TEACHING TODAY MN
MINNESOTA'S K–12 EDUCATION CONNECTION
Winter 2015–16, Volume 1

Exchange Students

Meet our New Friends from Guatemala

Heidi Preslicka, Parent
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

Friendly Exchange

Prior Lake High School is participating in a new exchange program. This has been a successful program in Twin Oaks and Hidden Oaks Middle Schools. It allows students and families to broaden their view of the world through interaction of families from Guatemala. The program, Friendly Exchange, gives our students an opportunity to learn about a different country, its culture, customs and way of life. These students from Guatemala stay with a host family and attend schools for 11 weeks.

There are a total of 6 exchange students in Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools participating in the Friendly Exchange program: 2 attending Prior Lake High School, 3 at Twin Oaks Middle School and 1 at Hidden Oaks Middle School.

What makes this program unique is that they focus on younger children grades 5th grade through 9th. Parents in Guatemala send their children so they can improve upon their English skills. Sometimes kids come multiple years in a row. We have a student this year too. And he plans on coming for 4 years in a row. Friendly Exchange operates in Washington and Minnesota. My family has participated in the program 5 times. Our youngest of 5 children is hosting his exchange brother right now. The program almost always results in a wonderful life-long relationship.

The Minnesota families are asked to provide the students with unique Minnesota experiences — like a corn maze, ice skating, making a snow man (something our exchange student was especially excited for) and pumpkin carving. It is not "vacation" they come here to live a "Minnesota" life for 11 weeks, complete with winter coat and gloves. The students also enjoy the changing of the colors of the trees and our holiday "Thanksgiving" since these are things they do not see at their home. Many times the students are surprised at how similar their lives are. Sometimes the Minnesota kids are surprised that they have so many of the same things that we have — malls, McDonalds, stadiums for sports, jet skis, and Applebee's — just to name a few random things. But Guatemala has many things we don't — volcanos, the ocean beach,

Continued on Page 4

Monroe Elementary School is a 2015 Blue Ribbon School!

Mankato Area Public Schools' Monroe Elementary School has been designated a "National Blue Ribbon School" by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Monroe Elementary School is one of 335 schools recognized across the nation for high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap.

Monroe Elementary School received the award in the exemplary high performing schools category and was honored at a November recognition ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Nestled in the Minnesota River Valley, Monroe Elementary School is located in North Mankato and is one of eleven elementary schools in the Mankato Area Public School District.

Monroe Elementary is named after the fifth U.S. president, James Monroe, and was built in 1959. The school provides education for approximately 480 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Our student population consists of a diverse socioeconomic background. Remembering our district's mission of "assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world," we use positive behavior strategies, collaboration between students, parents and teachers and high expectations of behavior and learning to promote success and create lifelong learners.

Our purpose is to guide students to reach their goals by making strong connections with families and promoting a challenging, yet supportive learning environment. Teachers who believe that all students can and will learn, strong curricula and data for sound instructional decisions give us the magic elixir for academic success.

Families are the most important part of our school. We see our staff, students and community as part of our family. We support each other like family and support families like they are our own. When we operate this way, it leads to great things. We welcome all staff, students and parents in our building. We collaborate, support and rely on each other. We want what is best for all students. We have seen success but it's not enough. In 2011, we earned the title of being a Minnesota Reward school. Reward schools are the top 15 percent of Title I schools in Minnesota. We maintained our Reward school status again in 2013 and 2014, continuing our high levels of student achievement. Strong connections and

Continued on Page 4

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Friends from Guatemala

Continued from Page 1

and ancient Mayan ruins.

The program has been operating for 31 years! The coordinator from Guatemala, Miriam Lucia, was an exchange student in Minnesota many years ago. She will be arriving in Minnesota on Sunday to meet all the exchange students at Buck Hill for the annual Friendly Exchange skiing event.

Meet José — staying with 9th grader, Joey Barnard

José Carlos Lopez lives in Guatemala City, Guatemala with his parents, Hugo Lopez and Amparo Diaz, and sister Rosa. José is attending 9th grade at Prior Lake High School with his host brother, Joey Barnard. He is staying with the Barnard family (Dawn and Scott, and also Maria) for 11 weeks. In Guatemala, José attends private school at Castillo Córdova. José will return to Guatemala on December 12.

José enjoys soccer, basketball and bowling. He enjoys playing sports with his host brother, Joey and also plays guitar. He plays in a band and is competing in the talent show at his school. When not doing sports or guitar, he also likes to watch TV and listen to music.

His father works for a maintenance company for the industrial part of the sugar cane mills all over Central America. His mom is a doctor and has her own private practice. Joey has one sister who lives at home and goes to the University.

José is enjoying Prior Lake High School because it is so different from his Guatemala school.

Meet Emilio — staying with 9th grader, Branden Kroyer

Meet Emilio Gordillo from Retalhuleu, Guatemala. Emilio is staying with Rick and Mary Beth and family for 11 weeks this fall. Branden, a 9th grader at PLHS, is Emilio's host brother. Emilio will attend 9th grade until he leaves for home on December 12.

Emilio is 15 years old and goes to Colegio D'Antoni School. He has two brothers, Jose (11) Enrique (5) and parents Enrique and Estela. His parents own a sugar cane farm and they also raise cows, goats and horses. Emilio helps to take care of the animals.

Emilio likes to play soccer, go swimming and biking, going to movies, play ping pong, tennis, video games, going on vacations and hunting.

This is Emilio's second time staying with the Kroyer family. Last year, Emilio enjoyed swimming in Prior Lake, camping, canoeing, exploring caves, skiing, and hunting pheasant and deer. Last year he extended his stay with the Kroyers so he could experience snow and Christmas and a family trip to Texas, topped off with the Cotton Bowl game on New Year's Day.

If you would like to learn more or participate as a host family in future years, please contact Heidi Preslicka 612-875-6630 heidi@preslickastudio.com

priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us
(952) 226-0000

Monroe Elementary School

Continued from Page 1

collaboration are key to the success of each student. We believe all students can learn at high levels and provide the support needed for teachers to meet each student's needs.

Creating a positive school culture has been a significant part of our school's success. Allowing students and staff to interact in a positive manner has led to a school that is friendly and welcoming. All members of the school feel valued and respected, giving us the perfect combination for success. Part of our climate has been developed through learning communities and providing staff opportunities for professional growth. Continuous Improvement Coaches work with staff to examine student data, support instructional best practices, research interventions and promote strong connections. They also provide leadership and knowledge in the utilization of the Response to Interventions (RtI) framework.

We annually provide opportunities for students to flex their talents and abilities outside of the classroom. Students participate in Field Day, competing against other classes in athletic events. We hold music concerts for students to sing cultural songs and play instruments from around the world. Our Art Fair allows students to showcase their fine arts creativity, and the Science Fair gives students in grades 3–5 a chance to try their hand at being a scientist.

Title I programing is available to students who are in need of academic support in the areas of math and reading. Interventions and extra support are given to students who need additional reinforcement for reading or math skills. For example, our Early Reading Intervention program targets struggling Kindergarten students and provides intensive small group reading instruction.

In addition to Title I, we have incorporated the Minnesota Reading Corp. into our reading interventions. This program provides support for those students that are in need of a small boost in reading instructional support. It targets those who do not qualify for Title I, but are still in need of additional support in reading.

Monroe participates in the Backpack Food Program. Funded by local donations and grants, this program provides a weekend's supply of food for students. At the end of each week, teachers place the food in the students' backpacks for them to take home. All students in the school can sign up for this food assistance program.

All students participate in Junior Achievement taught by volunteers and local business professionals. Junior Achievement maintains a belief in the potential of young people. The mission is to respect the talents, creativity, perspectives and backgrounds of all individuals.

www.me.isd77.org
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Apply for a Grant

Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants provide matching grants to local PTAs to support in-school and after-school arts enhancement programs. Grants may be used to establish or enhance arts programs in one or more of the following categories: dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts, and special artist. Grants up to $1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted January 4 through March 11, 2016.

Website: www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3101

Academic Enrichment Grants

The McCarthey Dressman Education Foundation offers Academic Enrichment Grants designed to develop classroom and extracurricular programs that improve student learning. The foundation considers proposals that foster understanding, deepen students' knowledge, and provide opportunities to expand awareness of the world around them. Grants up to $10,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Online applications are accepted January 15 through April 15, annually.

Website: mccartheydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants

Captain Planet Foundation Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) funds innovative hands-on environmental projects to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their homes, schools, and communities. The foundation's mission is to promote and support high-quality educational programs that enable children and youth to understand and appreciate our world through learning experiences that engage them in active, hands-on projects to improve the environment. Grants ranging from $500 to $2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due January 31 and September 30, annually.

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants

GRO1000 Grassroots Grants

ScottsMiracle-Gro provides GRO1000 Grassroots Grants to help foster community spirit and public service. Grassroots Grants are awarded to local communities to help bring edible gardens, flower gardens, and public green spaces to neighborhoods across the United States.

Grants up to $1,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted February 1 through February 19, 2016.

Website: scottsmiraclegro.com/corporate-responsibility/gro1000

Mission Nutrition: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The purpose of Mission Nutrition is to create planned lunchroom activities and educate school children about healthy nutrition. Proposed projects must be planned with the intention of offering activities to all students in the school building. Lunchtime-based projects are preferred because they offer access to all students.

Grants of $2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted February 1, 2015, and until funding is exhausted.

Website: www.chefannfoundation.org/get-involved/our-grants

More Grants on Page 14

WEM Awards at District 197

Travis Andries, Communications Specialist
School District 197

Sibley teacher Eric Friberg receives Outstanding Educator Award and $15,000

Eric Friberg, a biology teacher at Henry Sibley High in School District 197, has been selected as a recipient of the 2015 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Teacher Achievement, an honor that is accompanied by a $15,000 award.

The Outstanding Educator Awards honor six Minnesota educators each year. Friberg is one of two teachers in the state receiving the Teacher Achievement award, which recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning, as evidenced by student achievement.

Friberg, a 2006 Sibley graduate, was presented with the award in front of his colleagues, parents and grandparents at Henry Sibley on April 21.

"It was really a surprise to receive this award," Friberg said. "I find it so easy to talk with students in class, but I was humbled by having to speak to my peers, my parents and grandparents. It felt great to have the support of my co-workers and family."

Friberg has been teaching at Henry Sibley for four years. In addition to biology and Advanced Placement (AP) Biology classes, Friberg also teaches a biology course for students in the English Language Learner (ELL) program. He is driven to close gaps in education between students of different ethnicities.

He traveled to Thailand to teach science in a rural village. With no shared language between himself and his students at the time, Friberg worked to develop relevant and engaging biology lessons that were accessible to all the students. Friberg has also spent time in Guatemala improving his fluency in Spanish.

"The students in Mr. Friberg's classroom excel because of his organization, knowledge and the passion he displays," said associate principal Tom Orth. "He is truly an artist; utilizing questioning techniques that help his students discover solutions on their own."

Friberg credits his colleagues with helping him continue to develop his skills as an educator. Collaborations with teachers within the science department have been especially impactful for Friberg, including conversations regarding instructional strategies with fellow biology teacher Jennifer Nippert and physics teacher Peter Bohacek.

"The science department has probably been the most influential on my growth," Friberg said. "We are continually sharing ideas, offering each other feedback, and pushing each other to try something new."

In addition to his classroom teaching, Friberg coaches the varsity Nordic skiing teams at Henry Sibley. Through aggressive fundraising under his leadership, the team was able to purchase 40 pairs of skis for team use, which has allowed all students to participate regardless of their ability to purchase equipment.

Educators are nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members.

Garlough teacher Heather Wilsey named WEM Regional Award recipient

Heather Wilsey, a first grade teacher at Garlough Environmental Magnet School, has been selected as a recipient of a 2015 WEM Outstanding Educator Regional Award for Ethics in Education, an honor that is accompanied by a $1,500 award.

The Outstanding Educator Awards honoring six Minnesota educators at the state level each year. In addition to the six statewide honors, additional educators are selected as regional honorees. The Ethics in Education award recognizes educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

Last year was Wilsey's first as a first grade teacher, having previously taught second grade at Garlough, and credits the collaborative nature of her fellow teachers with smoothing the transition to a new grade level.

"Deborah Krohn and I have opened the wall between our classrooms and have been co-teaching throughout the year," Wilsey said. "I've really been able to grow by watching her teach and working together closely. It is encouraging that all the staff members here at Garlough are open to trying new things and finding what is most effective for our students."

"Mrs. Wilsey understands that her role as a teacher is not just about academics," shared a parent. "She focuses on creating a community in her classroom, teaching kindness, respect for others, compassion and social skills."

Wilsey is the third Garlough teacher to receive a WEM award in the last three years, joining Krohn and Jennifer Parker, who received statewide Ethics in Education awards in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

Wilsey has spent six of her 12 years as an educator in District 197, having previously taught at Pilot Knob Elementary and Somerset Elementary. She also spent two years living in Ecuador through the Peace Corps, gaining a valuable cultural and linguistic perspective.

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Margaret Kleven, Palmer Lake Elementary School, Selected Minnesota 2016 National Outstanding Assistant Principal

Margaret (Margo) Kleven, assistant principal of Palmer Lake Elementary School in Brooklyn Park and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is Minnesota's 2016 National Outstanding Assistant Principal. MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) present this prestigious award.

The National Outstanding Assistant Principal program was established in 2011 to honor assistant principals who are doing a superb job in their roles. MESPA and NAESP are committed to preparing assistant principals to step into the principal role. This program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) schooling and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal.

"I believe in people. I believe in the work. And I believe we will change lives," wrote Margaret Kleven in her National Outstanding Assistant Principal application. "We can no longer 'hope' we are providing successful learning opportunities for students . . . there is simply too much at stake, especially at a struggling school like Palmer Lake Elementary. We must dig deeper, and find proof that our energies are yielding the results we so desperately want. If our energies are not indicating results, then we must abandon what isn't working, and determine what might work. I believe this is the area where I have had significant impact on student success — engaging in a best practice that ensures equitable student achievement."

Kleven's two most significant accomplishments as an assistant principal include increasing Palmer Lake's reading proficiency on the MCAs by almost 10%, the largest gain of all 17 elementary schools in Osseo Area Schools, and leading the implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention Framework, which has increased positive relationships at Palmer Lake and reduced office discipline referrals by over 50%. She utilizes a variety of best practices that make her an outstanding assistant principal. In order to remain visible in her building, she "adopts" a single class for an entire week to generate a real connection with the teacher and students. Another way she connects with the day-to-day rhythm of the building is by facilitating or co-facilitating teacher collaborative work teams, which helps her "stay in the teaching game."

"As we began to tackle the difficult work of not letting Palmer Lake get labeled as an at risk school, I simply began to bring my friends and colleagues into the action and decision making process," said Kleven of the teacher-leaders at her school. "The work was too grand to not include multiple perspectives and energies; there was no way the administrative team could do it alone. We all needed to link arms and help with the heavy lifting. We needed additional leaders, and luckily, our building had a ton of prospects. Over the last three years, I have invited, pushed, encouraged, supported, hugged, coached, role played, practiced, cried with, scripted, and videotaped numerous staff members through their own journey of leadership."

"Margo is one of those rare individuals blessed with a broad and deep skill set that allows her to move effortlessly through the most complex of challenges," said Dr. Tim Brown, principal at Rush Creek Elementary in Osseo Area Schools.

Billy Chan, principal of Palmer Lake Elementary School, said of Kleven in his letter of recommendation, "Her commitment to enhance and change lives, through the field of education, has unfolded in a unique career path: mathematics educator, q-comp coordinator, and administration." He continued, "Because of her willingness to be a learner, Margo maintains high credibility with our staff. By being vulnerable herself, she silently invites others to take risks, creating a collaborative and progressive culture."

Billy Chan summed up Margo Kleven best when he said, "Margo exemplifies quality leadership. She inspires others for the greater good, develops meaningful relationships, works collaboratively, is a reflective practitioner, a problem solver, and provides a clear sense of purpose for her work. It is when you couple this with a caring heart and her infectious sense of humor, that you realize you may just have the National Outstanding Assistant Principal of the year."

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Jim Borgschagtz, Prinicipal, Lake City

MESPA is dedicated to promoting and improving education for children and youth, strengthening the role as educational leader for elementary and middle level principals, and collaborating with partners in education to assist in achieving these goals.

Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association
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Student Contests and Awards

InvenTeams

InvenTeams is a national grants initiative of the Lemelson-MIT program that is designed to excite high school students to cultivate their creativity and experience invention. InvenTeam students rely on inquiry hands-on problem solving as they integrate lessons from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to develop invention prototypes.

Grants up to $10,000 are awarded annually, with approximately 15 grants available. Excite Awards recipients receive travel, food, and lodging for one educator to attend EurekaFest. Winning InvenTeams receive room and board for eight team members 9six students and two chaperones) to attend EurekaFest.

Deadline: Initial applications are due March 7, 2016. If selected to continue to the next step, final applications are due September 6, 2016.

Website: lemelson.mit.edu/inventeams

Extreme Redesign Contest 3-D Printing Challenge

The Extreme Redesign Contest 3-D Printing Challenge is an annual competition open to students worldwide. Students work alone or in a team of two to redesign a product for greater accessibility, eco-friendliness, or human empowerment. Winning entries must be creative, mechanically sound, and realistically achievable.

Deadline: Entries are due February 4, 2016.

Website: www.stratasys.com/industries/education/extreme-redesign/contest-rules

Letters About Literature

The *Letters About Literature* contest is a reading and writing promotion program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Students read a fiction or nonfiction book, poem, or speech, and then write a letter to the author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. Students are encouraged to explain how that author's work changed their way of thinking about the world and others.

Deadline: Entries for grades 4 through 8 are due January 11, 2016.

Website: www.read.gov/letters

Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest

The *National Poetry Out Loud Competition* invites high school students in grades 9 through 12, as well as eighth graders that participate in high school-level classes, to compete in local, state, and national finals in the recitation of poetry. Prizes are awarded to winning students and their schools at the state and national levels.

States hold their competitions by mid-March (*see* www.poetryoutloud.org/competition/state-finals for more information). Following the state finals, the National Finals will be held in Washington, DC at the end of April, annually.

Website: www.poetryoutloud.org/about

World of 7 Billion Student Video Contest

Population Education is sponsoring a video contest open to all middle and high school students in grades 6 through 12. Contest entrants create a short video of 60 seconds or less that illustrates the connection between population growth and one of the three following global challenges: Deforestation, Public Health, and Water Scarcity. Cash prizes are awarded in the three topic areas.

Deadline: Entries are due February 25, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. (EST).

Website: www.worldof7billion.org/student-video-contest

The DuPont Challenge Science Essay Competition: Middle School/High School Divisions

The DuPont Challenge aims to help increase science literacy among students and motivate them to excel in communicating ideas in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Students write and submit essays that address a topic of their interest within four categories of challenges. Students compete in the Junior Division for grades 6, 7, and 8, or the Senior Division for grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Sponsoring teachers of first-, second-, and third-place winners in Junior and Senior Divisions receive an expenses-paid trip with their student to Walt Disney World Resort and NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Orlando, Florida.

Deadline: Essays are accepted through January 31, 2016.

Website: thechallenge.dupont.com/essay/teachers

Items of Interest

American Youth Leadership Program, Cyprus: Youth and Adult Participants

The American Youth Leadership Program in Cyprus is an international exchange that offers US students and adult mentors with the opportunity to explore the civic and cultural traditions of Cyprus, with an educational focus on the environment and climate change.

The 27-day program includes an orientation in Washington, DC, and educational tours, site visits, and service projects throughout Cyprus. Activities include daily language classes, group dialogues with peers, visits with community and government leaders, visits to university and government-sponsored research and conservation facilities, and recreational and cultural opportunities.

Deadline: Youth applications are due January 17, 2016. Adult mentor applications are due January 8, 2016.

Website: www.legacyintl.org/our-programs/american-youth-leadership-program/interested-in-applying-aylp/

College Board Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts

The College Board presents an annual award to public and private schools serving students in grades 6 through 12 that have implemented an arts program that promotes student learning and creativity in exemplary and innovative ways.

Three schools (one school from each category) will receive $5,000 each, with one school named national winner to receive an additional $2,500.

Deadline: All applications are due in April, annually.

Website: artsaward.collegeboard.org/award.php

National High School Journalist of the Year Scholarships

Journalist of the Year Scholarships are awarded to outstanding high school student journalists through a tiered competition. Students first enter their state-level Journalism Education Association (JEA) competition. State-level winners then compete for up to seven national scholarship awards.

One national student Journalist of the Year receives a $3,000 scholarship. Up to six national student runners-up each receive a $850 scholarship.

Deadlines vary by state. All state-level contest coordinators must send their winning state entry to JEA national headquarters to be received by March 15, annually.

Website: jea.org/home/awards-honors/journalist-of-the-year

Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award

The Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award is an annual award given to a school library that has conducted an exemplary program or program series in the humanities during the prior school year. Any elementary or middle school library or any school library program in the United States that serves children in any combination of kindergarten through grade 8 and is staffed by a state-certified librarian are eligible for the award.

Awards include a $5,000 cash award, a plaque, and the promotion of the winner as a model program for other school libraries.

Deadline: Applications are accepted from March 1 through May 6, 2016.

Website: www.ala.org/programming/jaffarianaward

Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award

The Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award rewards excellence in the development and delivery of technology programs. Programs that focus on aerospace or aeronautics are given priority to other programs. Applicants must demonstrate how their programs ultimately benefit the students in a school or organization.

The winner receives a cash award of $1,000.

Deadline: Applications are due January 15, 2016.

Website: www.amfcse.org

National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Programs Awards recognize and support outstanding after-school and out-of-school arts- and humanities-based programs for underserved children and youth that operate on a regular basis in the afternoon, on weekends, or during the summer. This annual award is presented to 12 programs that best meet all award criteria. The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities presents the awards, with a ceremony at the White House.

Grants of $10,000 are awarded to 12 programs.

Deadline: Online applications are due February 2, 2016.

Website: www.nahyp.org/how-to-apply

Middle School Tech Clubs Provide Solid Experience For Students

Edina Public Schools Communication Department

When students get to middle school, there is new responsibility in the form of technology, namely the fact that students use their own devices. With that added responsibility comes an added risk of cracked screens and other related mishaps.

At Valley View and South View middle schools, students don't have to go far to find help when those problems occur. In fact, there is a group at both schools dedicated to helping peers solve technology-related problems, while simultaneously indulging their own interest in tech. In its fifth year, the SMART Bar Technology Club is a "student-driven" group of students with a common interest in technology.

"The technology club is meant to be flexible. We start by seeing what the students want to do, and we learn about it together," said Robb Schwartz, a technology paraprofessional and SMART Bar advisor at South View. "These students are native technology users," he said. "Their cumulative knowledge about the latest technology is greater than mine."

Each student creates a personal website, which helps build web design skills while also acting as a journal for the year's activities. When a student has an idea of an activity for the club to pursue, he/she is encouraged to explain it to the class to see if it piques their interest.

One project Schwartz has led in the past was for students to rebuild a computer. Schwartz disassembled a desktop computer and gave its parts to students, with the challenge to rebuild the computer and see if it works. Drew Cole, Valley View ninth grade physics teacher and SMART Bar advisor added the possibility of students learning to code their own apps.

The activities and weekly meetings are only part of the club's tasks throughout the year, however. "The SMART Bar is the customer service part of the club," said Schwartz. Several times each week, students set up a counter where their peers can come to get help with technology-related problems. This could include fixing Chromebook screens or helping solve accessibility issues.

Ethan Emmons (pictured), a South View ninth grader, is starting his fourth year in the SMART Bar Tech Club. "I like computers, so when I saw that there was a club for it I was so excited," he said. "It's a great way to build your computer skills, and it helped me get a job this summer," said Ethan, who was an intern with District Media and Technology Services over the summer. The internship, he said, "was so fun!"

"The club builds your skill and your technology reputation," Ethan said. "Those are the two things you need to get a job — skill and a good reputation."

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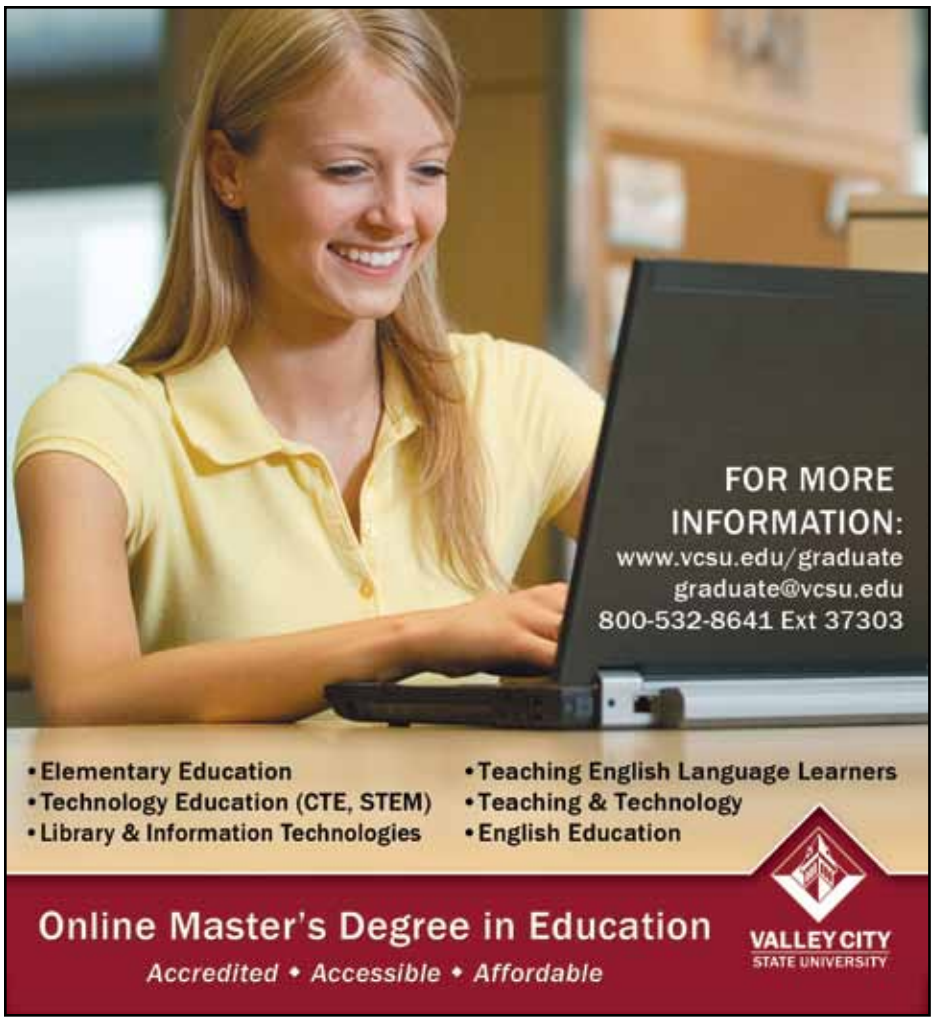

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Future Emergency Medical Responders Visit Guard Base for Training

Fridley Public Schools

The 133rd Airlift Wing of the Minnesota National Guard hosted Fridley High School students on October 22, 2015 at Fort Snelling. The students are part of the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program at the high school and trained with the medical personnel teams of the Guard.

Teacher Eric Anderson began the program last year for juniors and seniors with the help of trainer Joe Grafft. At the time, it only featured EMR (formerly known as First Responders) training. EMT training was added this year. Both are certification programs. It was Grafft who served as liaison between Fridley students and the 133rd.

Anderson first became involved as a nurse's aide, himself, while a student of Browerville High School. He initially wanted to go to college to become an athletic trainer, but realized he loved coaching and teaching and pursued that instead. This early training has helped him teach these classes.

Seeing a C150 plane up close, talking to emergency personnel and taking part in medical scenarios were the highlights of the experience for the students. Those in the program are exploring potential careers as EMTs, paramedics, nurses and doctors. "Several of them are most likely going to be in medical careers of some sort, or police or fire." Anderson said.

The students in both classes are at the highest level of CPR certification through the American Heart Association - Healthcare Provider Level. The program received a $5000 grant from the American Heart Association last spring and that helped purchase mannequins, AEDs (automated external defibrillator) and different equipment.

"We have kids who want to be physical therapists, occupational therapists, physicians and nurses. A lot of them realize these certifications will look good on college transcripts and give them a step up to others schools," said Anderson

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Coon Rapids Biomedical Sciences Program Inspires Success

Derrick Williams
Communication Specialist
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Imagine the scene: it's the first day of school and a group of Coon Rapids High School (CRHS) students walk into a fresh classroom that'll be home to their brand new Principles of Biomedical Sciences class. As the students find their seats, their eyes fall on a tragic scene.

"[The students] were immediately captivated," CRHS biomedical program coordinator Leah Sams said.

The riveting scene they witnessed was that of Anna Garcia, a fictional person portrayed by a mannequin, who lay deceased on the floor. The area was sealed off with crime tape, furniture knocked over, and blood, vomit and pills littered the floor near the body. For the next two trimesters, students used crime scene evidence and Garcia's medical history to determine how she died.

The Biomedical Sciences Program, a part of the national Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program, debuted at CRHS this school year and transitioned the school into a biomedical specialty school.

Coon Rapids' Biomedical Program Sciences curriculum is a sequence of courses, which follows a proven hands-on, real-world, problem-solving approach to learning. Students explore the concepts of human medicine and are introduced to topics such as physiology, genetics, microbiology and public health. Through activities, like dissecting a heart, students examine the processes, structures and interactions of the human body – often playing the role of biomedical professionals. They also explore the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease, working collaboratively to investigate and design innovative solutions to the health challenges of the 21st century such as fighting cancer with nanotechnology.

Why offer biomedical sciences? According to CRHS Principal Annette Ziegler, data suggests that job opportunities in the healthcare field will increase by 62 percent between 2010 and 2020.

"It's a growing field with lots of different career opportunities," she said. "And it's of great interest to our students."

From nursing and medical research to medical device manufacturing and forensics, there are nearly endless possibilities under the biomedical sciences career umbrella.

Ziegler and Sams also pointed out that Minnesota is home to major medical companies.

"With the education they receive [in this program], some students may be able to get an entry level job at one of these corporations while they work toward a college degree," Ziegler said.

Speaking of college, thanks to being part of PLTW, this year's Principles of Biomedical Sciences class has already had an end-of-course assessment, which, if a student scores high enough, will allow the class to count for college credit.

How did CRHS' first Principles of Biomedical Sciences class fare? A whopping 87 percent of the students who took the test passed, Sams said, meaning they met the testing criteria necessary for college credit.

"This program gets them ready for college while they are still in the comfort of a high school classroom," Sams said. "The teachers are still there to challenge them, and they can do it at a time where it doesn't cost a lot of money."

The Principles of Biomedical Sciences class was the first of four advanced courses to be implemented in the coming years, with one new class being added each year. Next year's new course is Human Body Systems, followed by Medical Interventions and then the capstone Biomedical Innovations after that. A total of seven sections will be available for the first and second year classes next school year, Sams said.

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Geometry in Construction

South Washington County Schools

Beginning in the 2014–15 school year, sophomores at Park High School had the opportunity to take a unique math class thanks to a grant from 3M. Geometry in Construction *was designed to provide students with the chance to apply geometry concepts through the construction of a number of different items including storage sheds, wooden folding chairs, cement stepping stones, and more. Technology Teacher Bonnie Thoe-Austin and Math Teacher Megan Diediker taught the class and assisted the students in the construction process.*

By Megan Diediker

The curriculum is designed to keep spiraling back to previous material so students who may have struggled at first or even missed certain concepts will continue to see the concepts throughout the entire year.

The way the curriculum is arranged is amazing. I have already seen students catch on to material taught in the first unit, triangle similarity now as a result of learning right triangle trig because each unit includes material from the previous unit. Additionally, every quiz is a group quiz. Students are expected to work together and then when they are done I will grade their quizzes right in front of them. This gives them immediate feedback and in some cases I ask them questions in order to catch where the misconceptions occurred. This immediate feedback makes it far more meaningful than when students turn it in and get it back a couple days later. It also allows me to change my lesson right away the next day if needed.

There is no book for this class. Everything is done with a problem bank of word problems (about 100 questions each unit) and hands on activities. Additionally there are only 8 units to be covered over the entire year. I love this because I don't feel pressured to get through so much material. None of the lessons involve me standing in front of the classroom more than 20 minutes. This is such a hands on course that students drive the lessons. Between the warm up of contextualized construction questions and the investigative activities I really don't have to do a lot of lectures. Students discover the concepts and we take short notes on "yellow pages" which students can use on tests. Since students know they can use

Continued on Page 14

In May 2014, 3M awarded Park High School a $19,000 Ingenuity Grant to spark student interest and achievement in mathematics. The technology and math departments use the grant to replicate the proven ***Geometry in Construction*** program developed by Loveland High School in Colorado.

In Larimer County, construction-related careers account for more than 20% of the private workforce, yet there existed an unmet local demand for construction workers at all levels of the industry. Business and industry representatives from the field who met to discuss the problem stressed the need to hire competent employees who possess solid math skills and a foundation of knowledge in green building techniques, construction, and leadership and employability skills.

In response to identified needs for integrating academic and CTE skills and knowledge, two teachers at Loveland High School in Loveland, Colorado, created and implemented an integrated, contextualized geometry and construction program, *Geometry in Construction*, in the 2006–2007 school year. *Geometry in Construction*—geometry taught in the context of construction—is team-taught by mathematics and construction teachers. The content of the traditional geometry curriculum, which is aligned with the National Common Core Standards, was reorganized to allow the geometry concepts to be taught in the sequence required for building a house, the annual capstone event for the *Geometry in Construction* program.

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Waconia Public Schools — Under Construction

Building a Better Future for Students & Community

The next two years will be filled with positive changes for Waconia Public Schools. Since the successful referendum last year, school and community leaders have been busy working with architects, MnDOT, Carver County and the city of Waconia to develop better learning environments for all Waconia-area Public Schools' students.

Groundbreaking for Laketown Elementary School

The groundbreaking and unveiling of the name of ISD 110'S new elementary school took place on the very windy evening of Oct. 12. With gold painted shovels, Superintendent Patrick Devine joined a group of community leaders to ceremonially dig the first hole. Several students and Principal Nancy Wittman unveiled the sign, announcing the name of the new school: Laketown Elementary.

Laketown Principal Nancy Wittman is a veteran when it comes to opening new schools. In 2005 she opened Victoria Elementary School in the Schools of Eastern Carver County. In an interview after the groundbreaking she expressed her excitement at the opportunity to open another.

"It is a privilege to serve our children, families and this community in opening District 110's newest school. It is such an exciting time for everyone, and I feel very honored to be a part of this chapter in a school district so rich in tradition," Wittman said.

Wittman expressed her delight over the work of the design team. "The team members' collective vision for the physical space is well-thought out with an eye for 21st-century learning. They created warm and inviting learning spaces, paying special attention to the beauty of the school's natural setting.

Wittman said a focus now, with the addition of the third elementary school, is to provide excellent learning opportunities and interactive learning environments. "Waconia Schools is committed to providing high-quality staff, and excellent curriculum and tools at all schools."

"New" High School

In May, the Waconia School Board discussed and approved a final design for the remodeling of the new high school complex. The board's priority was to keep the plan within budget and deliver the expectations of the community and school district. "These changes will make a big impact on our school, our community and our students," says Superintendent Patrick Devine.

There are some exciting changes that will impact the greater community. The new high school theater will have seating for 1,000 and be located near the gym. Outdoor athletics will move to the high school campus and will include

Continued on Page 14

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Early Childhood Family Center Earns Green Award

The Early Childhood Family Center (ECFC) has been awarded LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

The ECFC, which was completed in 2012, employs many sustainable design features, including:

- a solar panel system that converts solar radiation into electric power and solar thermal to heat water
- a light color and high-reflectance cool roof
- low-emitting materials, mold prevention, indoor air quality management and efficient appliances
- stormwater management plan
- water-efficient and low-flow plumbing fixtures
- high-efficiency HVAC system
- automatic lighting controls
- abundant natural light in classrooms provided by expansive windows and solar tubes

The ECFC provides a healthy learning environment to help children from birth to age 5 develop a solid foundation for learning. Each week, about 400 families use the facility, which is inclusive of children with a wide range of abilities. The ECFC offers classes for infants and toddlers and their parents, preschool students, and adults working toward a GED or learning English.

www.stillwater.k12.mn.us
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Careers in Green Construction

Training in green practices is more important for some occupations than for others. Specialty trade workers—who need to be proficient in installing energy- and water-efficient appliances and who might use new techniques—usually require more. The design occupations, such as architects and engineers, require a considerable amount of education and training specific to green construction.

Architects design buildings and other structures. They are responsible for the overall look of buildings, but an architect's work goes far beyond appearance: Buildings also must be functional, safe, and economical, and must suit the needs of the people who use them.

Architects use computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) software and building information modeling technologies to design and manage projects. They often work closely with engineers, urban planners, interior designers, landscape architects, and other professionals. Architects spend a great deal of their time coordinating information from, and the work of, others engaged in the same project.

The work of architects is critical to determining how green a building is. For example, architects designing a green building might devise ways to maximize the building's energy efficiency. To accomplish this, they might apply daylighting principles and design a building with large banks of windows that face the sun. Or because buildings consume significantly more energy as they grow in size, the architects might design a building with little extra space.

Civil engineers design and supervise the construction of roads, buildings, airports, tunnels, dams, bridges, and water supply and sewage systems. Their work requires them to consider many factors, from the construction costs and expected lifetime of a project to government regulations and environmental hazards. The major specialties of civil engineering are structural, water resources, construction, transportation, and geotechnical engineering.

The knowledge civil engineers possess allows them to be involved in just about every part of green building design. They might work on issues as diverse as erosion control and traffic flow patterns. By adopting green practices in every piece of a building, civil engineers can ensure that the final product is environmentally friendly.

Electrical engineers develop, test, and supervise the manufacture of electrical equipment. They focus on the generation and supply of power and specialize in areas such as power systems engineering or electrical equipment manufacturing.

Electrical engineers frequently design the lighting systems of buildings. The importance of energy efficiency in green buildings places a premium on well-trained electrical engineers. For example, electrical engineers might work closely with architects to plan areas of a building where daylighting is the primary source of light. They may use sensors that automatically trigger traditional lighting only when the daylight is insufficient, thereby helping to reduce energy usage.

Landscape architects plan the location of roads and walkways and the arrangement of flowers, shrubs, and trees. They analyze the natural elements of a site, such as the climate, soil, drainage, vegetation, and slope of the land. Landscape architects also assess existing buildings, roads, walkways, and utilities to determine what improvements are necessary. At all stages, they evaluate the project's impact on the local ecosystem.

Landscape architects who work on green building sites apply their expertise to plan attractive scenery while also conserving water. To do this, they practice xeriscaping, or using local plants that require less water. Landscape architects working on green buildings also might plan drainage channels to diffuse rainwater throughout planting beds.

Mechanical engineers work on power-producing machines, such as electric generators, internal combustion engines, and steam and gas turbines. They also might work on machines that consume power, such as refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment, machine tools, material-handling systems, elevators and escalators, and industrial production equipment. Some mechanical engineers design tools that other engineers need for their work.

Mechanical engineers can specialize in many different types of equipment. When designing green buildings, they are consulted on any proposed equipment. Mechanical engineers specializing in air-conditioning systems, for example, would be able to provide valuable input on the strengths and weaknesses of different setups. They also might install systems to record and measure energy savings.

Urban planners develop long- and short-term plans for the use of land and the growth and revitalization of urban, suburban, and rural communities. They help local officials alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems by recommending locations for roads, schools, and other infrastructure. Urban planners also suggest zoning regulations for private property and work with developers to meet those regulations.

Some planners might help make decisions about protecting ecologically sensitive regions. They are involved in environmental issues, including pollution control, wetland preservation, forest conservation, and the location of new landfills.

Urban planners specializing in green development work with local authorities to develop zoning areas in which new buildings are required to meet standards of environmental efficiency. They also help guide infrastructure additions, such as new roads, to benefit the maximum number of people possible. When determining the ideal location for a green building, urban planners work closely with the rest of the building design staff.

From the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Geometry in Construction Continued from Page 11

their yellow pages on their tests it forces me to keep my notes simple and students to pay close attention during lectures; if a student is absent he or she usually finds their elbow partner to write down what was missed. I also believe that because students are allowed to use "yellow pages" on their test that it gives them added confidence.

Making a difference!

1. Students gain confidence that carries over into other aspects of their life because for the first time they are having success in a math class and school is enjoyable again. Additionally, in the shop they are learning how to use power tools that they may never have learned how to use before which gives students a sense of accomplishment and confidence.
2. Students are forced to work with all different types of peers (especially in the shop). They learn how to communicate and appreciate different personalities and really become a family.
3. Most of our students don't particularly enjoy math and so having the hour of construction in the shop is a motivator to work and get the math done so they can go into the shop. We don't use NOT going in the shop as any sort of punishment . . . instead of telling a student they can't go in the shop to work I tell Bonnie "hey this kid is not getting their stuff done can you talk to them?" She finds a time while the student is working during the construction hour to talk to the student. It has really worked for us. She always finds a way to connect with students that I can't seem to reach at the moment. Which is a testimony not only to her being a fantastic educator, but also shows that kids brains think differently and sometimes Bonnie's way of thinking works better for explaining things. At other times mine does the trick.
4. truly believe that because our projects HAVE to be completed, in other words we have people counting on us that are buying our playhouses, sheds, chairs, and other projects students don't have the option not to do it. Having a deadline and not having the option to just "take a zero" is a huge piece to the success of this class and the confidence students feel after accomplishing their goal.
5. Bonnie and I are very energetic teachers. We love to tell stories and laugh a lot so the energy in our classroom is different than any other classroom. Students see not only a respectful and professional relationship but they also see two friends who truly enjoy what they do. This is so important for kids to watch and see. I believe that this year our reputation from last year of being understanding teachers along with the fact that the class lends itself to be very fun allows all of our students to be successful, especially the students who have struggled in the past either academically or behaviorally.
6. Our students have used us a references when applying for jobs. This class functions much like a real-world job experience and we encourage them to put us on their applications as we can testify about work habits and skills that they possess.

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Waconia Under Construction

Continued from Page 11

ample parking. The turf competition field will be encircled by the track. The campus will include ponds both to provide beauty and irrigation for the property.

High School Academic Areas

WHS will have 70 teaching stations to accommodate up to 1,600 students. The remodeled spaces and new addition will accommodate the educational program needs for all WHS classes.

The new addition will include:

- A commons/cafeteria area for a 2,000-student high school
- A three-station gym off of the main commons
- A 1,000-seat auditorium with a balcony off of the main commons
- A new kitchen serving area
- A new office area with a secure entrance
- New band and choir rooms
- New industrial technology classrooms
- New locker rooms
- Nine new science rooms (in addition to one existing room)
- Hallway traffic flow solutions including enclosed courtyards

Fitness, activities and grounds

In addition to academic spaces, the new high school will have new or renovated areas for fitness and activities, including a large fitness/weight room, a gymnastics gym space and a large wrestling room.

Since the referendum, more is known about Minnesota Department of Transportation plans to extend County Road 10 along the west side of the new high school, providing better access to the school. This required a reconfiguration of the activities and athletic fields, including:

- A new competition track
- A turf sports field inside the track area
- Four new multipurpose soccer/lacrosse/football fields (2 are sand/peatbased fields)
- Two new baseball fields
- Eight new tennis courts
- Lots of new parking and roadways for the traffic flow

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Grants

Continued from Page 4

Healthy Lifestyle Grants

The Children's Obesity Fund seeks to educate parents and children about the rising obesity rates in America, reverse the statistics and dangerous trends, and prevent the next generation from continuing down the alarmingly unhealthy road. The fund strives to increase awareness and understanding of what it takes to be a strong, vigorous child by supporting programs and organizations that work to make a difference in children's health.

Deadline: Applications accepted year-round.

Website: www.childrensobesityfund.org/grantfundraising-faq

Kinder Morgan Foundation Grants

The Kinder Morgan Foundation awards grants to programs that benefit kindergarten through grade 12 youth and focus on science, math, art, and music. The goal of the foundation is to help these students become engineers, educators, and musicians who will support diverse communities in the future.

Awards range from $1,000 to $5,000.

Deadline: Applications are due the 10th of every other month beginning in January.

Website: www.kindermorgan.com/community

Toshiba America Grant Program for 6-12 Science and Math Educators

Toshiba America Foundation seeks to support teachers by providing funds to support classroom projects. The foundation strongly encourages projects planned and led by individual teachers or teams of teachers for their own classrooms. Successful projects tap into the natural curiosity of students, enable students to frame their own scientific questions, and incorporate the expertise of community partners. Applications must be for project-based learning.

Deadline: Grades 6 through 12 applications are accepted year-round. Requests for grants of more than $5,000 are due August 1 and February 1, annually.

Website: www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp

Instrumental Music Grants

The Fender Music Foundation awards instruments and equipment to eligible music instruction programs that are part of US public schools or qualified nonprofit organizations. The instruments and equipment are lightly used, blemished, or otherwise imperfect and have been collected from manufacturers and retailers. The foundation provides information on specific imperfections to programs that are selected to receive instruments.

Deadline: Applications accepted year-round.

Website: www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/grants-info

Mound Westonka High School Dares to FAIL — Embraces Growth Mindset

By Becca Neuger, Communications Coordinator Westonka Public Schools

At MWHS, FAIL stands for "First Attempt In Learning" and is part of the growth mindset taking hold of students and staff this year. According to MWHS Principal Mark McIlmoyle, a growth mindset is all about taking risks, being comfortable with the uncomfortable and trying new things.

"I think of school as a learning community. Regardless of the position we have—teachers, students or administrators—we're all learners," McIlmoyle explained. "I believe that all learners have the potential to grow, and the attitude that we bring to our learning is critical to our success."

McIlmoyle is on a mission to remove what he calls "fixed mindsets" from the school culture. A fixed mindset, according to McIlmoyle, centers on the idea that you can't do something because you never have before. This way of thinking holds people back from trying something new out of fear of failure.

"With a growth mindset, we are talking about approaching new learning with the anticipation of that uncomfortable feeling," McIlmoyle explained.

McIlmoyle added that mastery is not always a straight line—there setbacks and failures along the way to achievement. "When we approach new learning tasks with this in mind, we embrace the cognitive dissonance and intellectual challenge because we recognize it as an important part of the learning," he said.

In the first of a series of videos on the growth mindset, McIlmoyle challenges students and staff to get out of their comfort zones and try something new. In the video, he puts the growth mindset into practice, trying his hands at the potting wheel for the first time. The end result is a far-from-perfect piece of pottery that teaches a valuable lesson about the learning process.

In the video, MWHS art teacher Sara Strother tells McIlmoyle that, in addition to learning about actually making a bowl, what he really learned was to be comfortable with discomfort and failure. "If you think about where your lump of clay was 20 minutes ago to where it is now, that's your whole learning process," Strother said. "It went through the really ugly and the really uncomfortable and comes out with something that you're proud of."

This fall, MWHS staff have focused on having an instructional growth mindset, bringing the language into the classroom.

"Teachers are engaging in meaningful dialogues about what they can do intentionally in the classrooms to promote the growth

mindset," McIlmoyle said. "This can be revealed in day-to-day instruction and the words they use, or it can emerge in the type of feedback they provide students on assessments."

"While some of our assessments in school are summative in nature or final, true learning is through trying, getting feedback and making it better," McIlmoyle added.

Parents can reinforce the growth mindset at home by repeating the FAIL mentality at home. "The language we use is powerful," McIlmoyle said. "Using a phrase like 'not yet' implies that the young person is on a continuum and that there is expectation from people around them that they will get there eventually."

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Metcalf Ninth-Grader Stands Out With Third School Chess Title

Aaron Tinlenberg
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191

Nearly 50 years ago, 35 years before Zander Gorton was born, Metcalf Junior High School began its annual all-school chess tournament.

Zander made history on Oct. 20 by winning three consecutive school championships in 7th, 8th and now in 9th grade.

"No other student has done this in the history of the school," said Brian Ribnick, a math teacher at the school who has been chess director for 33 years. "It's a remarkable accomplishment."

Every year Metcalf students compete in an all-school competition to determine a chess champion. This event also serves as team tryouts for students attempting to qualify for the school's trophy-winning traveling team.

"Metcalf students earned three national titles in 2015 and the school's 28th state chess title, so when they play against each other, the competition is fierce," said Ribnick.

This year was no exception, with Zander being the eventual school champion.

"Zander works at the game," said Ribnick. "He is very creative and is able to create brilliant plans to outwit most of his opposition."

Also notable, says Ribnick, is that Zander learns from his mistakes and rarely makes the same mistake twice.

Zander's interest in chess increased back when he, along with all 4th graders in Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, participated in two-week residency with a chess master through a unique and long-time Community Education program.

"Chess is like a super checkers game but a lot more fun and complicated," said Zander. "Chess has so much depth to it — there are more possible chess games than atoms in the observable universe."

Zander believes calculation and intuition are his greatest strengths in playing chess which allow him to make "some ridiculous moves that actually work."

Earlier this year Zander won the national junior high blitz chess championship in Louisville, Ky, — a very fast-moving version of the game.

Ribnick predicts continued chess success in Zander's future as he moves on to be a member of the Burnsville High School chess team next year. "Zander made Metcalf history," said Ribnick. "Can't wait to see what he does next."

www.isd191.org
(952) 707-2000

Metcalf Celebrates 50 Years of Chess Excellence

Every year since Metcalf Junior High in Burnsville opened 50 years ago, there has been an all-school chess championship to determine the school champion. This event also serves as team tryouts for students attempting to qualify for the school's trophy-winning traveling team.

"Metcalf students earned three national titles in 2015, so when they play against each other the competition is fierce," said Brian Ribnick, a math teacher at the school who has been chess director for 33 years.

Metcalf Junior High has one of the most successful junior high chess programs in the country. Only one other school has won more national junior high chess championships.

Earlier this year, the Metcalf team won the Minnesota State Junior High Chess Championship — the 28th state chess title in the school's history.

Ribnick is assisted by Robert Phenicie, a former Metcalf chess player and current college student, who is in his 10th year as assistant director.

At American College of Education, an accredited online college founded by educators, for educators, we know that there is nothing better in a teacher's life than seeing a student's face light up when she has learned something new — we like to call this the 'Aha' Moment.

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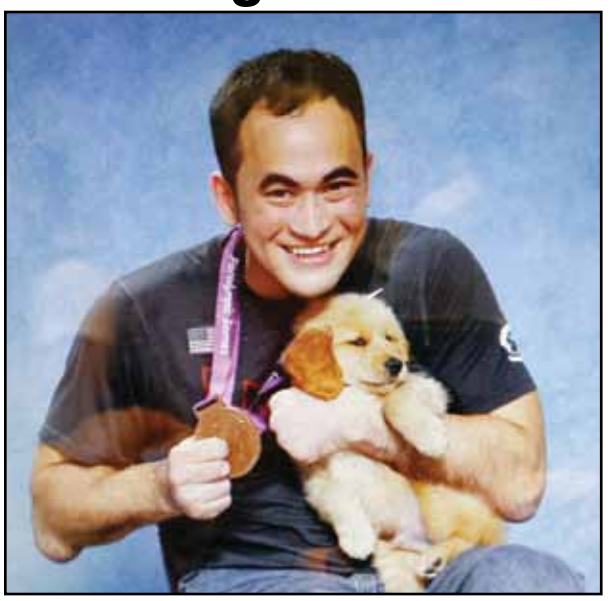
A Leap of Faith

Believing Your Child Will Have Every Opportunity to Succeed



By Jennifer Nelson, Minnesota's State Librarian

As parents, we send our kids off to kindergarten with equal measures of fear and optimism, knowing that over the next 12 years, our kids will grow and change in ways we can't even begin to imagine. We take a leap of faith that the schools they enter will be welcoming and safe. That the teachers they meet will understand, and maybe even appreciate, their quirks and idiosyncrasies, and foster their love of learning. December 7–11 is *Inclusive Schools Week*, well worth celebrating and a perfect time to reflect and remember.

When my son, Chuck Aoki, entered school, I was keenly aware that his disability might pose all kinds of challenges to his success as a student in a public school. I worried about buildings with limited accessibility for a wheelchair. I feared students might not respond well to his differences and that teachers wouldn't take the time to understand his capabilities or make sure he had the accommodations he needed to be successful. Yet I was committed to making sure that he had every opportunity to succeed.

Chuck graduated from college this past spring, with a degree in education from Metro State University. He received an Outstanding Student award from the Urban Teaching Program in recognition of his ability to overcome his challenges and achieve academic distinction. When I asked him why he chose to pursue a degree in teaching, he responded, "To give back to all the teachers who gave me so much, and to share what I'm passionate about — history — with kids."

I also like to think it's because his teachers never treated him differently. They supported, encouraged, cajoled and disciplined him, just as they did his peers. When his first grade class went overnight camping, his teacher made sure there were adults available to hoist him in his wheelchair over rough spots on nature walks. In the dead of winter, his seventh grade science teacher loaded him up on a sled, and pulled him along with his classmates to the middle of Lake Harriet to drill holes in the ice to take water samples. When he raced his wheelchair down the hallway, he got pulled in to the principal's office for a conversation about safety. And as a graduating senior, his classmates propped him up on their shoulders so he wouldn't get lost in the senior class picture.

Through all his years in school, his teachers supported his participation in sports. Chuck played wheelchair basketball for many years, and took up wheelchair rugby when he was a high school junior. Competing at the national level meant frequent travel. His teachers held him accountable for his completing his work, but were also flexible, understanding that for him to develop as an athlete, he had to go where the other teams were. Their support paid off.

Chuck earned a spot on the U.S. Wheelchair Rugby team in 2009 and has emerged as a key player not just in the U.S., but in the world. He led Team USA to bronze medals at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London and the 2014 World Championships in Denmark and a silver medal at the 2015 Parapan Games in Toronto in August. He's training now for the Rio 2016 Paralympics and looking forward to bringing home the gold.

I'd like to thank his teachers for treating him just like every other kid: believing that he could achieve his dreams, because he can. And he has.

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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)

The website offers numerous resources related to assistive technology. It also has links to checklists that IEP teams can use when considering assistive technology.

Website: www.parentcenterhub.org

SETT Framework

SETT is an acronym for Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools—all of which need to be fully explored when assistive technology tools are considered or selected. The website offers a set of forms for collaborative decision making.

Website: www.joyzabala.com/Home.php

The Family Center on Technology and Disability

This website offers monthly newsletters, success stories, information about disability organizations, reviews of technology resources, and more. Its collection of nearly 1,000 annotated resources can be browsed or searched by topic, disability, and material type. In addition, its newsletter archive provides examples of strategies and tools that are helping students succeed. Some of the resources are available in Spanish.

Website: www.fctd.info

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

This site focuses on how schools can serve students who are unable to read or use standard print materials, through the use of specialized formats (braille, audio, large print, and digital text). There are articles and research about effective practices, technical information, tutorials, webinars, online forums, and more.

Website: aem.cast.org

Bookshare

Bookshare is an online library of more than 170,000 digital books for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Schools can download textbooks, books, and periodicals, which their students can access on computers or mobile devices using software or apps that read the text aloud. For students with visual impairments, schools can also download files for use with braille devices.

Website: www.bookshare.org/cms

Learning Ally

Learning Ally offers a collection of more than 70,000 audiobooks, including recorded textbooks and literature titles, for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Audiobooks are available as digital downloads, as well as CDs, and free apps are available for popular mobile devices. Learning Ally works with volunteers to record books that its users request.

Website: www.learningally.org

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services (QIAT)

The QIAT Consortium is a national, grassroots group that provides input into the ongoing process of developing, disseminating, and implementing a set of quality indicators for assistive technology services. The QIAT website provides guidelines that can help schools improve their assistive technology services, as well as an email list where educators can participate in online discussions.

Website: www.qiat.org

IDEAs That Work

Preparing Children and Youth with Disabilities for Success website will connect teachers and families with resources to assist them in improving instruction and supporting academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students with disabilities as they become college and career ready.

Website: ccrs.osepideasthatwork.org

Supporting and Responding to Behavior

Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers toolkit, which summarizes evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies for teachers.

Website: www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies

8 Examples of Assistive Technology and Adaptive Tools

Assistive technology is one of the core strategies schools use to help with learning and attention issues. Some adaptive tools are low-tech and some are pretty fancy. Here are some common examples.

Website: www.understood.org/en/school-learning/assistive-technology/assistive-technologies-basics/8-examples-of-assistive-technology-and-adaptive-tools

LDA Minnesota Services
for Students, Parents and Teachers

Assessments
LDA offers diagnostic assessments for children and adults struggling with learning and/or attention challenges. Made up of experienced psychologists and special education professionals, LDA's Assessment Team has deep expertise in learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. LDA utilizes a battery of tests to identify an individual's strengths and weaknesses, and to confirm or rule out a learning disability or ADHD. Call 952-582-6000 for more information or to begin the process.

Tutoring
LDA provides specialized tutoring services for individuals of all ages with various levels of learning needs. Whether you or your child are challenged by a learning disability or just need extra help in a particular area, our licensed professionals can tailor tutoring sessions to meet your individual needs. Call 952-582-6000 or visit www.ldaminnesota.org for more information.

Professional Development
LDA provides engaging, customized workshops on topics related to learning disabilities, ADHD, and executive function skills, among other topics. Call LDA at 952-582-6000 to learn more.

Book Drives
Each year, LDA collects 5,000 books from local schools, churches, civic groups and businesses to distribute to children working on their reading skills in our literacy programs. Consider hosting a book drive to benefit LDA! Call 952-582-6000 or visit www.ldaminnesota.org for more information.

Workshop Schedule 2016

Feb. 10, 2016	**ADHD Medications and Comorbid Disorders in Adults** 6:30-8:00pm
Feb. 23, 2016	**Research Validates Imagery-Language Connection to Dyslexia and Autism Spectrum Disorders** 6:30-8:00pm
March 9, 2016	**The Virtual Pencil; Applications for Notetaking, Organization, Math and Science** 6:30-8:30 pm
Mar. 22, 2016	**Top Ten Tips: The College Search and Selection Process for Students Who Struggle** 6:30-8:00pm
Apr. 6, 2016	**Executive Function Skills** 6:30-8:00pm

Register online at www.ldaminnesota.org or call 952-582-6000.
Workshops are $25 per session. CEUs are available.

LDA is hiring!

LDA is hiring for several part-time positions:

Licensed Teachers: Reading Intervention Teachers

Licensed Teachers: Part-time hourly tutors

Part-time Licensed Psychologist

To view job descriptions, visit www.ldaminnesota.org.

LDA Minnesota (Learning Disabilities Association) is the leading nonprofit educational agency in Minnesota that specializes in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of learning disabilities and ADHD.

www.ldaminnesota.org 952-582-6000 email: info@ldaminnesota.org
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Shelly Lopez at 612-726-5239 or Shelly.Lopez@mspmac.org.

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