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RCC instructor ships out to study oceanlife

Kathleen Salinas will spend three weeks this summer aboard an oceanic research vessel as part of the Teacher at Sea program, and she hopes local students and teachers will use the Internet to connect with the project.

Salinas, who teaches Adult Basic Education at Rogue Community College, will board the “New Horizon” Aug. 17 in San Diego. Using sound waves and other instruments, she and other researchers will map the layers of phytoplankton and zooplankton along the Continental Shelf off Monterey Bay. The research is part of a multi-institutional project funded by the Office of Naval Research. The ship returns to land Sept. 10.

“Plankton plays an extremely important role in feeding fish and providing oxygen for our atmosphere,” Salinas said. During the cruise she will post daily journals and quiz questions at http://literacyworks.org/ocean. She also will be available via e-mail Aug. 17 through Sept. 10 at ksalinas@literacyworks.com.

Before joining the RCC faculty, Salinas spent several years substitute teaching at local grade schools. To get the word out about the Teacher at Sea program, she contacted a number of teachers and made classroom presentations to get people interested in the ocean.

“I hope that teachers and students from kindergarten through high school will click on that Web site and see what we’re doing. The site will have photos, daily journals and quiz questions. The scientists and I would welcome questions and comments throughout the trip by email,” she said.

The Teacher at Sea program is supported by the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University (www.coas.oregonstate.edu), Oregon’s Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the Science and Numeracy Special Collection of Online Resources, National Institute for Literacy.
As part of the program Salinas attended a series of weekend sessions at OSU and the Hatfield Marine Science Center. Christine McCaffrey, another ABE instructor at Rogue, also participated in the training.

“The program has been wonderful. I’ve met lots of other adult education instructors, and we’ve shared ideas on what works well in the classroom. I’ve also received many excellent teaching materials,” Salinas said. “This program helps teachers bring enthusiasm for learning into their classrooms Teachers encourage students and help them to be excited about learning and achieving their goals”

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