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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CATHERINE FREER RECEIVES  
GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARD**

ALBANY, Ore. (Sept. 25, 2008) – Albany based Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs is the regional winner of the 2008 Oregon Governor's Volunteer Awards in the Outstanding Youth Volunteer Program category.

"Your volunteer service is an inspiration to others and exemplifies the very heart of our state. Thank you for all that you do to support Oregon's communities," said Oregon Volunteers! Volunteerism Coordinator Kate Budd.

Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs was nominated by the Middle Fork Ranger District for their more than twenty years of service in Willamette National Forest. This year alone, Catherine Freer's adolescent participants and staff helped to develop a mountain bike trail, build a bridge, assisted with trail maintenance, stocked cross country ski shelters with firewood and worked on a number of other recreation projects.

The Oregon Governor's Volunteer Awards recognize individuals and organizations for their dedication, commitment and determination in promoting and supporting volunteerism throughout Oregon with the purpose of inspiring individuals to make a positive difference and strengthening Oregon communities.

"Service learning is a powerful component of our wilderness therapy program. We believe that participation in service learning helps young people make meaningful contributions to the environment and to their community. This then becomes an important as part of their recovery," explained Robert Cooley, Ph.D., Catherine Freer executive director.

(More)

Catherine Freer operates wilderness therapy programs for at-risk youth. Each week, three staff members along with up to eight adolescent participants depart Albany for a wilderness therapy backpacking expedition. One staff member is a master's level therapist. During the expedition the adolescents' hike daily, participate in individual and group therapy, and learn new tools and healthy coping mechanisms for addressing emotional and behavioral issues.

Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs serves approximately 350 adolescents annually. The employee owned and operated company was founded in 1988 and is licensed by the State of Oregon as both a substance abuse and mental health treatment program. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHCO) accredits the program.

The company also operates Santiam Crossing, an outdoor therapeutic school and Oregon Transition Homes. For more information, please visit the web site at [www.http://www.cfrees.com](http://www.cfrees.com) or call (800) 390-3983.

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