

# WL teens learn about giving to others

By JODI HELMER  
For the Tidings

Michael Dearborn knows what it feels like to lose a loved one: Three years ago, Dearborn lost his brother Max to leukemia. He was heartbroken and needed someone to talk to. "I went to the Dougy Center (for Grieving Children) after my brother died to get out my feelings," says Dearborn, 14. "A lot of my friends hadn't been through something like this and they didn't know how I was feeling, but at the Dougy Center I learned that other kids were going through the same things and how they handled it."

When Dearborn joined the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation (OJCYP) last year, he knew he had an opportunity to give back to the organization that had given him so much.

Founded by Julia Weiss as a bat mitzvah project, OJCYP aims to give teens an opportunity to make a difference in their communities while learning about the importance of charitable giving.

"The foundation teaches kids about the importance of giving generously to the community," says John Moss, executive director of Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, who served as an OJCYP advisor. "It empowers them and gives them a sense of what they want their lives to mean."

Thirteen teen-agers participated in the inaugural year of OJCYP and were asked to research one Jewish and one secular organization to consider for funding. Dearborn researched the Dougy Center and the Jewish Federation of Portland.

"We researched the organiza-

tions, made a site visit to learn more about them and how they would use the money, and then made recommendations to the board," Dearborn said. "Then we took a vote on which foundations would get the money and how much we were going to give them."

After hearing all of the presentations, board members debated about how to allocate the funds, giving them an abbreviated look at how adults struggle to allocate funds to worthy causes.

Selecting which organizations to fund may sound simple, but the teens at OJCYP quickly learned there was a lot more to donating money than simply writing the check.

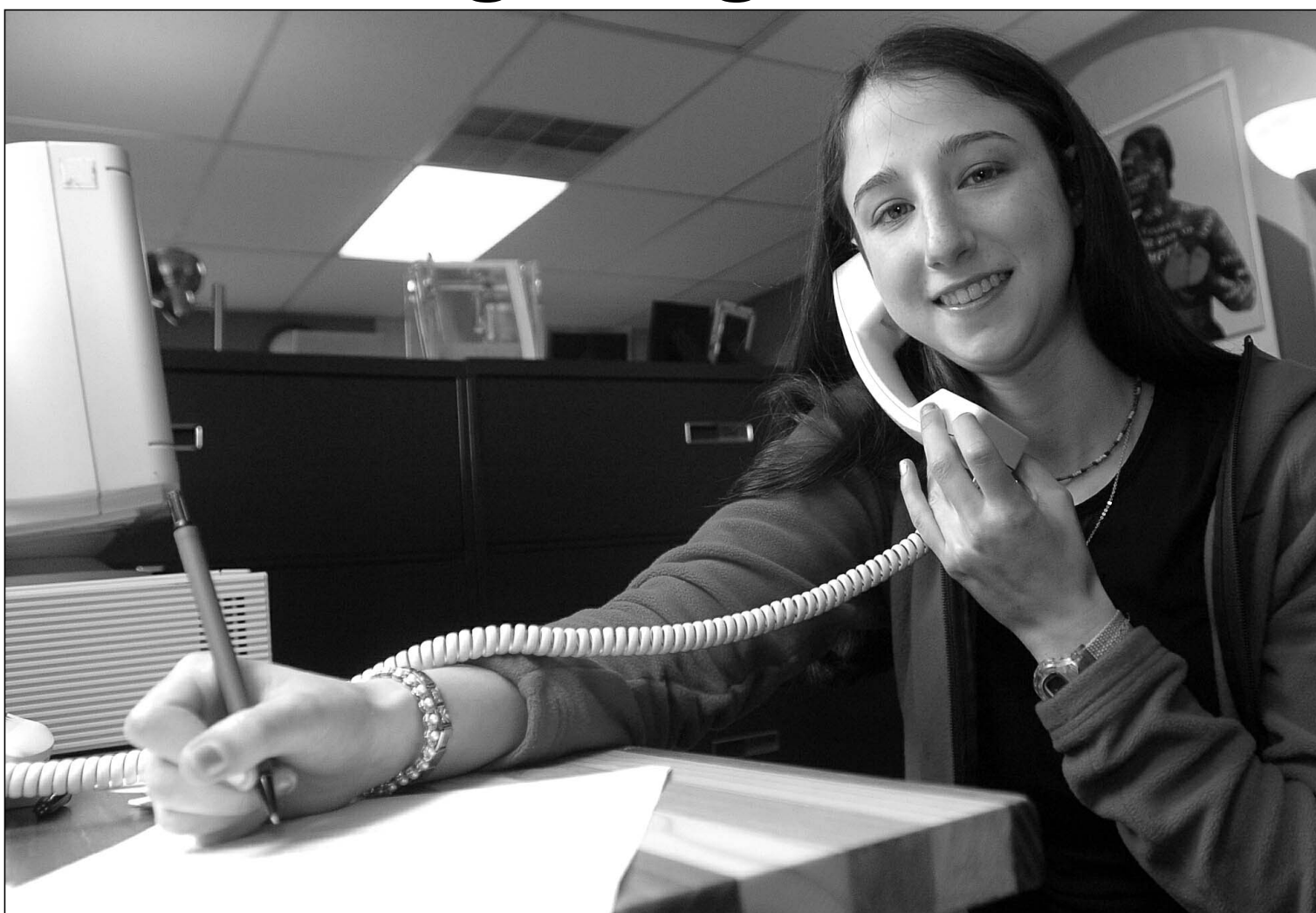
"Everybody was so passionate about the charities they researched," says Annie Levine, a 16-year-old West Linn High School student and member of OJCYP. "Nobody wanted to say no to any of the charities."

"The kids really learned how to weigh different choices," Moss said. "And they learned how to make judgments about who to give it to."

After a lively debate, OJCYP awarded a total of \$5,000 to eight non-profit organizations including Oregon Food Bank, Jewish Family and Children's Services, Jewish Federation of Portland, Clackamas Women's Services, and the Dougy Center for Grieving Children.

"We really learned how a non-profit foundation works," Dearborn says. "I didn't know how much work foundations put into finding groups to give money to."

See GIVING, page A7



STAFF PHOTO/VERN UYETAKE

Annie Levine, 16, made a convincing argument to the OJCYP board and was able to give much needed money to Clackamas Women's Services.

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## Giving: Teens learn more lessons than just who are needy

Continued from page A6

For Levine, who advocated giving funds to Clackamas Women's Services, the most powerful lesson was learning to stand up for what she believes in.

"They needed the money so badly," she said. "They lost a huge percentage of their funding and have to turn so many people away."

But convincing the other members of OJCYF was not easy.

"Annie really had to fight for Clackamas Women's Services," Moss said. "But she was perceptive enough to realize that most of the charities being funded were in Portland, and no money was going to Clackamas where there was just as much need."

Levine made a convincing argument and a \$200 grant was awarded to Clackamas Women's Services.

The OJCYF grant was not the only thing the Clackamas Women's Shelter received from the foundation: They also gained a new volunteer.

Levine was so inspired by the work the organization was doing in the community, she decided to do an internship there this summer.

"I thought it would be cool to try something new and get experience working with a non-profit organization," she said. "As a girl, I never want to have to deal with any of that, and I want to help if I can."

Dearborn was amazed by the services non-profit organizations are able to provide on a shoestring budget.

"No one pays to go to the Dougy Center and they have to rely mainly on donations," he said. "It's amazing that they make enough money to work with children year after year."

Because of his connection to the Dougy Center, Dearborn was thrilled that OJCYF voted to award the organization a \$250 grant. "It is nice to know that I get to present money to the Dougy Center because they have done so much for me," he said. "It feels good to give back."

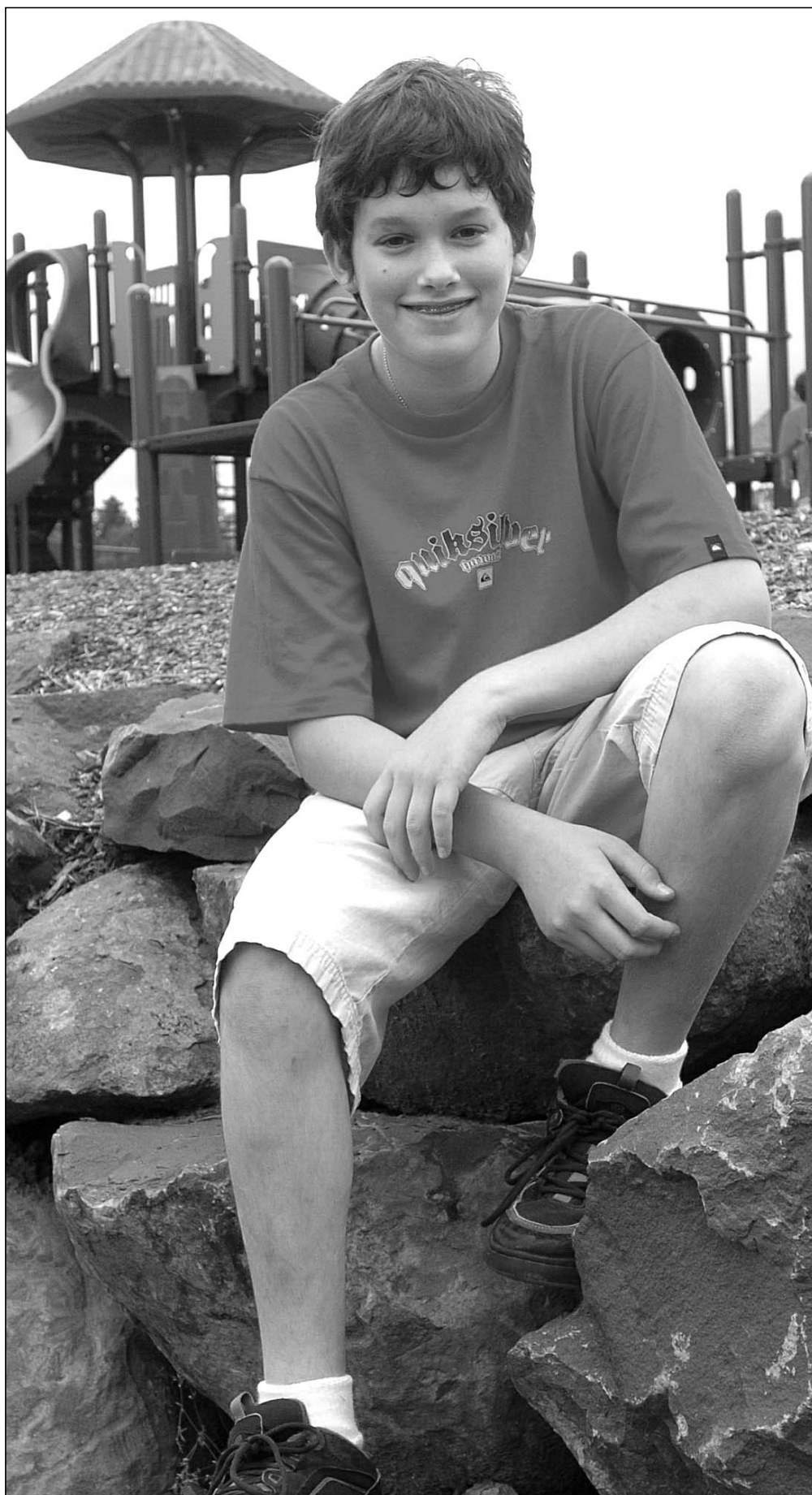
Plans are already under way to launch the second year of OJCYF and Moss hopes that the project will be an ongoing tool to raise a new generation of philanthropists.

"We are teaching these kids that people have the power to make significant change," Moss said. "We hope the foundation teaches kids that giving is serious business and demonstrates the importance of giving generously."

"It is really cool that adults trusted us with their money and gave us such ownership over the project," Levine said. "It feels really cool to help out."

Dearborn says researching non-profit organizations, making site visits, and deciding which organizations should be funded was time consuming, but worth the effort.

"It was a great learning experience," he said. "It really paid off in the end."



STAFF PHOTO/VERM UYETAKE

Through his work with the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation, Michael Dearborn, 14, was able to give to a cause that had benefited him at the time he lost his younger brother.

## WL man is summer intern for U.S. senator

U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, recently hired Rand Johnson of West Linn to work as an intern in his Washington, D.C., office this summer. He has been paired with staff members who specialize in his areas of education, interest and talent. Johnson will gain first-hand experience working in an office and learn about everyday Senate operations.

"As interns in Washington, D.C., young people have the opportunity to participate in the legislative process," said Craig. "In addition to getting a first-hand look at our national government, interns play a key role in making the office run smoothly and efficiently while fine-tuning the skills they have gained in their studies."

Johnson is a senior at the University of Oregon where he will complete a bachelor of arts degree in political science with minors in history and business.

After graduation, Johnson said he would like to attend law school at either Tulane University in New Orleans or Marquette University in Milwaukee, and then become a sports agent, his lifelong dream.

Johnson's internship is sponsored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, which Craig co-chairs.

Johnson said his internship is an important step towards realizing his goals.

"I'm grateful to my parents for instilling within me the vision that was necessary to start realizing my dreams," he said. "This is my first opportunity to be immersed in a truly political realm. Being here in D.C. lets me see just how powerful our nation is and how important it is to take into account all facets of political arguments because the issues affect so many people. I've enjoyed every minute of it."

## Willamette Falls Locks extends summer hours

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began July 3 extending the hours of operation at Willamette Falls Locks. The lock will be open for public use 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturdays through Wednesdays, and 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays.

Barges will be moored in the locks Thursday and Friday of this week when Portland General Electric (PGE) will be making improvements to its fish passage facilities at the Sullivan Plant.

While the barges are in the locks, large craft only will be restricted to the hours between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. or after 5 p.m. to pass through the locks. Smaller craft may be able to pass the barges during the remainder of the operational hours. Barges will be moored in the locks again in August. The Corps will issue public announcements prior to these operations.

On July 13 and 14, the locks will be closed to all river traffic for required maintenance. The locks will reopen July 15.

Questions concerning these hours of operation can be addressed to the lock operators by calling 503-656-3381.

No funding is included in the President's fiscal year 2005 budget for Willamette Falls Locks, which will result in the Corps indefinitely closing the locks — effective Oct. 1.

The Corps has operated the Willamette Falls Locks in West Linn since 1915. The project is on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a State Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

More information about Willamette Falls Locks is available on the Web site at <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/b/wfl.htm>.