

Molalla, Oregon

Population 8,304

Data for Clackamas County showed low levels of physical activity among children. The Oregon State University Extension Service began working with communities to create solutions. Molalla decided to create a StoryWalk®. A StoryWalk® features books on stakes in a public location for people to read as they walk through the story. Posts are cemented into the ground and pages laminated.



The school superintendent suggested focusing on early literacy, getting preschoolers ready for school. The coalition commissioned six original stories from local authors and had them illustrated by high school students. At each location, a kiosk describes the featured book. The Extension Service staff put together formats, and a local sign company printed them on a vandal-proof, weather-proof material. The Chamber of Commerce maintains the storyboards.

Installation of the stories finished in 2015 and are on a rotating schedule at schools and parks, so visitors returning to the same location will, after a time see, a different story. While the loop for any one story is typically only about a half mile, the attraction of coming out to see it leads to outdoor play at nearby playgrounds.



The Extension Service is now conducting evaluation with the Summer StoryWalk Challenge. Visitors take a survey on their phones that asks how they enjoyed the book, whether they have kids with them, and how many times have they have walked it.



Advice:

- Work on relationship building.
- Get people involved!

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson.

Thank you to and photos courtesy of Beret Halverson