



The Review

Celebrating Students

Winter 2015
www.swsc.org

Remembering Dr. John Brennan

By Bruce Olson, Superintendent, Red Rock Central Schools

Dr. John Brennan came to Red Rock Central in January of 1999. He saw the district through some tough economic times, and was able to get two operating referendums passed in the district. He was a man who cared deeply about kids, their education, and their overall welfare.



Dr. Brennan left us unexpectedly in March of 2014. In his honor, Clayton Hubert drew and painted this wall mural (below) in the main entry into our school. Mr. Hubert, the Art Instructor at RRC, put over 40 hours into this project. John's wife, Trish, is pictured with three of their grandchildren, Teagen, Bridget and Madigan Brennan.



RRC also installed a Digital Fabrication Laboratory with Dr. Brennan's urging. The lab was dedicated to him.



Update from the Executive Director

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director, cliff.carmody@swsc.org

This edition of The Review comes to you in the middle of our Minnesota winter. The winter comes early and long after the first of the calendar year when new resolutions and commitments flood our thoughts and plans. [What did you resolve and commit to doing in 2015?](#)

The front cover of The Review remembers Dr. John Brennan, former Superintendent of Red Rock Central Schools, who died unexpectedly in March of 2014. Dr. Brennan was just a few short months from celebrating his retirement. A man with a strong “New Jersey” accent, he was committed to the work of schools; he loved kids; and, did everything he could do to ensure all kids had access to great schools. In 2015, I want to be like John!

Scott Monson, Superintendent of Marshall Public Schools, recently shared a written piece by Allison Behne called “Snow Day”. The storyline is about a young boy who understands the work of the superintendent from a young boy’s perspective. The boy loves it when the superintendent calls off school for a snow day and tells his mother he wants to be like the superintendent when he grows up. “You want to be a superintendent when you grow up?” the mother asks the boy. “No, I want make kids happy,” he replies.

As our Minnesota winter lingers on, let’s not forget our resolutions and commitments to the work we do; it is a large responsibility (as John Brennan knew), and we should be thankful we have the opportunity! As Allison Behne said, “I suggest we take a deep breath and look at our jobs through the eyes of a child. We are in the business of making kids happy. What could be better than that?”



Updates from Special Education

EHDI: Early Hearing Detection & Intervention

By Ed VanDerHeiden, Audiologist, ed.vanderheiden@swsc.org



The question, “are there children in my program who have an unidentified hearing loss?” is a sobering one for early childhood education and early intervention providers.

Hearing loss is one of the most commonly unidentified and misdiagnosed conditions in early childhood. Approximately 1 out of every 300 children in the United States is born with a permanent hearing loss. About that same number will lose their hearing after birth, and before entering school, because of illness, injury or genetic factors.

Although newborn hearing screening is successful in identifying many children with hearing loss shortly after birth, of the children who do not pass the newborn screening, almost half cannot be documented as having received the follow-up diagnostic or intervention services needed.

Hearing screening during early childhood is therefore vital for identifying infants lost to follow-up from newborn screening, as well as children with post-neonatal hearing loss.

Hearing loss is an “invisible” condition because it is extremely difficult for parents or professionals to recognize. Parents may feel that “something is wrong”, without being able to accurately pinpoint that the child is not responding reliably to sound. Professionals may determine that a child has a speech/language delay or behavioral concern, but remain unaware of the underlying hearing loss.

This is especially true for children who have mild or moderate hearing loss that allows them to respond to loud noises while being unable to hear all parts of speech.

This is why it is so important for children to receive objective hearing screening throughout early childhood. Fortunately, a highly reliable, objective hearing screening method can help to prevent under-identification or misdiagnoses of hearing loss. Otoacoustic emissions (OAE) hearing screening technology, used widely in hospital based newborn screening programs and validated as an objective and reliable screening method, is being demonstrated as the most practical method for screening children from birth to 3 years of age.

With proper screening and evaluation, hearing loss can be identified and effective intervention can be initiated for children with hearing loss as young as a few weeks of age.

Source: Identifying Hearing Loss in Young Children
Authors: William Eiserman/Lenore Shisler

Alternative Programs and the Development of Social Emotional Learning Standards

By Tish Kalla, Director of Alternative Programs, tish.kalla@swsc.org



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors. It is the process through which students enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaving in order to achieve important life tasks.

The purpose of developing SEL Standards is to provide the alternative programs a framework for integrating SEL with character development so that students will learn, practice, and model essential personal life habits that contribute to academic, vocational, and personal success. It is about learning to make healthy decisions, to problem solve effectively, to value excellence, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

(continued on page 4)

In This Issue -- Celebrating Students

From Special Education -- pages 3-4

- Early Hearing Detection
- Alternative Programs & SEL Standards
- Socially Inclusive Schools

From Teaching and Learning -- pages 5-6

- Young Writers Conference
- Spelling Bee • Science & Nature Conference
- Junior High Knowledge Bowl Winners
- Young Artists Conference Recap

From School Districts -- pages 7-11

- Canby • New London-Spicer
- Cedar Mountain • Worthington
- New Century Charter • Willmar
- Marshall • Worthington
- Cedar Mountain • Willmar
- Worthington • Sleepy Eye
- Lakeview

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Creating Socially Inclusive Schools

By Dr. Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services, mary.palmer@swsc.org



When visiting with people about inclusion for students with disabilities, the discussion often times centers around putting strategies and methods in place to help the classroom become more academically inclusive. These are certainly important discussions. However, we also need to think about what can be done to make school a socially inclusive place for students with disabilities. Special Olympics Project UNIFY conducted a comprehensive study to determine common factors found in those schools that have a socially inclusive atmosphere and which have set them apart from other schools in the area of inclusion. In the February 18, 2014 edition of "Edutopia Works in Education", Maurice Elias who is a Professor of Psychology at Rutgers Social-Emotional Learning Lab, says that there are some schools where there is a philosophical commitment to inclusion but for which strategies are needed. He goes on to state that there is a second type of school that most could be described as. In these schools the commitment is not deep or articulated clearly and if strategies are present, they are often sporadic. For these types of schools the following suggestions if implemented, can assist them in becoming a "truly" socially inclusive school.

Suggestion #1: Start with some tangible, non-threatening activities with those who are genuinely interested in being involved. Start small if you have to as success often builds upon true enthusiasm no matter how small. You must begin by building a foundation for long term success. You are not just putting together a program.

Suggestion #2: The efforts need to be student centered by engaging the students with and without disabilities in developing and implementing inclusive activities. Do not hesitate to empower the students. In fact, if inclusion is to be successful, students must be empowered to contribute.

Suggestion #3: Educate students and all staff members about social inclusion in formal and informal settings. This includes the classroom, the bus, the lunchroom and after school activities.

Suggestion #4: At some point, school leadership must demonstrate through their actions that inclusion is a priority and a way things are done in the school. Inclusion has value and non-inclusion is not acceptable.

Suggestion #5: Social inclusion is not about some students helping others and some students being helped. It is all about students finding meaningful ways to contribute which requires addressing situations as an individual situation and making adjustments to fit the given circumstances. A one size fits all approach in trying to implement social inclusion will not work.

Suggestion #6: Have students, teachers and administrators engage in ongoing reflective processes to review efforts, to plan and adjust one's efforts accordingly.

Suggestion #7: Administrative support has to be visible and meaningful. This may require budget considerations, time for planning, policy review and amendments, and regular discussion of inclusive efforts.



Alternative Programs (continued from page 3)

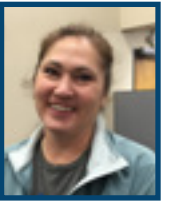
A team of social workers and teachers representing several of the alternative programs came together this summer to begin the selection of standards and research-based curriculums. The SEL team researched and reviewed standards from Illinois, Kansas, Anchorage, and Intermediate District 287. Other literature reviewed came from CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), Seattle University, and Reclaiming Youth and Children. From this work, a set of standards based on four main areas was formed and adopted. These standard areas include: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Social Management.

Now that the standards have been adopted, the alternative programs will begin implementation of these standards through researched-based curriculums and practices. Currently programs such as Mind Up, SSIS (Social Skills Intervention System), Boys Town, Why Try, and Think Good/Feel Good are being piloted at different programs. All staff were trained in January in the 5-Point Scale, and the Behavior Analysts are working with the team and programs to develop common behavior point sheets that will result in the collection of meaningful data to help drive educational decisions for students. These resources will also assist the home districts as students transition in and out of the alternative program.

Updates from Teaching & Learning

Write, Write, Write ... Snow, Wind, Winter!

By Andrea Anderson, Student Activities Coordinator, andrea.anderson@swsc.org



It was unfortunate the Minnesota weather forced us to cancel this year's Conference for Young Writers. Much time is spent planning and preparing to bring quality enrichment opportunities to kids and having to cancel is very disappointing for all of us -- the participants, presenters and staff.

We have not had to cancel a conference in 20 years, so it was unfortunate the entire week was filled with inclement weather. And, only in Minnesota would the "snow date" be even worse than the original event date! Rescheduling an event like this beyond the snow date is not an option since we would not have access to a facility large enough. Our events are held when the college is on break and after graduation.

Please watch for 2016 Conference for Young Writers brochures next fall.



Regional Spelling Bee

By Andrea Anderson, Student Activities Coordinator, andrea.anderson@swsc.org

As schools are holding their local spelling bee, winners are being submitted for the Regional Spelling Bee competition. The competition consists of a written test and three preliminary oral rounds for all contestants. The top 15 spellers then participate in a spelloff where there will be 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place trophy winners.



The four winning spellers will advance to the Multi-Region State Spelling Bee in Fergus Falls on February 23rd with that winner participating in the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC. Good luck to all spellers as they participate in this year's Spelling Bees!

Regional Spelling Bee -- Redwood Falls
February 10, 2015 (snow date February 11)

Multi-Region State Bee -- Fergus Falls
February 23, 2015 (snow date - February 25)

The Science Behind Meteorology

By Andrea Anderson, Student Activities Coordinator, andrea.anderson@swsc.org

We are super excited to have Grant Smith, a meteorologist from KELOLAND TV, present the keynote presentation at this year's 21st Annual Science & Nature Conference. This conference will be held on May 13, 2015 at SMSU in Marshall.



Some of the topics we have lined up for this year are: minerals, science of firefighting, un-mixing colors, archaeology, grossology, GPS, science express bus, radiology, ultra-cold, science magic, animal habitats and much, much more.

It is a wonderful, fun filled experience for students in kindergarten through 8th grade to learn more about science. Watch for brochures as they will be coming soon.

www.swsc.org/scienceandnature

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Winners!

Region 6 Sub-Regional Winners -- December 19th at SMSU



GSL #1 1st Place



Ortonville #1 2nd Place



Hutchinson #3 3rd Place

Region 8 Sub-Regional Winners -- January 5th at SMSU



Fulda 1st Place



Pipestone 2nd Place

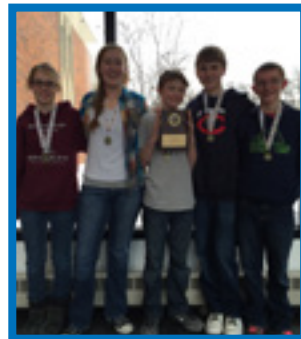


MCC 3rd Place

Regional Winners -- January 10, 2015 at SMSU



**2nd Place
Glencoe-Silver Lake**



1st Place -- YME



**3rd Place
Ortonville**

Illusional Wonders at 2014 Young Artists Conference

By Andrea Anderson, Student Activities Coordinator, andrea.anderson@swsc.org

On October 29th at SMSU, Reza, an illusionist from Brookings, SD, captivated over 1,200 participants with his intriguing performances with his perception of magic. Using the audience during parts of his show was extremely entertaining and mind blowing. His incredible performance left us wondering "How does he do that?" Reza has a passion to be a positive influence for young people and had the chance to share his talent with students in small group sessions using beginning magic tricks.



After the keynote, students attended three hands-on sessions on a variety of topics related to the visual and performing arts. These sessions included wheel thrown pottery, canvas painting, drawing, wood art, hip hop dance, origami, nature art, dream catchers, Zentangle® art, mask making, watercolor techniques, and much more. One of the new sessions this year, Theatrical Makeup, was a huge hit as students turned into an old aged person and zombies throughout the day -- a perfect fit just before Halloween. The word in the hallways was how students were trying to figure out how to preserve the zombie faces for trick-or-treating two days later.

With a mix of new and old sessions at the 21st Annual Conference for Young Artists, students were able to expand their imaginations and creativity. Always held in the fall at SMSU, give your students this unique opportunity to experience new and different forms of art in 2015!

Canby Elementary Student Council Successes

By Marylee K. Giese, 6th Grade Teacher, Canby Elementary School

Box Tops Challenge. The Giving Tree. Food Shelf Drive. School T-shirts. What drives each of these activities at Canby Elementary School? The CES Student Council which has been in existence for over 15 years. The current advisor, paraprofessional Becky Verhelst, has been on duty for the last 15 years. Prior to that Joan Citrowske, a retired paraprofessional, took the reins.

The benefits of the work of this representative group of elementary students from grades 3-6 are astounding. • The Box Tops Challenge is held school wide in a competition pitting grades against other grades, all for a great payoff. This challenge takes place twice a year and has reaped multiple benefits for the 240+ students at Canby Elementary. These include a large monetary donation to a new playground project in 2010 and the purchase of a new sound system in 2012. The donations driven by this student council led drive are also used to help offset costs of attending plays, AR end of the year celebrations, and support for treats during the OLPA and MCA testing periods.

- The Giving Tree, a project held throughout the month of December, has accepted donations from student and staff and given its support to a local before and after school program.
- The Food Shelf Drive, also spearheaded by the Student Council, collects goods for the Canby Food Shelf.
- In addition, every other year, Canby Elementary students are invited to participate in a t-shirt design competition. After the winning design is voted on, the t-shirts are printed for sale to the families of CES.
- The Student Council also supports the Bike Rodeo that is held in June.

Student Council members are like the minutemen and minutewomen of Canby Elementary. They are ready to serve on a moment's notice, be it at Parent's Lunch Day during American Education Week, or Grandparent's Lunch Day in May. This eight member council is represented by two students from grades 3-6 and their advisor. Their impact on the school is positive and invaluable.

Pictured at right: 6th grade student council members Zeke Sather and Johanna Heinrich and their Advisory, Becky Verhelst (middle)



Girls United at New London-Spicer

By Trish Perry, Middle School Principal, New London-Spicer Schools

New London-Spicer Middle School is proud to launch our new 5th grade program, *Girls United*. The purpose of *Girls United* is to encourage positive interaction and problem solving amongst peers and to promote healthy self-esteem and girl empowerment. Our after school program is open to all 5th grade girls and thanks to a grant from our Parent Teacher Organization is free to all of our girls in 5th grade.



Prior to our program starting, parents were surveyed about the needs of our students. We have developed curriculum based on those needs. Our first program met on December 8th and included craft and baking activities along with a lesson on inclusion at lunch. At the end of the evening, 5th grade Moms or a special female role model and girls were invited to a catered dinner. *Girls United* will meet two additional times throughout the school year. Our next program will be scheduled in February and the focus will be on wellness and our last session will be focused on fashion appropriate for tweens and skin care.

We are appreciative of the support we have received from our community in implementing *Girls United*. We have included our female business owners in our community to also be part of our program. Our students will benefit from developing these relationships and linking them to our school. Our *Girls United* goal at NL-S Middle School is to create, foster, and guide our future female leaders.

CM Elementary Promotes Active School Day for Kids!

By Patti Machart, Elementary Principal, Cedar Mountain Schools

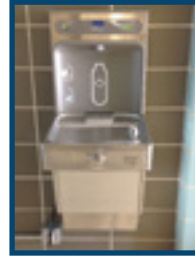
Students at Cedar Mountain Elementary School in Franklin have been learning a new activity in Mr. Freitag's P.E. class this year thanks to a grant through the Statewide Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). CM elementary students are learning how to play pickle ball. Pickle ball is a racket sport very similar to tennis. It is played indoors with a wooden racket and a plastic wiffle ball. It is a lifetime, dual activity that promotes fitness and is great for hand-eye coordination skills.



Mr. Freitag commented, "I wanted to include a racket sport into my current P.E. curriculum and I choose pickle ball because it is a little slower moving than tennis and therefore easier for kids to learn and be successful. I also like the fact that all kids take on an active roll because the game is played 2 on 2 or 1 on 1. The students enjoy playing the game and their skills improved greatly after the 1st couple of days."

The SHIP grant covered the cost of the pickle ball set which included 24 rackets, 20 wiffle balls, 4 nets and standards, and a portable storage cart.

Students and faculty at Cedar Mountain Elementary are also drinking more water these days to promote wellness as a result of a new water bottle filtration drinking fountain which was another part of the SHIP grant awarded to CM Elementary this fall.



Worthington Marching Band at Outback Bowl

By Anne Foley, Enrichment Programs Coordinator, Worthington Public Schools

After a year of fundraising efforts, many hours of practice, numerous marching events, and tremendous community support from Worthington, 168 students of Worthington High School, parent chaperones, and band staff boarded 4 Reading Bus Line charter buses for Florida the morning after Christmas.

The Spirit of Worthington Trojan Marching Band traveled to Florida to compete in the Brightspark Music Festival in Tampa, Florida. They first spent a couple days in Orlando at Universal Studios to relax before getting down to business. Competing in Concert, Parade and Field (in exhibition), Trojan band members once again gave performances that left crowds cheering. They also brought home some hardware. Spirit of Worthington Trojan Marching Band earned Group II, Gold Rating, 1st Place Concert Band, Group II, Gold Rating, 1st Place Parade Band, Feature Parade Band Award (first time given).



Following the band competitions that Worthington took place in, they quickly began preparing the half-time performance for the Outback Bowl that saw the Auburn Tigers and Wisconsin Badgers football teams compete. The Spirit of Worthington Trojans Marching Band was one of 26 bands from 14 states throughout the United States, with 3,017 musicians participating in the festival. The half-time show also featured the Just for Kix National Performance Team, in which dance students of Just for Kix could audition to also participate in. Worthington Just for Kix dancers were a part of this amazing production.



This truly was a once in a lifetime opportunity for these young musicians. How many band students can say that they performed with over 3,000 playing their instruments? The Outback Bowl was the conclusion of a very busy summer and fall marching band schedule for the Spirit of Worthington Trojans Marching Band. Congratulations on an award-winning trip, along with a very successful marching season, Spirit of Worthington Trojans Marching Band. The band is directed by Jon Loy.

New Century Academy is S.T.E.A.M.ing forward!

By Glenn Klaphake, Principal, New Century Academy

New Century Academy (NCA) has recently expanded its educational mission to include Integrative S.T.E.A.M, the acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. NCA is a Charter School located in Hutchinson, MN serving approximately 130 students in grades 7-12. Students come to us from a large geographical area which includes communities like Glencoe-Silver Lake, Cosmos, Litchfield and Dassel-Cokato. We are a member of the SW/WC Service Cooperative, the MSHSL, and our authorizer is Novation Education Opportunities (NEO).

The S.T.E.A.M. initiative developed from educational conversations about needs of our regional work-force and the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century. As such, NCA has embraced the S.T.E.A.M. platform to best prepare our students for career and college readiness. This is not a marketing scheme, but rather an intentional, integrative approach to teaching and learning. We have invested in the resources to properly train our staff and have partnered with Georgette Yakman, the premier advocate of S.T.E.A.M. education throughout the country to help us incorporate this exciting program.

Integrative S.T.E.A.M accreditation is a 2-phase process. First, it requires that our staff become fully trained in the curriculum of integrative S.T.E.A.M; this includes teachers, para-professionals and administrators. Integrative S.T.E.A.M. takes STEM and STEAM to another level. Integrative S.T.E.A.M. is a problem-based instructional program that relies on the ARTS to enrich the learning which fits our student niche. Second, the initiative requires NCA to meet benchmarks throughout the accreditation process. In addition, we must seek community sponsors to support our mission, submit S.T.E.A.M. lesson plans that are approved, and submit a portfolio S.T.E.A.M. related artifacts.

NCA is on pace to be a fully accredited Integrative S.T.E.A.M. school at the completion of this school year. We have a lot of work still to do, but we are clearly on our way. Yea for NCA!!!



Lots of Winners at Willmar Middle School

Three Winning Veteran Essay Winners -- Winner received \$50 gift card, finalists received \$25 gift cards. Teacher of winning essay student received \$100 in classroom supplies and rewards! Pictured: Mark Miley (Principal), Kim Oehrlein (6th Grade Communications Teacher), Nathan Heil, Tyler Ludwig, Dylan Kroes, Dionne Meehan (Jennie-O Representative), Sheryl Schwitters (6th Grade Communications Teacher), Amy Sack (Assistant Principal)



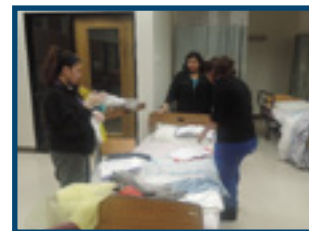
Three Members of the Varsity XC Team That Placed 3rd at State ... Are 8th Graders!
Pictured: Heidi Schmitz, Serena Monson, and Leah Hanson



MA-TEC: Career and Technical Education Offered Locally

By Michelle Noriega, MA-TEC Principal, Marshall Public Schools

Marshall Area Technical and Educational Center (MA-TEC) now offers two new career paths to area students and adult community members. This year we implemented a 16 credit welding program that covers 3 terms three hours each day. During the first term students earn 6 of the 16 credits and then 5 credits in each of the following terms. During the last term students will test for their welding certificate. Minnesota West Community & Technical College provides the instructors and the college credit. Marshall Public Schools provides the facility and equipment. We have also implemented a 3 credit Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. We started this past summer as a host site offering two rounds of courses. We then had our first class second term and we will be offering our next course fourth term. Students will be in class three hours a day working with nurses from MN West and a high school teacher



who will provide the wrap around services that Marshall Adult Basic Education initially implemented in their programming. At the end of the CNA course students complete 24 hours of clinical experience and test out at one of the MN West campuses. Students from MA-TEC and Marshall High School can enroll as well as any area student that would like to participate. Marshall Adult Basic Education and Private Industry Council work with young adult learners and adults to fill any remaining openings in the classes. School students in both programs also earn elective credit towards graduation.



Learning with the MacPhail Center

By Lisa Spieker, Media Specialist, Worthington Public Schools

In late September, the Worthington High School Orchestra began taking lessons with the MacPhail Center in Minneapolis, MN. No students were loaded up in buses -- instead they walked into the Media Center at about 4pm and sat down in front of our ITV system. There were a few problems getting it set up because the MacPhail Center likes to meet with students on a weekly basis. They normally provide private lessons with students in house, so we had to be patient while teachers were being found. It is a lot of work for Orchestra teacher, Melanie Loy, as she has to make sure that she sends out the music score to the teacher each week along with being on site when the class is taking place and making sure that students show up. Melanie says that students are picking up different skills from the teachers. Many students have said the sessions are intense. This would be due to the skill of these teachers for example they have played with famous orchestras and taught at the college level.



Prairie Elementary Offers "HOPE"

By Zachary Dingmann, Assistant Elementary Principal, Worthington Public Schools

All 1,200 students at Prairie Elementary gathered outside the school on Friday, October 10th to give "Hope" to those fighting cancer. For the first time, the students at Prairie Elementary participated in a week long Relay Recess program that raised almost \$6,000. The Relay Recess program, part of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, engages elementary school students in the fight against cancer through collecting donations along with educating students through activities that focus on four cancer education areas -- nutrition, physical activity, sun safety and tobacco prevention. The week ended with students participating in a Relay Recess walk and then gathering to spell out the word HOPE.



Students Learn About Native American Heritage

By Rebekah Gregg, Native American Liaison, Cedar Mountain Elementary School

Preserving the traditions of our culture and maintaining our history has been an important part of Global Explorations class. We didn't start any of these lessons until after the first snowfall because long ago stories were never shared until after the first snowfall -- because of all the preparations that needed to be done before the lengthy winters approached. Secure and relaxed in their tipis and winter lodges by the warm fire, stories and recollections were shared.

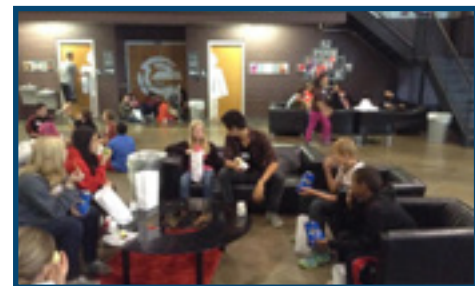
Along with the help of the Global Explorations Teacher, Mrs. Steve, we provided class time to all the students of Cedar Mountain Elementary School. We are delivering a hands-on learning experience by bringing in pieces from my collection of handmade Native American Regalia', including several different examples of regalia styles: Jingle Dress, Fancy Shawl and legends were told of what is believed by the people. There were also pictured examples of Men's Traditional, Fancy Dancer and Grass Dancers with legends told as each style of regalia' and dance have a legend that coincides with each form of regalia'.

Coming in January, there will be added examples of bead work and hanks of beads and even a hands-on project for student participation. Examples will be shown of quill work and the techniques of using quill and beading together. Students will learn about basketry and a weaving project will be offered to the students. Some of items included brain tanned hide and sinew that was used to make the clothing and various beaded items used by the Native Americans. Month by month, we plan on offering a new and different experiment of artifacts that will better help the students to have a real sense of what traditions and rituals are still being practiced today. All artifacts are part of my personal collection.

7th Grade Courage Retreat in Willmar

By Mike Miley, Middle School Principal, Willmar Public Schools

Our seventh graders participated in a Courage Retreat, led by Youth Frontiers out of Minneapolis, on Wednesday, November 5. The purpose of the retreat is to teach students to act with "Courage" at their school. Examples of this include standing up to bullying, including others, thinking about things from another person's point of view, and respecting adults. Students are lead through many whole group activities, team-building activities and also have time in small groups to discuss issues. The small groups were led by junior class volunteers from the high school. This event was paid for by our school fundraiser.



Skills for Life at Sleepy Eye

By Nichole Krenz, DCD Special Education Teacher, Sleepy Eye Public Schools

Work is a central part of adult life, consuming as much as half of our waking hours. People often identify themselves by the work that they do. A job can provide a sense of accomplishment and pride and have an enormous effect on our overall life satisfaction.

Sleepy Eye Public High School instructor Nichole Krenz creates a job-like setting within her classroom called **Skills for Life**. Students learn basic job skills they may otherwise never learn. Students load the soda machines and count the money, pick up recycling, wipe tables, clean up and run mail from the elementary to the high school.

By mimicking the working world inside the comforting walls of the school, students with special needs are taught valuable job skills in a non-threatening environment surrounded by friends and faculty.

"It's all about providing real-life job experiences for these students," Krenz explained. "I would love to see these students succeed at a job that hires them on after high school. This would be a chance to help them get ahead now."



Lakeview's Upstander Program

By Phil Lienemann, Principal, Lakeview Public Schools

In the summer of 2014, the Minnesota Legislation beefed up the "Bullying" Law, the Safe and Supportive Schools Act. With a better definition of bullying and requirements to delineate procedures for addressing reports, schools took various approaches to address the law.

At Lakeview, the Safe and Supportive Schools Committee created three tools: an "Administrative Steps: Bullying," a delineation of roles for parents, students, teachers, and administrators, and an Upstander program.

The Safe and Supportive Schools Committee, made of administration, guidance counselor, dean of students, and school social worker, wished to recognize the great things students are doing. Any adult or student in the building can recognize a student or staff member for being an Upstander.

Rather than being a bystander to bullying behaviors, Upstanders do good things in the school setting; the smallest action can make a difference. Each week, a small group of Upstanders are announced over the school public address system. The recognized Upstanders then receive a small token of appreciation in the office and a hearty "Thanks!" for their good actions in the school setting.

So far, the program has been received well, and the number of positive contributions to the school environment continues to grow. Likewise, to support the idea, staff members wear Upstander T-shirts every other Wednesday. The program has been so successful that other stakeholders, such as parents, have asked where they can get an Upstander T-shirt. "Be an Upstander!"



Upcoming Student Events



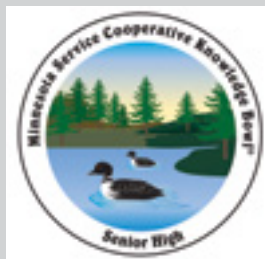
March 31, 2015
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