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Katherine: Hello and welcome to Friday Focus on community, my name is Katherine and our guest today is Youth in Nature partnership. I have several guests with me today, so I would like you to introduce yourselves today and tell me where you are from.

Jewel: Thanks for having us on. My name is Jewell Abott, I work with WREN in the west Eugene Westland, and we provide free science based education to school students that are low income and serve all learners.

Liz: Hello my name is Liz Karas and I work with Northwest Youth Corps, and our mission is to empower youth through conservation work, and we have been doing this for about 27 years.

Jenn: My name is Jenn Marsh and I work for Willamalane Park and Recreation.

Katherine: and Youth in Nature partnership is sort of collaboration between your organizations and several other ones, and you have a motto "leave no child inside". Can you tell us about the Youth in Nature partnership.

Liz: Yeah so this started about 3 years ago, again this is Liz from Northwest Youth Corps, and it was basically a collaboration of different organizations both non profits and agencies like the U.S Forest Service, BLM, and other groups like Mt. Pisgah Arboretum. And a whole bunch of other ones. We all came together because we wanted to make sure there is no more nature deficit in Eugene, there is a lot of people who believe they are scared to outdoors, they just don't quite appreciate it, so we said lets get together and try to provide resources that will get kids outdoors in all types of weather.

Katherine: So do the kids come to you as Youth in Nature as a club or do they go to your organizations to find activities to do?

Jenn: That is a great question so the Youth in Nature partnership has been sponsoring this once a year event called play in the rain day which is tomorrow, as an organization, we are looking for and dedicated to keeping those barriers down to connecting people with nature, and I know WREN in particular is very dedicated to that as well.

Katherine: So tell us about Play in the Rain Day, tell us what types of things happen there.

Liz: So Play in the Rain day has a two fold goal, one goal is to get parents resources so they can learn about all these different agencies, agencies that don't even include the Youth in Nature partnership, that's not so interesting for children, its important for us to get people outdoors, so the second goal of Play in the Rain Day is to get kids playing right away, immediately in all types of weather, often times there is a misnomer, oh you only go outside when its nice. But in Oregon, that's really not the case. So we wanted to show parents that you can play in all kinds of weather, so heck so lets go out and have an outdoor event in November.

Katherine: So for the parents there will be a lot of different tables with all the different organizations and the parents can learn about you. But then for the kids there seems to be a lot of different things, like circle survival, hayrides, raptors, tree climbing, haze rides. tell us about some of the activities., the activities the kids can do.

Jenn: Well like Willamalane has a table that has different animal tracks, where they can stamp different tracks of different animals, and bone identification where we will have bones laid out where they can trace them, touch them, and just very hands on, we have.

Liz: yeah some of the other events, as an organization we take teens to live in the woods and teach them how to make trail for 5 weeks at a time. So we thought at this event, we would teach them campfire cookery. So will have a huge bonfire, we got over a 1000 hot dogs and marshmallows, so please come have some, some of the other events we will have like we will have the Backcountry Horseman there, so children can learn how to pack a horse, and learn about "leave no trace". We're going to have some archery there, tree climbing, oh gosh there are so many I have been organizing, so many different groups.

Jewell: Well I wanted to say if you noticed a trend in all these activities, a lot of them have a loose structure, but they are unstructured explorations, so it's really a child and parent's interest and curiosity driven, so it's not to go out and play a particular game with rules or anything like that. It's to use your imagination, connect with nature, anytime of year in that unstructured free form way. That's really a theme running through much through all our events.

Katherine: Now is there going to be counselors or guides there for the children, so if the parents want to go over to the tables, and the kids want to go running out towards whatever draws their attention, there will be people to keep them.

Liz: Yes there is going to be a lot of parents, all the organizations know they need to have to have people there to help guide the children, but again, we want children to also feel comfortable how to learn how to make their own hot dog, how to make their own nature crafts, there will be a lot of supervision there but also a lot of fun at the same time.

Katherine: All different things happening at one time, so they can see the horses and see the horses, and see different things. And I hear it's going to rain for you tomorrow too.

Liz: Funny story in all the years we have done play in the rain day, it hasn't rained. This year we are going to live up to the name.

Katherine: And tell us where you are going to meet, what time, and what people should do.

Wren: I know a lot of folks are familiar with Mt. Pisgah, but Mt. Pisgah Arboretum, up off I-5 30<sup>th</sup>, I am sure you can out at our website [www.youthinnature.org](http://www.youthinnature.org). It runs from 10 to 3. Stop by anytime, like I said it's unstructured. One thing I want to highlight and sneak in here really quick add is we asked is Rich Clabbard to come and perform, he's a professional children musician, and he's just fantastic. Really fun and committed too. It's a free event so anytime stop by and spend as much time as you like.

Liz: if you want any more information, we did post a little summary on activities the Youth in Nature site. Feel free to come on the website or learn more about the other organizations participating.

Katherine: or stop by tomorrow from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Mt. Pisgah Arboretum, your tuned into Friday Focus on 91.9 KRVM