

# Outsiders welcome at the Northeast Community Center

By Tom Vandel,  
Board Member, Northeast Community Center

You don't have to wait for the random arctic blast to go outside and play in the snow. The Northeast Community Center (NECC) offers monthly outdoor adventure activities led by the Northwest Wilderness Institute.

Tony and Kelsey Holmes manage the program, which consists of weekend day trips and summer camps on Mt. Hood and in the Columbia River Gorge. They also will provide day programs for kids when school is out on teacher planning days (February 16, March 6 and April 10). The activities during the off-school days will include leadership- and team-building exercises, arts and crafts, and environmental-science events.

The Weekend Warriors Club for ages 12 to 18 meets on the first Saturday of every month through April. Under the instruction and supervision of the Northwest Wilderness Institute's world-class guides, participants learn alpine winter skills and go snowshoeing, snowboarding, snow caving and sledging. Costs vary per trip (contact the NECC for information); equipment, transportation and a snack are provided.

"The elusive teenager is the last frontier," jokes Tony Holmes. "We started our program as a way to get young adults interested in adventure recreation and to teach important outdoor skills. We don't just lead guided tours. We teach how to use maps and compasses, how to be self-reliant, how to prepare, what to take, plus safety measures and restrictions. It's great for kids who are not into traditional sports. It takes them places they have never been before. It also gives them a sense for environmental preservation and sustainability."

For adults who want to be outsiders, too, the Northwest Wilderness Institute offers a Valentine's Day snowshoe trip that includes guides, equipment, hot lunch and transportation to and from the NECC. It's open to anyone 18 years and older. To register for any of the Northwest Wilderness Institute adventure trips, contact the NECC soon. The Northeast Community Center is located at 1630 N.E. 38th Ave. (between Sandy Boulevard and Northeast Broadway). For more information or to be put on the e-mail list to receive NECC program news and event information, call (503) 284-3377 or visit online at [www.necommunitycenter.org](http://www.necommunitycenter.org).



Weekend day trips and summer camps on Mt. Hood and in the Columbia River Gorge are just some of the Northeast Community Center's outdoor adventures, put on with the help of the Northwest Wilderness Institute. – Courtesy Northeast Community Center

# New executive director steps in at Northeast Community Center

By Tom Vandel  
Board Member, Northeast Community Center



Laura Seurnyck, new executive director of Northeast Community Center. – Courtesy Northeast Community Center

The Northeast Community Center, 1630 N.E. 38th Ave., has hired a new executive director. Laura Seurnyck has taken over for Don Waggoner, who will attempt to retire a second time after serving as interim executive director for the past year.

Seurnyck has a distinguished background working with nonprofit organizations in many capacities. Most recently, she was executive director for Five Mountains Hawaii, an organization devoted to improving the health of North Hawaii communities. Prior to that, she spent more than ten years working in developing countries around the world, including Fiji, Azerbaijan and Bangladesh.

After many years away from the Pacific Northwest, which had once been their home, Seurnyck and her husband and daughter are delighted to return to be closer to family and friends. They live in the Laurelhurst neighborhood, where their daughter attends Laurelhurst Elementary School. The family also includes a 26-year old son who lives in Seattle.

"I am thrilled to be a part of this wonderful community and to help carry the Northeast Community Center forward into the future," says Seurnyck. "It's such an important place for so many people, and the potential is unlimited. I look forward to meeting all our members, staff and volunteers."

In addition to her passion for health and wellness, Seurnyck loves hiking, biking, gardening and cooking. She will be a tremendous addition to the Center, a facility that has been a neighborhood institution for well over 80 years. The Northeast Community Center is also deeply thankful to Don Waggoner and his wife, Eunice, for their dedicated work and generous support.

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