

People Are Now Calling Me an Artist



By Carissa Hopkins-Hoel
Communications Coordinator
St. Cloud Area School District 742

McKinley-ALC Principal Al Johnson loves to tell the story of how he discovered Paige Philippi as an artist in his midst.

"I'm big on holding students accountable for their actions," Johnson begins. "I've got about 26 or so cameras that monitor our schools, but I also have a camera that monitors our bus stop. Students, sometimes when they leave school, make some mistakes, like writing graffiti and those kinds of things."

Johnson is adamant about not destroying property. He believes in being a part of the community and respecting that community.

"It's just another example of a McKinley student that comes to the building with some issue blocking or interfering with their learning and us doing our best to put our arms around them and give them the support they need to get them through this station in life and on to something better."

In addition, he feels that students should be good stewards of their resources.

"I'm watching my cameras one day," he continues, "and I happen to see a young lady drawing something on the booth at the bus stop.

"And, I'm like, 'doggone it, what are you doing? Graffiti? And that's gonna cost. You're going to have to have a consequence for that.'"

So I zoom in and think, 'That is actually good.'"

Johnson let Philippi know that he saw her on camera drawing on the bus booth and her consequence would be to clean it up.

However, since he thought the artwork was good, he wanted to turn her artistic outlet into something good and positive.

Johnson had always wanted to do a mural at McKinley.

"So this is the idea," Johnson told Philippi. "We are the McKinley Panthers,

and I want you to create a mural and a brand new logo for us, and that is how you are going

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Therapy Dog Wins Over Students, Teachers at FLAHS

Forest Lake Area School District
Communications Department

Forest Lake Area High School (FLAHS) has a four-legged friend that visits with various Special Education classrooms every Monday and Thursday. Her name is Muppet, and she passed the testing and observation phase with the nationally accredited Therapy Dog association, Therapy Dog Alliance (ATD).

Muppet started her therapy dog sessions at Ecumen Parmlly LifePointes (Hospice Care) and began coming to FLAHS the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Special Education Teacher Dawn Soltis, who has worked with Autism Spectrum Disorders at the high school for the past five years and is known as the lady that holds the leash, was delighted to have Muppet come to the school and work with different classes.

"She spends the entire day with us, starting at 7:30 a.m.," Soltis said. "She's in my room first through third hour and then she works one-on-one with John Perry and then we make our rounds to the three DCD (Developmental Cognitive Disabilities) classrooms. At every bell, we try to get to the hallway where Muppet has gained a following and makes new friends. She even just lays in the hall and lets students mob her. She has literally never growled in her entire life and can take a mob of students wanting to be next to her."

Muppet is no stranger to bonding and helping students feel at ease. At 16 months of age, Muppet was naturally born with an intuitive and compassionate nature. Special



Education teacher Nicole Mancuso witnessed this nature first-hand with one of her students.

"I have a student who is in a wheelchair that told us he didn't trust anyone to use the hooyer lift to get him out of his wheelchair because he felt so helpless when he was out of his chair," Mancuso said. "When he met Muppet, he was so upset that others could get on the floor and play with her and he could barely reach her. Staff suggested that this student use the lift to get on the beanbag and Muppet could come cuddle with him. He cautiously agreed.

"The day it was planned, he was so scared and nervous. Once he was on the beanbag he uses and Muppet was with him, he had the biggest smile I have ever seen on

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TEACHING TODAY MN

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People Are Now Calling Me an Artist

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to pay it back.”

“Ok. I’ll do that,” replied Philippi.

A week later, Philippi presented an idea to Johnson for a logo at McKinley.

Philippi now realizes she should have attended McKinley as an alternative student sooner.

“I was nervous at first because it is an alternative school, but with the PACE program, it’s a lot more one-on-one. It allows you to be more individual. It helped me get that self-motivation to work more for myself and have more personal goals.”

Johnson continued to put Philippi to work.

Sheri Rutar, principal, at Clearview Elementary wanted to commission a new mural on the wall. The old one had been torn down with the new addition to the school.

Johnson told Rutar, “I have someone that can do that for you.”

Philippi, close to graduating, just needs elective credits to graduate.

“For her to work on something she loves and get credit for it, we’re all in,” says Johnson.

After he saw the mural at Clearview, Johnson sat down with Philippi to review her credits and asked her to create a mural for McKinley.

Johnson remembers their meeting.

“She said to me, ‘Mr. Johnson, thank you . . . People are now calling me an artist. And that is what I really want to be.’”

Johnson went on to tell Philippi, “That is why we are here, Paige.”

Philippi drew, sketched out and painted the mural that now adorns the McKinley office. It took her five days working 5 to 6 hours a day to complete the mural.

“It’s just great vision and she is such a nice young lady,” says Johnson.

“It’s just another example of a McKinley student that comes to the building with some issue blocking or interfering with their learning and us doing our best to put our arms around them and give them the support they need to get them through this station in life and on to something better.”

Philippi’s future plans after high school are to become a professional artist. She’d like to move to Venice Beach, CA and be able to sell her artwork along the boardwalk, like many other artists in the Golden State.

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Therapy Dog at Forest Lake

Continued from Page 1

him. He made comments about how it was the best day of school he had ever had and he would gladly use the lift every time Muppet came to visit.”

Special Education teacher Amber Lauer also saw great engagement between Muppet and one of her students.

“I have a student who is incredibly scared of dogs,” Lauer said. “He would tense up and bolt out of the room if there was a dog in the room. Since we have had Muppet join our class during break time, the student has grown to enjoy being around Muppet. He will pet her and call her over to him instead of the usual running away from dogs. We love having Muppet in our room!”

Muppets presence in the school provides an at-ease feeling for many students and promotes a sense of happiness that some have never known. DCD teacher Laurie Bachman could not be more thrilled with having Muppet in the school.

“Muppet adds a calming presence to our classroom,” Bachman said. “She certainly brings joy and happiness, but she also helps my students with mild-moderate and severe-profound disabilities stay on task. Instead of riling them up or getting them too excited, she helps my students learn and keeps them focused. One of my students, in particular,

is very energetic and spontaneous. He has learned to pet Muppet calmly and carefully. Muppet and this student do not frighten each other and they make a great team.”

Through Muppet serving the Special Education Department and various classrooms, other students have begun to notice Muppet’s presence and it has positively impacted their days as well.

“My school day is automatically better the second I see Muppet in the hall,” 10th-grade student Aidan (Bubba) Escobedo said. “As Forest Lake’s current therapy dog, she has attracted lots of attention by welcoming students and staff as they enter the building. She is creating a lot of smiles at the school as well as comforting members of the school. Muppet has created a more loving environment and has made a positive difference in my school day by just being in the school.”

In addition to Muppet adding smiles and happiness across FLAHS, she also made an appearance at FLAHS’s pepfest as an honorary Ranger Ambassador on Feb. 24.

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Construction Increases as Work Begins on More Bond Projects



Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, ISD 196
Communications Department

Several projects are underway and construction will begin this spring on several more that are part of the \$180 million in bond and capital projects levy referendum improvements approved by district voters in November 2015. The bond projects will provide improved safety and security at all schools, as well as additional space for learning. The capital projects levy is providing

funding to increase access to technology for all students districtwide.

The single biggest project, construction of the new East Lake Elementary School at the intersection of Diamond Path and County Road 46 in Lakeville, is on schedule to be completed this fall in time for the start of the 2017-18 school year. In November, the School Board approved an attendance area for East Lake and hired the school's first principal.

Construction began in November on

the first phase of additions at the district's five elementary magnet schools, which will increase elementary capacity and school choice options for families. Echo Park Elementary School of Leadership, Engineering and Technology is getting a classroom addition, space to support the magnet theme, a secure entrance and new office area adjacent to the entrance. Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences is also receiving a classroom addition, magnet theme space and a modified entrance that will direct visitors into the existing office. The improvements at both schools are scheduled to be completed this fall.

Construction has also begun on the addition of secure entrances at Deerwood and Woodland elementary schools, which share the same design. Both schools will also receive new offices that will be built adjacent to the entrances; completion is scheduled for this fall.

When this article was originally published, final design work was nearing completion on projects at Southview Elementary School, Valley Middle School of STEM and Apple Valley High School. At Southview, there will be a new secure entrance and office constructed on the north side of the building next to the courtyard area that separates Southview and Valley Middle. A new parking lot will be added on the west side of the school for student drop-off/pick-up and the current entrance on the south side of the building will be reserved for buses only.

Valley Middle and Apple Valley High are two of the most extensive renovation projects in the bond. Construction on both schools will begin this spring and won't be

completed until fall 2018. Valley Middle will get improvements inside and out, starting with the parking lot, which will be divided into a north lot for parent parking and student drop-off/pick-up, and an east lot for buses. The main entrance will be bumped out with the addition of a new office area and STEM

The single biggest project, construction of the new East Lake Elementary School at the intersection of Diamond Path and County Road 46 in Lakeville, is on schedule to be completed this fall in time for the start of the 2017-18 school year.

lab. Dismantlable walls will be removed throughout the school and replaced with permanent walls. The design includes "neighborhoods" of classrooms, each with four walls and a door, and a "main street" corridor will improve the flow of

pedestrian traffic through the school.

Apple Valley High will get a two-story, triangular-shaped addition that will be built in the courtyard area in front of the existing main entrance. The 8,200 square-foot addition will house the student services offices, including attendance, counselors and career guidance, and will provide a large, open commons area for people to gather just inside the entrance to the school. The cafeteria and areas surrounding the auditorium will be renovated. The other major renovations will take place in the media center, which will be filled in and a large stairway will be added leading up to the existing mezzanine level. Additional stairways will be added connecting the mezzanine to the second floor and there will be student workstations on all three levels.

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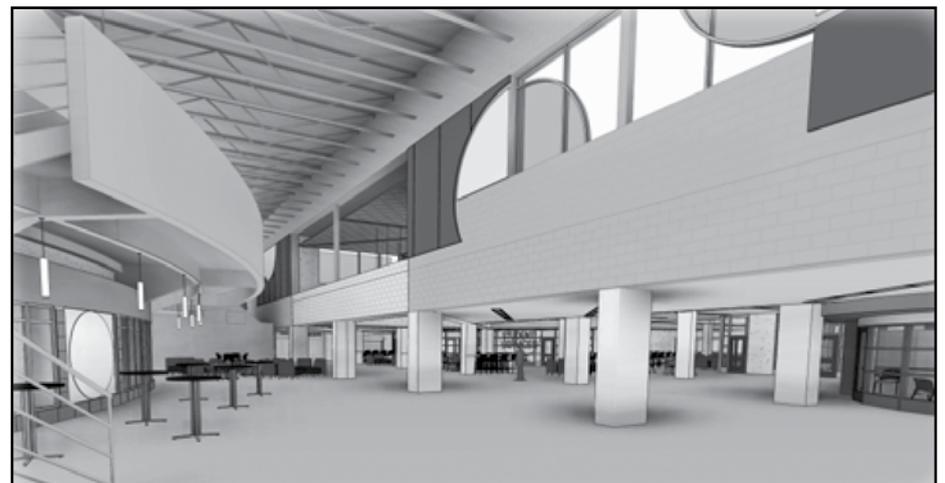
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A large, open commons area will be created inside the entrance to Apple Valley High School. The student services offices will also be relocated to the addition at the entrance to the building.

Television Personality ‘Nails it’ With Students at Blaine High School



Anoka-Hennepin School District
Communications

Students at Blaine High School (BHS) got a special treat when Kayleen McCabe, host of DIY Network’s “Rescue Renovation,” stopped by the school Jan. 30.

She had spent the weekend sharing fix-it tips and design solutions and answering questions about her television show from her booth at the Minneapolis Home and Remodeling Show.

Eager to entice young people to pursue a career in the trades, she happily accepted

an invitation from BHS industrial technology teacher Tim Nestrud to come to the high school and meet some of his students.

When she got there and saw the school’s student-built house on campus and met some of the young people who crafted the building, she soon discovered how much passion already exists in students’ hearts for trades like carpentry.

Junior Maddie Soukup, the lone female student in Nestrud’s class, couldn’t wait to tell McCabe how much she loves learning about construction, how proud she is to help build

a three bedroom/two bathroom 1,500-square foot house from the ground up, and how impressed her mom and dad were when she single-handedly changed an outlet box in her parents’ bathroom.

“It’s so good to know how to do all this and it’s kind of sad, but people are still surprised when they see a girl do it. Some people still think only guys can do construction. Not true,” said Soukup.

Of course, McCabe wholeheartedly agreed.

“I always want to open eyes to what careers are out there and construction is such a passion for me — I’m so sad I haven’t touched sawdust in a few days — but what’s really sad is that there is such a shortage of people in the trades right now, especially women,” she said.

As students installed electrical outlets, hooked up ventilation and wired can lights overhead, Nestrud told McCabe about the student’s current home-building project.

The current house is the 23rd house BHS students have built; each project beginning as the school year opens and ready for market by the time the school year ends.

“They do it all — electrical, plumbing, HVAC, framing, windows, drywall, finishing . . . these kids build the house from the ground up and we auction it off once it’s finished,” said Nestrud, noting that proceeds from the sale of each house go to fund the following

school year’s house-building project.

Telling students “we are desperate for people in the trades now,” McCabe encouraged the young people to pursue construction and assured them “there are tons of trade jobs out there and they’re good jobs for good money.”

“Construction — any of the trades — is the most transportable skill you can have . . . construction is a gift. It’s a genuine love I have and I know I’ll be back to support the program here,” she said.

Following her one-on-one interaction with Nestrud’s students, McCabe spoke to a larger audience of students and staff in the BHS auditorium.

“The stuff Tim’s doing here is unique, building homes as part of the classroom lesson. No one does that. No one gives those hands-on lessons. But that’s what’s going on here and these kids are learning the right way to do things, experiencing all the components of construction. That’s unheard of. If I had a construction company I’d hire them all,” she said.

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- **2011 Outstanding Project, Learning by Design:**

Deephaven Media Center
MHS Entrance, Auditorium and Student Union

- **2010 Outstanding Design Award:** MHS Entrance, Student Union and East Gym

- **2010 Bronze Award:** MHS Auditorium and Music Room

- **2010 Silver Award:** Groveland Learning Commons

- **2009 Illumination Award:** MHS Auditorium

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As responsible stewards of our community assets, we are committed to maintaining and upgrading our district facilities, not only for today, but for decades to come. In the past year, the District has completed the following renovations to better serve today's students:

The Port at MHS

Formerly known as the Media Center, The Port is a collaborative, quiet workspace for students. As the vast majority of research and reading materials have moved online, there is less need for shelves of books. Now that every student carries a tablet, with internet access at their fingertips, there is less need for banks of computers. Students asked for collaborative workspace and a variety of seating areas with brighter lighting. The Port is once again a hub of learning at MHS.

MMW Media Center

Similar to the high school and many collaborative, open work environments, the MMW Media Center was remodeled during the summer to open sight lines, improve lighting and encourage collaboration with a variety of seating options.



Minnetonka Research And Three MHS Science Labs

The growth of the science program at MHS required a renovation of the second floor northeast corridor to accommodate three additional science labs and the Minnetonka Research Lab. The new labs are easily accessible from the science silo constructed in the 1960s.



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Middle School Science Rooms

Expanding opportunities in science, two classrooms were renovated into science labs at each middle school.

Playground Expansions

With the help of PTO/PTA and school fundraising activities, four elementary play-

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Women Wear Hard Hats Too



As the construction industry rebounds and major public projects such as the Light Rail Corridors and the new Vikings Stadium forge full speed ahead, the opportunities for women in the industry have never been greater.

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Women Wear Hard Hats Too (WWHH2), the largest female-focused training program in Minnesota, was developed to increase the participation of women in the construction trades. WWHH2 was designed for the unique needs of tradeswomen, including an industry network and advisory council as well as a tradeswomen mentorship program.

Female-Focused Training

Weekly training and group discussions on female-focused topics ensures students are prepared for success in the classroom and on the job. Examples of training topics include *How to Work in a Male-dominated Work Environment and Tricks of the Trade*, a 3-part series that introduces students to job site culture and expectations.

Network of Tradeswomen

Experienced tradeswomen and other industry professionals regularly volunteer with and mentor the WWHH2 students. These industry experts offer students a first-hand account of job site expectations and challenges.

Job Site Field Trips

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Summit Academy President and CEO Louis King said, "As for our Women Wear Hard Hats Too program, we found it was especially important to communicate to women that they can succeed in the construction field. In fact, the demand for women in construction is so high that Summit can't train female students fast enough for the industry."

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What do you want to be when you grow up?

Careers in Aviation

Ken Polovitz

Assistant Dean John D Odegard School for Aerospace Science

“Since you were old enough to understand the question, you have been asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” And, like most, you probably blurted out something that seemed really exciting and glamorous but really didn’t have the first clue what it really was or how you become a fireman, rock star, ballet dancer or pilot. Now that you are older and wiser and considering your options after high school, the question now goes like this: “Where are you going to college and what are you going to major in?” And, you may be like most — still clueless and confused! Determining a career and selecting a college can be some of the most difficult decisions we ever make.

For almost twenty years as Assistant Dean for Student Services within the Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences at the University of North Dakota, I’ve been advising young people who are considering a career in Aviation. And, when asked what specifically they would like to do in aviation the vast majority respond: “Airline Pilot”! That’s certainly exciting and specific, but most have really no clue about how you become a professional pilot. Or, about the many other occupations within the industry like

air traffic controllers, maintenance and avionics technicians, airport managers, military options, helicopter pilots, corporate pilots, airline operations managers and the list can go on and on. Like many career fields, the aviation industry is so large and diverse that it can leave many clueless and confused — again!

When considering a career within the aviation industry, it’s best, in my opinion, to first turn toward those colleges and universities that have the degree options covering all or most of the occupations you should explore. This approach can help determine the quality of the school but just as importantly, allow you to explore and become more knowledgeable about the many, many occupations within the aviation industry--including becoming an airline pilot!

It is very important that you find and explore degree options in professional flight--both airplane and helicopter, air traffic control, airport and aviation management, aviation systems management (maintenance/avionics/dispatch), engineering, ROTC programs and the newest degree option, unmanned aerial systems (UAS) operations.

Collegiate aviation has become the main avenue for individuals to follow to as they consider establishing a career within the aviation industry.



Consequently, not only is it important to choose a school with comprehensive degree options, it’s also very important to choose a university with a strong reputation within the aviation industry. This, of course, gives you an advantage with job placement upon graduation.

So, what do you want to be when you grow up? Well, if you are considering a career

in aviation, don’t limit yourself to any single occupation or university. Explore the vastness of the industry and the comprehensive collegiate aviation programs that can enable you to lay a foundation for success.”

Aerospace Engineering Class at Cooper High School Test Launches Hand-Built Gliders



By Laci Gagliano

Students in Tim Fitze’s aerospace engineering class at Cooper High School built wooden gliders as part of their year-long class on aviation engineering. Students have been test-launching the gliders at various intervals of the building process.

The class, which Fitze says is one

of only three or four similar classes in the metro area, takes students through the basics of engineering through robotics. The projects begin with gliders, then move into simulation software and rocket launches, with robot construction capping the year off. The classroom is equipped with two 3-D printers that enable students to custom-build parts for their projects,

which are designed in professional CAD software.

Senior Dominic Quewon’s glider landed only an inch short of the longest launch distance. “My design was built off the top of my head. I worked everything from scratch, and I revised everything I started from the Area 52 program,” Quewon said. “We had a couple of test runs two days prior, but today was the final testing day. After every launch, we would fail and revise, and every time it would get better.”

Quewon said he really enjoys the class. “I’m learning a lot. It’s something I want to do in the future, and I just hope to go far in (the field).”

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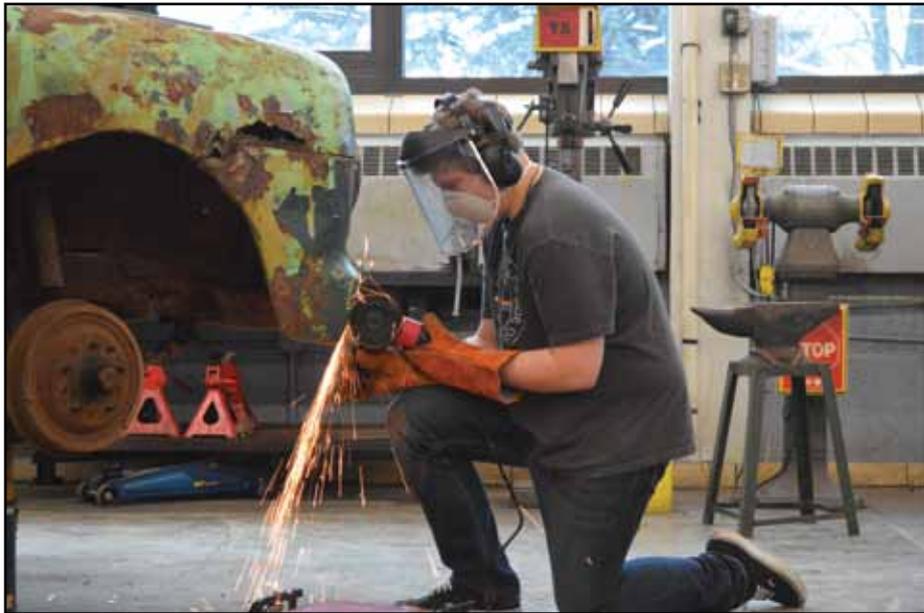
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Overhaulin': Tech Style



Carissa Hopkins-Hoel
Communications Coordinator
St. Cloud Area School District 742

This version of "Overhaulin'" won't be finished in the crunched time period of a one-hour episode on TV. Instead, the overhauling of a 1951 Ford truck will be done over the course of three years.

Technical High School's newly formed

Auto Club will be reducing the old '51 truck to nothing but the frame before restoring it to its former glory.

Matt Keil, a technology education teacher at Tech, is heading the project with the Auto Club. The Ford truck is a family heirloom that has been passed down to Keil from his father-in-law who had received it from his father-in-law. Now in Keil's possession, the truck is about to

get a facelift. The truck has been residing at the family farm for many years.

It was no small feat to tow the truck to Tech.

"The truck had had animals living in it and it wasn't easy," says Keil.

Once inside Tech, the clean-up could begin. Starting with the removal of all the walnuts, acorns and other "leftovers" from animals that had taken residence in the truck.

The Auto Club students are excited to work on this project. As each part is removed, they label and categorize it.

Ethan Moore, a sophomore at Tech, says, "It's a lot of work. It's really hard."

Some of the pieces don't want to come off very easily. Rust has a mind of its own.

"You should have seen the brakes," exclaims Andrew Christopherson, another sophomore in the club.

The students have removed most parts from the interior, the rear fenders and wheels and are now siphoning the remaining gas from the tank to keep the work safe. The next step is to remove the front fenders.

"The club is made up of a rather diverse group of kids," explains Keil.

"I even have a 10th-grade girl who isn't taking any of the auto classes. She just thought it sounded fun."

Christopherson, however, wants to be an auto mechanic.

"I've been working on them [autos] since I've been four. I've changed batteries, redone brakes, rotated tires, etc.," says Christopherson. "I'm taking auto right now for a class and will be taking the next auto class as soon as I can."

One of the things Christopherson appreciates about this project is that it will take three

years to complete. He will be able to see the project through to its entirety. He'll be a senior when the truck is complete.

The plan was to remove the engine in February and Christopherson was looking forward to it.

Each club member works in tandem on the truck, and overseeing the majority of it is senior, Brenden Forbes. Forbes gives advice to his younger classmates and gives gentle reminders to watch for safety.

"Brenden is pretty much in charge. He's really good at this and knows what he is doing," says Keil.

Forbes is cutting off the front left fender and is showing Moore where the cuts need to be so that the fender can be taken off properly.

Before long, the shop starts to smell of hot metal and sparks are flying. Keil checks up on the students and stops to answer questions as well as assist in the removal of the gas tank.

The smile on the students' faces and the glimmer in their eyes show just how much these students enjoy the work.

"If it wasn't for this club, these kids would just be at home doing nothing," says Keil. "It's really great that they can be here

The smile on the students' faces and the glimmer in their eyes show just how much these students enjoy the work. "If it wasn't for this club, these kids would just be at home doing nothing," says [Matt] Keil. "It's really great that they can be here doing this."

doing this."

These students are taking the initiative to get hands-on experience in a field that they are interested in as a career and to get some first-hand experience overhauling a 1951 Ford truck, Tech style.

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Scott Highlands Science Teacher Bound for NASA's Johnson Space Center



Ted Siefkes (far left), a sixth-grade science teacher at Scott Highlands Middle School in Apple Valley, is part of a team of five Minnesota educators headed to NASA's Johnson Space Center as part of the Microgravity University for Educators program.

By Andrew Miller

Ted Siefkes will be getting an inside look at the wonders of space exploration when he travels to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston next month.

As part of a team of five Minnesota educators, the Scott Highlands Middle School science teacher will be heading to the space center April 9–14 to test a student-derived experiment in a simulated microgravity environment.

The team of teachers — which includes three teachers from St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights, and one teacher from Mankato East High School — is one of 12 teams from across the country that will be participating in the experiments as part of the Microgravity University for Educators professional development program.

Siefkes was offered a role on the team by longtime friend Mark Westlake, a physics teacher at St. Thomas Academy who is leading about 42 students at the high school in designing a “satellite launching experimental device,” or SLED, for the tests.

The SLED experiments, Siefkes said, will be staged inside a NASA facility that also houses actual mockup simulations for the International Space Station.

While students from St. Thomas are taking the lead in designing the satellite

launching device, Scott Highlands students are also involved in the process. Siefkes is working with a group of about 10 eighth-graders involved in the school's science clubs, investigating ways to optimize design.

“The idea is to share ideas, take the best ideas and the best design, and that's what we ship to NASA,” he said.

The Microgravity University for Educators process began in January with the teachers holding bi-weekly meetings and video conferencing. The project was then introduced to students, and culminates with the satellite-launching experiments in April.

Siefkes' role during the testing at Johnson Space Center will be to physically man the SLED on an air-bearing floor during the first phase of the experiment.

“The air-bearing floor is kind of like an air-hockey table,” he said. “My job will be to be on the SLED and to launch it.” “The air-bearing floor is kind of like an air-hockey table,” he said. “My job will be to be on the SLED and to launch it.”

One aim of Microgravity University for Educators is to give teachers a better understanding of NASA education resources, along with training on teaching strategies and supporting lessons for use in the classroom.

It's funded through the STEM Education Accountability Project, as part of NASA

Education's contribution to a national goal of preparing 100,000 new K-12 STEM teachers by 2020.

Siefkes said he looks forward to incorporating what he learns through the project into his sixth-grade physical science classes next year, adding to what his students already learn about forces of motion, gravity and Newton's Law.

The experiments at NASA are “presented as a competition, but NASA is telling us that this is really about the education experience — they are setting it up to be about learning,” he said.

During the experiments, Siefkes is planning to connect with his students in Apple Valley via FaceTime. The testing also will be shared through video conference by NASA Ustream, and the Minnesota-based team will be posting updates and photos at Facebook.com/NASAMgUE.

Reprinted with permission from the Sun This Week

www.scotthighlandsms.new.schooltoday.com
(952) 423-7601

Autonomous Bus Pilot Project

Overview

MnDOT is exploring the safe use of an autonomous bus in cold weather climates to position itself as a leader in this fast emerging technology area.

By doing so, MnDOT will influence national policy and prepare Minnesota transportation owners and stakeholders for the future.

Why a bus?

Minnesota is a mass transit state. The population in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area alone is expected to double by 2040, increasing the need for public transit in the state.

Currently, many mid- to high-end personal vehicles for sale include some level of autonomous and connected features, but there is little research being done with transit buses.

Background

Autonomous Vehicle technology is rapidly developing around the country and the world. It began in 2004, when the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency hosted the “DARPA Grand Challenge” to push the technology forward.

The technology quickly grew from an idea started on desert race courses and university labs to technology that is available for retail purchase and potential future self-driving vehicles.

Benefits of autonomous vehicle technology

- Safer roads
- Improved mobility services
- Reduced congestion
- Fuel efficiency
- Reduced energy consumption
- Cleaner environment
- Better land use
- Positive societal impacts
- Better quality of life
- Enhanced partnerships

Source: MnDOT



Timeline

Phase 1 of the pilot project began in February 2017. This phase includes soliciting technology partners to safely demonstrate how AV technology works in cold and snowy weather. This phase will define the project, perform preliminary engineering and solicit for AV technology partners.

Phase 2 will include a controlled demonstration at MnROAD, MnDOT's pavement test track facility. This phase will identify risks and challenges for future implementation efforts. After a successful test at MnROAD, a live test could be conducted during the week of the 2018 Super Bowl.

Project goals

- Identify the challenges of operating autonomous vehicle technologies in snow/ice/salt conditions and test potential solutions through field testing on an active public roadway.
- Identify the challenges and strategies of having third parties safely operate autonomous vehicles on the State transportation system.
- Identify infrastructure gaps and solutions to safely operate autonomous vehicles on the State transportation system.
- Prepare transit for improving mobility services through autonomous vehicles.
- Increase Minnesota's influence and visibility on advancing autonomous vehicles/connected vehicles.
- Enhance partnerships between government and industry on advancing autonomous vehicles/connected vehicles in Minnesota

Hopkins High School Students Take Pledge Against Distracted Driving



Communications Department
Hopkins Public Schools

Most people see it every day: a driver in the car next to you texting, putting on makeup, eating a sandwich, or turning around to grab something from the backseat. And maybe you're that driver. Hopkins High School students are taking a stand against distracted driving, raising

awareness and pledging to keep their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road.

The student-led campaign, organized by the Hopkins High School Student Wellness Club, raised awareness of distracted driving and had students ink their thumbprints on a large poster that states "I pledge to keep my eyes on the road, keep my hands on the wheel, and keep my mind on driving." Students also got a first-hand

lesson in the dangers of distracted driving through a driving simulator.

"Distracted driving is a prominent problem among high schoolers, but it's also an overlooked problem," said Hopkins student Abby O'Callaghan, president of the Wellness Club. "The little things that we do have large consequences. But it's even bigger than just being on your phone."

A recent Hopkins High School survey — taken by 387 students — revealed 14 percent of students said distracted driving is a problem that affects their ability to drive safely. And about 6 percent of the survey population admitted to texting and driving every single day. However, students said realistic advertisements, personal experiences with a distracted driver, and understanding the dangers are motivators to stay focused at the wheel.

High school counselor Denise Col-

icchia said the survey results confirm distracted driving is a problem students face every day, and that more education and awareness tactics are needed to keep young drivers safe.

"It's obviously a problem that people deal with on a daily basis, even as adults, so it's nice that the young students are recognizing that it's an issue and are trying to be proactive before it's too late," she said.

The distracted driving pledge will be hung in the high school mall area as a reminder for students leaving campus to put away distractions, keep their eyes on the road, and arrive alive.

www.hopkinsschools.org
(952) 988-4000



Adopt a Highway

What is the Adopt a Highway Program?

The public can volunteer and participate in Adopt a Highway to pick up litter along Minnesota's highways.

Adopt a Highway also enables residents who are environmentally conscious to make a personal contribution to a cleaner environment.

These volunteers save MnDOT \$7 million every year.

How does it work?

Community groups, churches, individuals or businesses adopt a highway by picking up litter on both sides of a road at least two times per year for at least two years.

MnDOT will help your group select a highway to adopt. Roads that have heavy traffic or are inaccessible to pedestrians are not eligible.

How do I start?

- Contact your local Adopt a Highway coordinator.
- Choose a representative for your group. The representative will sign an agreement on behalf of the group.
- All participants in the group must review the safety information provided by



MnDOT before every pickup.

- Participants must be at least 12 years old unless specifically permitted. Participants 18 years old or younger must have adequate adult supervision.

MnDOT provides volunteers with safety vests, trash bags and safety information.

What if I'm interested in doing it only once?

Pick a Highway is a one-time litter picking activity on an assigned segment of state highway. MnDOT will provide bags, vests, training, and bag retrieval. You contribute approximately four hours of labor.

Is your class seeking an environmental project? Does your business coordinate employee activities in the community? Pick a Highway better fits these situations. Contact an Adopt a Highway coordinator.

For more information on who to contact see www.dot.state.mn.us/adopt.

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The APA is a partnership of the Asphalt Institute, National Asphalt Pavement Association, and the State Asphalt Pavement Associations.

* Federal Highway Administration. WestTrack Track Roughness, Fuel Consumption, and Maintenance Costs, 2000
** Edelman Berland Survey, 2013

Developmental Milestones and Delays – Know the Signs

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development using standardized, validated tools at 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months and for autism at 18 and 24 months or whenever a parent or provider has a concern. Ask your child's doctor about your child's developmental screening.

If You're Concerned – Act Early

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program.

At 2 months:

- Doesn't respond to loud sounds
- Doesn't watch things as they move
- Doesn't smile at people
- Doesn't bring hands to mouth
- Can't hold head up when pushing up when on tummy

At 6 months:

- Doesn't try to get things that are in reach
- Shows no affection for caregivers
- Doesn't respond to sounds around him
- Has difficulty getting things to mouth
- Doesn't make vowel sounds (“ah”, “eh”, “oh”)
- Doesn't roll over in either direction
- Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll

At 1 Year:

- Doesn't crawl
- Can't stand when supported
- Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide
- Doesn't say single words like “mama” or “dada”
- Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- Doesn't point to things
- Loses skills he once had

At 2 Years:

- Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, “drink milk”)
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

At 3 Years:

- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can't work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn't speak in sentences
- Doesn't understand simple instructions
- Doesn't play pretend or make-believe
- Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys
- Doesn't make eye contact
- Loses skills he once had

At 4 Years:

- Can't jump in place
- Has trouble scribbling
- Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe
- Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family
- Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- Can't retell a favorite story
- Doesn't follow 3-part commands
- Doesn't understand “same” and “different”
- Doesn't use “me” and “you” correctly
- Speaks unclearly
- Loses skills he once had

At 5 Years:

- Doesn't show a wide range of emotions
- Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad)
- Unusually withdrawn and not active
- Is easily distracted, has trouble focusing on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- Doesn't respond to people, or responds only superficially
- Can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Doesn't play a variety of games and activities
- Can't give first and last name
- Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly
- Doesn't talk about daily activities or experiences
- Doesn't draw pictures
- Can't brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed without help
- Loses skills he once had

Reprinted from CDC's “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program.

The CDC's “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Program aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.

Website: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

Other resources for families and educators/caregivers:

Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children, also known as TACSEI, takes the research that shows which practices improve the social-emotional outcomes for young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities and creates free products and resources to help decision makers, caregivers, and service providers apply these best practices in the work they do every day.

Website: challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

CSEFEL is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. They have user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources which are available directly from this website to help early care, health and education providers implement this model.

Website: csefel.vanderbilt.edu

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NAEYC provides accreditation for schools that meet certain standards, as well as resources, tools, and information for families and childcare providers.

Website: www.naeyc.org/

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC)

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC) works to strengthen the systems that provide early childhood services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The center's mission is to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through 5) and their families receive and benefit from high-quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services.

Website: ectacenter.org/

Zero to Three

Provides professionals working with very young children and their families an extensive collection of resources aimed at supporting the work of professionals in a variety of early childhood settings.

Website: www.zerotothree.org



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Navigating MSP Program

Many families who have children with special needs avoid flying because they are unsure how their children will respond. In an effort to ease the anxiety associated with an airport visit and flying, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), Fraser and the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) have teamed up to create the Navigating MSP program. The program includes several events, all designed specifically for individuals with special needs, that guide families through the steps of an airport visit, from walking in the door to finding their seats on a plane.

What to Expect

- ➔ Upon registering for the program participants are emailed a children's social story, detailing what it's like to take a flight—from the airport experience to plane protocol to being in flight and landing. Parents and guardians are encouraged to read the story to their children to prepare them for the program and, ultimately, for their actual flight
- ➔ On the day of the tour, participants meet by the Information Booth on the Tram Level of MSP Airport to pick up their concourse passes. There, each family

is assigned its own MSP Airport Travelers Assistant volunteer to guide them through the event.

- ➔ The group then heads to the Ticketing Level and moves through the TSA security line at Gate 6. This process is extremely realistic. Participants utilize MSP's family line, which tends to be shorter, but they must still wait in line, show a TSA agent their concourse pass, remove all items from their persons and pockets, as well as their shoes and winter coats and place them in bins. They move through the same security system as they would if taking a real flight. TSA agents are active partners in the Navigating MSP program and happily walk children and families through the process, ensuring their comfort.
- ➔ Once they move through security, the group is given a gate assignment and has approximately 30 minutes pre-“flight” to explore the terminal with their Travelers Assistant. Some families choose to have a bite to eat or to shop the many stores throughout the terminal. Others head to the children's play area on Concourse C, which fea-

tures a mock airplane and air traffic control tower, slides, and a statue of Snoopy (whose creator is a native Minnesotan), as well as adult seating and electrical outlets. For those families who seek a quiet place to rest, MSP offers a Family Center, which has a family restroom, comfortable seating, a rocking chair and a crib. It is located near the entrance to Concourse E. A private Nursing Mothers room is located on Concourse C.

- ➔ After approximately 30 minutes of roaming the terminal, families head to their gate assignment where boarding is announced. The group follows the gate agent's instructions for boarding the plane and take their assigned seats. They buckle up and listen to safety instructions — just as they would on a real flight. Once everyone is settled, Delta Pilot Rich Kargel steps out and explains to the families what will happen on an actual flight, covering topics such as the sensation of liftoff and touchdown to pressurization in ears.
- ➔ Upon “touchdown” the group departs the plane and is directed out to Baggage Claim and then to Tram Level and



Parking. The program is offered monthly; those families who feel they need another practice run before their trip are welcome to sign up again.

mspairport.com/passenger-services/Navigating-MSP.aspx

NAVIGATING MSP AIRPORT



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Traveling with your special needs child can seem intimidating. Navigating MSP Airport helps ease the anxiety with free, monthly practice runs through the airport.

A partnership between the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Autism Society of Minnesota, and Fraser, this program will allow you to:

- ➔ Experience TSA Security
- ➔ Explore the Terminal
- ➔ Board a plane and meet a pilot
- ➔ Prepare for takeoff
- ➔ Gather helpful tips, information, and resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION
contact Shelly Lopez
at 612-726-5239, or
Shelly.Lopez@mspmac.org.

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Apply for a Grant



Art Works: Arts Education

The National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) vision for Arts Education is that every student is engaged and empowered through an excellent arts education. Arts Education funding is focused on students. Projects are for prekindergarten through grade 12 students, the educators and artists who support them, and the schools and communities that serve them.

Awards range from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

Deadline: Applications are due July 13, 2017.

Website: www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/arts-education

Art Works: Creativity Connects Grants

Creativity Connects* is an initiative that shows how the arts contribute to the nation's creative ecosystem, investigates how support systems for the arts are changing, explores how the arts can connect with other sectors that want and utilize creativity, and invests in innovative projects to spark new, collaborative ideas.

Awards range from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

Deadline: Applications are due May 4, 2017.

Website: www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/creativity-connects-projects

Music Education Grants

The D'Addario Foundation awards grants and product donations to educational programs that offer sustained opportunities for active participation in music for children and adults, particularly for those who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

Deadline: Letters of Inquiry are due January 31 and July 31, annually. Applications are due March 15 and September 30, annually.

Website: www.daddariofoundation.org/grants

Music Performance Attendance Grants

Classical music education (vocal or instrumental) must be the key component of any music program requesting a grant. Priority is given to requests for funds to purchase tickets for specific live classical music performances. Stipends and performance fees for guest instructors and musicians are also considered.

Grants up to \$500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due June 30, annually.

Website: sites.google.com/site/gewirtzkidstoconcerts

Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program provides funding to state educational agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to carry out a coordinated program of scientifically based research, demonstration projects, innovative strategies, and similar activities. Activities are designed to build and enhance the ability of elementary and secondary schools to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented students.

Awards are estimated to range from \$250,000 to \$400,000 for a period of up to 36 months.

Deadline: Applications due May 4, annually.

Website: www2.ed.gov/programs/javits/index.html

Collaboration Grants

DiscoverE offers Collaboration Grants designed to launch a new engineering outreach program. Grants facilitate collaborations between engineering organizations, educational organizations, and engineers, and are intended to engage kindergarten through grade 12 youth with hands-on learning experiences.

Five grants of \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted until funding is depleted.

Website: www.discovere.org/about-us/collaboration-grants

PPG Industries Foundation Grants

Our local communities have a need for a skilled workforce in research and development, manufacturing, information technology and industries related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) professions. To meet this demand — and the challenges of the changing world — PPG is investing in the next generation of innovators. We aim to excite youth about STEM and the world of possibilities it holds, and also support more advanced learning and career pursuits in specific fields of interest.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.ppgcommunities.com/Our-Story/Education.aspx

Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership Grants

The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (CGP) awards education grants for projects designed to increase aware-

ness and understanding of Japan in the United States by students and teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Grants may fund support of teacher training, curriculum development, and community outreach efforts.

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Grant applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cgp.org/grassroots-exchange-and-education/education-grants

Community Service Grants

WaysToHelp.org invites high school students no older than 19 years old (on the day they apply) in the United States to apply for grants to fund their community service ideas across any one of 16 issue areas in four categories:

- The Environment: global warming, clean water, land preservation, and recycling.
- Democracy and Equality: education and development, gender equality, homelessness and poverty, and financial well-being.
- Health: HIV/AIDS, cancer/smoking, organ and blood donation, and general fitness.
- Community Issues: drug/alcohol abuse, crime prevention, animal welfare, and senior care.

Grants up to \$500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: waystohelp.org/grants.php

Education, Youth, and Development Grants

The Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund makes grants in the areas of education, child development and welfare, and the environment and conservation. Examples of previously funded programs include expanding music education for students in kindergarten through grade 12 and promoting professional development for music teachers; hands-on botanical and art museum experiences for children who are underserved; and employment and leadership support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.bridgestoneamericas.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/community

Environmental and Science Grants

Waste Management, Inc. supports environmental and science education programs, such as science fairs and Earth Day projects targeting middle and high school students. There is also interest in proposals to preserve and enhance natural resources. Local facilities may identify and support other causes that are important to the immediate community.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp

Fruit Tree 101 Orchard Donations

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF) awards donations of edible fruit trees, planting resources, and supporting curriculum materials to eligible public schools, including colleges and universities, and private nonprofit schools and organizations. Fruit tree donations are provided for the purpose of benefiting people and the environment and, in the case of schools, for educating on the importance of trees for the environment and fruit in the diet.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.ftpf.org/fruittree101.htm

Green Thumb Challenge Grant

Green Education Foundation (GEF) and Gardener's Supply Company have teamed up on a funding opportunity for established youth garden projects nationwide. The organizations are calling on schools and youth groups to submit chronicles of their garden projects in a race to win a cash prize.

Grants of \$250 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due September 30, annually.

Website: www.greeneducationfoundation.org/greenthumbchallengesub/greenthumb-challenge-winners.html

GreenWorks! Grants

GreenWorks! Grants are awarded for service-learning projects in environmental education. Activities such as school recycling programs, conserving water and energy, establishing school gardens and outdoor classrooms, improving a forest, and restoring a natural habitat are all eligible for funding.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due September 30, annually.

Website: www.plt.org/resources/greenworks-grants/

Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The Chef Ann Foundation and Healthy Scoop have teamed up to help schools increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for children and youth, and nutrition education in schools. The purpose of Project Produce is to create planned lunchroom activities to showcase and taste fresh vegetables and fruits. 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 year-round.

Website: www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce

Westonka's English Language Learners Form Close Bond



Westonka Public Schools

While most Westonka students go to school eager to learn every day, perhaps some of the most enthusiastic learners are the six adult students currently enrolled in the district's English Language Learners (ELL) class. These students spend two to three hours every Monday night practicing their English, learning how to type, studying for citizenship exams and becoming friends. The current class, which is offered through the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, is made up of students representing Russia, China, Thailand, Honduras and Mexico.

Classes meet at the Western Communities Action Network (WeCAN) office in Mound. The central location is critical since transportation can be an issue. One student walks two miles to class and back home each week. All of the students are employed except for one, who is retired.

"Attendance is fantastic," said teacher Susan Anderson. "Most students arrive early and don't leave until we close."

Anderson previously taught English at Hutchinson High School for 29 years. Not quite ready to accept retirement, she began teaching part-time in a college ESL/GED classroom before coming to Westonka four years ago. She said that she enjoys every part of teaching ELL students.

"I learn as much from them as I hope they learn from our class," said Anderson. "Because my current students represent different countries, our discussions are a

true learning experience."

A typical night of class includes writing sentences on the boards on that night's topic, reading aloud together from a fiction or non-fiction story or article, practicing English pronunciation and working on grammar. The students also use computers to learn keyboarding skills, use language-learning software and study for citizenship exams. While class size can vary, the Westonka group is stable, with some students staying in the program for two or three years.

The weekly group conversations sometimes focus on current events or on other fun things. One week, the students brought in their favorite foods to share and discovered the wonderful tastes of five different countries. The students are happy to have the opportunity to learn and have become friends in the process.

Victor Andrey, the only male in the group, moved with his wife to Mound from Russia four years ago after their son married an American citizen. He works hard on his English and enjoys fishing on Lake Minnetonka.

Bowen Cao, from China, is an au pair who enjoys teaching Chinese to her young charges and playing with them. She is happy to make so many friends in English

class and she says she "loves" her teacher.

Nelly Rivera is a native of Honduras. She has two daughters, one of whom is studying to be an engineer. She works in childcare and says she likes living in Wayzata, even though it's cold.

Although Mexico is her native country, Antonia Santiago has lived here for 12 years. She has two daughters and enjoys going to work every day.

Tatiya Geyen of Thailand moved to the area four years ago after marrying an American man following a two-year courtship.

"One of the best things about teaching ELL is watching how the students help each other to understand; how accepting they are of each other, and how they laugh and work together," said Anderson

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(952) 491-8000



Tanglen Celebrates at the Community Table During Cultural Night

An annual event at the elementary school, Cultural Night brings families and students from various backgrounds together through fellowship and food.

Communications Department
Hopkins Public Schools

Tanglen Elementary students took an educational, and tasty, trip around the world without even leaving the school grounds. Through authentic cuisine, conversation, and camaraderie, the school celebrated its fourth-annual Cultural Night on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

The event serves as a virtual passport offering students and families a glimpse at cultures across the globe and recognizes their own diverse backgrounds. Throughout the years, Dr. Jim Hebeisen, principal of Tanglen, said Cultural Night has become a staple event.

"Tanglen has a rich variety of cultures represented in our students," he said. "We wanted to find ways to connect families from different cultural backgrounds in a safe and inviting environment where they can learn from each other and experience cultures beyond our own."

The cafeteria was filled with dishes and desserts from all parts of the world. Local vendors donated food, while Tanglen families shared their specialty items. Israeli couscous, Norwegian potato lefse, German apple cake, Jewish chocolate rugelach, Chinese orange chicken and fried rice, and traditional Spanish churros were among the dishes that filled plates.

New to the event was the addition of a giant green screen that allowed event-goers to pose in front of backgrounds from around the world, like famous monuments or in sprawling metropolises like Hong Kong. Many even donned traditional attire from their respective backgrounds. Principal Hebeisen got in on the fun, too, by strapping on some lederhosen.

Students and families made their way through the halls for an educational scavenger hunt. In other classrooms were coloring stations where students watched a video of kids their age talk about school in their country. Others engaged in a friendly game of mancala. To close the evening, kindergarteners sang "What A Wonderful World," and students performed a reading of "Cinderella" in English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. Event organizers Alex Fisher and Carlos Connell-Torres said life enrichment through engaging learning opportunities is the core idea behind Cultural Night.

"Celebrating diversity validates and affirms the many different cultures represented in our student body," Fisher said. "Cultural Night supports efforts of equity and inclusiveness. This celebration is just one piece of a larger puzzle that makes up Tanglen pride."

As a testament to the school's commitment to celebrating diversity, 68 flags were



recently hung in the cafeteria, which represent the backgrounds of all students in attendance.

"Just like we try to fill our halls and classrooms with images of a variety of students, seeing the flags reminds them that we can embrace where we are from as we all come together to create the United States of America," Hebeisen said. "I hope they leave events like this embracing their own cultural background, being more accepting of people

who have different experiences than their own, and feeling incredibly proud of the learning environment we are creating for their children at Tanglen."

www.hopkinsschools.org
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Reading is More Fun with a Friend



Stillwater Area Public Schools

Learning to read doesn't come easy for all children. Some students need more time to develop reading skills. Others benefit from personalized, one-on-one attention or just need extra encouragement and support to motivate them to pick up a book.

That's why Lisa Potter, a reading intervention teacher, started a tutoring program several years ago to bring struggling readers together with junior high mentors. Her goal

was to give her elementary students more time to practice reading skills outside of the normal classroom environment. What she got, however, was more than she bargained for.

"We're really building something beyond straight academics," Potter said. "I can't quite put it into words, but you can feel it. They're connecting with the junior high students and it's making a difference. One dad told me his child is reading every

night, something the child never did before, because he wanted to impress his tutor."

About 20 National Junior Honor Society members from Stillwater Junior High walk over to Oak Park Elementary school each week to tutor an elementary student. The junior high students were specially trained to help the younger kids practice their reading skills. They spend about a half hour sitting together to the school's media center. The younger children are all smiles when they walk into the room and pick up a book. The junior high students offer encouragement, help sound out words when necessary, and give high fives and smiles when their mentees succeed.

"I think we just take reading for granted," said Rachel Schulz, a ninth grader, who said she doesn't even remember learning to read. "[My mentee] is usually pretty excited to see me and gives me a hug. I like helping other people and I like reading, so

it's great."

While the younger students have the opportunity to practice their skills and grow more confident in reading, the tutors also develop important leadership and coaching skills. They also get a taste of what it is like to be a teacher, and can hone skills like patience and persistence.

"It's really hard," said Olivia Olson, ninth grade, who admitted teachers have a very difficult job.

"But they're improving a lot. They're interacting more and as they grow with reading they're showing a lot more confidence. I love volunteering. It's really fun to do."

stillwaterschools.org
(651) 351-8340



District 833 Schools Participate in Battle of the Books



South Washington County School District

Several schools in District 833 participated in a heated Battle of the Books competition during the months of February and March, where students were quizzed

on several books nominated for Minnesota's Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award.

On March 3, 160 sixth Valley Crossing Elementary students competed in the school's first-ever Battle of the Books. Students who wanted to participate in

the reading competition formed teams in October, and met each month leading up to the battle.

Students, staff and dozens of parents attended the event, where students went head to head, answering questions about the books they had been studying. Teams taking first place in the fourth and fifth grade battle were the Epic Blue Lightning Dragons and sharing first place in the second and third grade battle were The Prankster Gangsters and The Neighborhood B Bookworms.

"All the students involved grew as readers by sharing their ideas and questions about the books with each other, and some great friendships were formed," said Valley Crossing Media Specialist Sarah Lanners. "The ultimate goal of this event is motivating students to read, which I think we achieved."

Liberty Ridge Elementary participated in their 12th Annual Battle of the Books on March 2. One hundred thirty students making up 20 teams spent the last four to five months meeting with their teams to prepare for the battle.

After a lively and exciting evening, the winning fourth grade team was The

American Ninja Readers and the winning fifth grade team was the Reading Royalty. In addition to their winning teams, Liberty Ridge would also like to give a shout out to the students that read all 24 books during the last two seasons: Nathan Liu, Brayden Carlson, Easton Kleven, Ashlyn Mehus, Callie Cupito and Vivian Meier.

District 833 would also like to thank all of the parents who assisted throughout the process for dedicating their time, encouraging students to read their assigned books and quizzing them in preparation of the battle.

Both parents and students worked extremely hard to read, understand, share, and discuss the books and had fun along the way! Congratulations to all!

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Robert Asp Teacher Named One of Two Moorhead Teachers of the Year

Pam Gibb
Communications Coordinator
Moorhead Area Public Schools

As a freshman in college, Tammy Ressler began working at an agency that serves people with disabilities. It was during this time she discovered her passion for working with people with special needs.

"I believe all students, regardless of their disability can learn," said Ressler, now a learner support services teacher at Robert Asp Elementary School. "They may learn at different rates and in different ways, but all make progress that can't always be measured on standardized tests."

Ressler and Moorhead High teacher Angie Jelinek have been named the 2017 Moorhead Teachers of the Year.

Ressler has been a special education teacher for Moorhead Area Public Schools for 22 years. She graduated from Moorhead State University, now Minnesota State University Moorhead, in 1994 with a degree in special education and began teaching students of various disabilities at Moorhead High School. In 2009 she transferred to Robert Asp Elementary School. Ressler earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with an assistive technology certificate in 2006, and she is a member of the Moorhead cadre for the

state's Universal Design for Learning (UDL) team.

"Through my training in Universal Design, I have learned it is vital to motivate and stimulate my learners, find a variety of ways to present information to my students and differentiate the ways my students can express what they have learned," Ressler said. "Implementing UDL strategies when planning my lessons has helped me reach many more learners in my room."

Ressler also has shared her knowledge of UDL with her colleagues — both general education and special education — and she seeks ways this can be applied in the general education setting for all students.

"I believe it is my job to create a classroom environment that supports my students' emotional, social and educational needs," Ressler said. "I realize the importance of being able to create authentic learning experiences in the classroom that build upon students' knowledge. In my room we celebrate all levels of progress, much of which is not decided by a test score, but by my day-to-day observations and interactions with students."

Chris Triggs, Robert Asp Elementary principal, believes Ressler uses her classroom time efficiently to advance her students' learning.



"She will also advocate positively for her students if they are not obtaining proper classroom support and will work with that classroom teacher to ensure learning continues in the regular classroom," he said.

Ressler believes it is vital to build a rapport with her students and parents.

"I am a teacher who provides and appreciates open, honest feedback and communication with students, parents and col-

leagues," she said.

"Mrs. Ressler's ability to connect with her students and form meaningful relationships with them and their families has helped her to move them academically and functionally in the school setting," Triggs said. "She works with some of the most challenging learners in our school setting but is continuously finding ways to offer instructional support that is

Continued on Page 18



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Minnesota Principal of the Year



By Sarah Burghardt

Mounds View High School principal Jeff Ridlehoover was named 2017 Principal of the Year by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals. The association is part of a national secondary school association that connects and engages school leaders through advocacy, research, education, and student programs. The annual Principal of the Year award honors principals that have contributed to providing high-quality learning opportunities for students and have demonstrated exemplary contributions to the field of education.

The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals divides the state into eight divisions based on location. Ridlehoover was nominated by peers last winter for the Capitol division Principal of the Year award and won the division title in spring 2016. Division winners are then eligible for the statewide Principal of the Year award.

Ridlehoover found out that he was the statewide award winner at the MASSP Winter Conference on Jan. 18. Ridlehoover said he felt surprised, honored and very humbled.

"There were so many wonderful educators and principals, many folks that I know and

respect, that were nominated. And for me to be selected for an award like this, it's pretty humbling," he said.

MASSP Executive Director Dave Adney said Ridlehoover exemplifies good leadership, innovation, and commitment to research, among many other positive qualities.

"Emerging research is very important, and Jeff is still very much a student of the game," Adney said.

An innovation piece that Adney pointed out was Mounds View High School's media center and that it is no longer just a library. "We really like to find what principals are doing that is new and different," he said. "Jeff is just a wonderful example of good leadership and really caring about the students."

Ridlehoover first began his career as a chemistry teacher, teaching in both Lakeville and Anoka-Hennepin school districts. He then moved into administration and spent ten years as an assistant principal, with nine of them at Wayzata High School.

The opportunity to become principal at Mounds View High School was an offer he could not refuse.

"When I learned more about the district, the community, and the families, I was hooked," Ridlehoover said. "That's why I jumped in with both feet."

Care and Communication

Communication is key when it comes to the strengths of an effective leader. As communication is a two way process, Ridlehoover stressed the importance of being a good listener and truly values the input of stakeholders.

Ridlehoover also strongly values the relationships among school administration, staff, families and students. The school and community went through a tragic time in early December when a car accident took the lives of two students and hospitalized another. Through signs of soli-

darity, kind words, and an enormous amount of support, Ridlehoover and the school are grateful for the continuous care and support that has been exemplified by the community.

As the leader of the school, Ridlehoover became the face of the communication process, although, he stressed that he absolutely did not do it alone.

"There were many people working with me to get through this," he said. "I think it's just being compassionate, caring, transparent, and letting others help when help is offered and providing support for those that need it," Ridlehoover said.

"The big thing for us is that we were able to reach out to the families of the young ladies that passed away, as well as young lady that has survived, and established nice rapport there so they know that we are here for them."

Although the healing process is never easy, Ridlehoover said that it helps to have wonderful people around and a caring community.

Strong School Culture

Principals play an active role in building a strong sense of school community and culture.

As one of the premier school districts in the state, Ridlehoover prides Mounds View as being very collaborative, as well as holding a strong focus on creativity and innovation.

"We've done a lot to really build on what students need in the world right now, like needing to solve problems, think critically, work with other people, work in teams," he said.

As with any success story, there's always a need to look ahead to the future.

"We're always looking to continuously improve," Ridlehoover said. "We don't like to stay status quo if we know that there is room for improvement."

Finding it hard to pinpoint just one favorite thing about being principal at Mounds View High, Ridlehoover said he is thankful for the entire learning community.

"I'm really fortunate. I get to work with a great school board, an amazing superintendent, and the teachers and the families and the kids. We've got a good thing going, and we don't take it for granite, there's a lot of positives."

Ridlehoover is now eligible to represent Minnesota at the Principal's Institute in Washington D.C., as well as being a contender for the National Principal of the Year award.

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moundsviewschools.org
(651) 621-6000

Tammy Ressler Continued from Page 17

meaningful and connected to the regular classroom curriculum."

Ressler is honored to be named Robert Asp Teacher of the Year and to share the Moorhead Teacher of the Year recognition with Jelinek. However Ressler feels she doesn't work alone.

"I am the teacher that I am because of the great team of paraprofessionals with whom I work," she said.

"Mrs. Ressler has been a positive force on our staff, especially to our special education staff where she models professionalism and a great attitude toward all of her students," Triggs said. "Teachers and paraprofessionals request to work with her because of these qualities."

The Education Moorhead Communica-

tions Committee, which selected both Ressler and Jelinek as Moorhead Teachers of the Year, acknowledged Ressler's qualities as a teacher.

"Tammy Ressler has many wonderful qualities that make her one of Moorhead's top teachers: hard-working, patient, innovative and creative team player. Tammy personalizes instruction for each of her students to be successful, and she is always focused on the whole child," the committee said in a statement.

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Teacher of the Year Candidate Field Narrowed to 37 Semifinalists



The field of possible candidates for this year's Minnesota Teacher of the Year honor has been narrowed to 37. A selection panel of 23 community leaders chose the semifinalists from an initial field of 132 candidates from across the state.

The panel will review the semifinalists' portfolios again in late March and will select about 10 finalists from among the group. The current Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Abdul Wright, will announce his successor at a banquet May 7 at the Radisson Blu Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn.

Education Minnesota, the statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

Semifinalists for 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year are listed below, including the district, school, subject area and grade taught:

Hinda Abdi, Minneapolis, Whittier International Elementary, elementary, 1

Alison Alowonle, Minnetonka, Excelsior Elementary, elementary, 4–5

Maria Amundson, Lake Park–Audubon, Lake Park–Audubon Elementary, elementary, kindergarten

Alex Berry, Minneapolis, Folwell Performing Arts Magnet, visual art, 5–8

Jeffrey Boyle, Blessed Trinity Catholic School, Richfield, English, 7–8

Pam Broksma, Fairmont, Fairmont Elementary, elementary, 1

Corey Bulman, Westonka, Mound Westonka High School, English, 9, 11–12

Greta Callahan, Minneapolis, Bethune Community School, elementary, kindergarten

Adrian Davis, Minneapolis, Roosevelt High School, music, 9–12

Sigrid Espe, Minneapolis, Marcy Open School, math, 5

Erin Gillespie, Morris, Morris Area High School, special education, 7–12

John Glas, Burnsville–Eagan–Savage, Nicollet Middle School, math, 6

Stephane Goeken, North St. Paul–Maplewood–Oakdale, North High School, special education, 9–12

Daniel Haley, Big Lake, Liberty Elementary, elementary, 1

Shauna Heggem, Battle Lake, Battle Lake Public School, English, 8, 10–12

John Horton, St. Paul, J.J. Hill Montessori, elementary, 1–3

Michael Houston, St. Paul, Harding High School, math, 9–12

Alison Humpal, Columbia Heights, Columbia Academy, English, 6–8

Karla Johnson, Brainerd, Brainerd High School, English, 9

Holly Johnston, St. Paul, Phalen Lake Hmong Studies, elementary, kindergarten

Stacy Kelzer, Cambridge–Isanti, Cambridge Intermediate School, math and science, 5

Kristen Kilpo, Proctor, A.I. Jedlicka Middle School, math, 7

Wade Laughlin, Shakopee, Shakopee High School, language arts, 11–12

Glenn Morehouse Olson, St. Francis, St. Francis High School, English, journalism and theater, 9–12

Elizabeth Neilson, Twin Cities Academy, St. Paul, English, 9–10

Scott Noet, Owatonna, Owatonna Junior High, social studies, 7

Linda Pfeilsticker, Winona, Winona High School, social studies, 9, 11–12

Charity Przepiora, Roseville, Roseville Area High School, language arts, 10–12

Teresa Stadem, Richfield, Richfield College Experience Program, English, 9–12

Sarah Swan McDonald, Northfield, Northfield High School, social studies, 9–12

Charlene Warne, Delano, Delano Elementary, elementary, 3

Mark Westpfahl, St. Paul, Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet, American and Minnesota history, 6–7

Carole Whitney, St. Paul, Como Park Senior High School, vocal music, 9–12

Marsha Wilson, Austin, Banfield Elementary, elementary, 4

Ong Xiong, St. Paul, Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet, elementary, kindergarten

Eileen Zachman, St. Paul, JJ Hill Montessori, elementary, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten

Mary Zilge, Lakeville, Cherry View Elementary, vocal music, kindergarten–5

Source: Education Minnesota

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From left: Amy Hewett-Olatunde, MA-Education '02, EdD '15, 2015 Minnesota Teacher of the Year; Abdul Wright, MA-Education '16, 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

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