

# Pioneer Days come to the Heritage Center

Over 285 fourth graders, plus their teachers and many chaperone parents, once again learned about pioneer life in Tualatin earlier this month. You may have noticed children pulling their covered wagons to and from Tualatin Elementary School or the two huge tents at the Heritage Center, provided by Willowbrook Summer Arts Camp. The event is sponsored by the Tualatin Historical Society and made possible by volunteers from a wide community of Historical Society members and long time Tualatin residents, retired teachers, young adults, New Seasons Market employees and newcomers to Tualatin that love history and opportunities for children to have hands on experiences.

The dedicated staff of volunteers who worked hard to make sure those three days were authentic included Emily Bartlett. She was on first wagon train when we started the program and has now become a volunteer teacher herself as a college student. Evie Andrews plays a key role as “school marm” at the one-room school where individual slates were used instead of paper or computers. Lindy Hughes and Donna Disch challenged

the children to identify artifacts. The students scrubbed clothes on a washboard in washtubs, supervised by Ellie McClure. Students left with a certificate granting them 160 acres of Tualatin land. Everyone had an opportunity to quilt, braid, and sew on a button, punch tin lids, play games, and taste butter that they made on hard tack.

The garden staff changed daily, with 12 volunteers over three days. The garden planted by the 4th graders included beans starts, potato pieces, onion sets, seed corn and native flowering plant starts.

During the High School Senior Awards, held the following week, many graduates recalled their Oregon Trail experience at the Heritage Center 8 years ago. A parent recalled chaperoning her child a few years ago and felt it was the best field trip she and her child had ever experienced.

The public is invited to visit the Pioneer Garden at the Heritage Center this summer. The new plantings, near the patio, include identifications recently finished by Eagle Scout Candidate Mark Fellin.

