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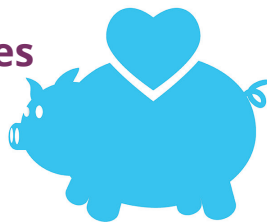
South Dakota
banks
donated



**\$11
MILLION**

in charitable
contributions & grants

Bank
employees
donated



**\$61
MILLION**

in charitable
contributions & grants

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bankers
volunteered



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HOURS**

with community
organizations

43 BANKS WHICH TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY EMPLOY

11,559 PEOPLE

WITH ANNUAL
PAYROLL TOTALING

\$773 MILLION



SD BANKERS FOUNDATION'S
HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM & BANKS AWARDED

\$150,000

in scholarships
(in addition to banks' own
scholarship programs)

Source: The SDBA is comprised of 78 member banks, of which 43 responded to the survey. Information is for calendar year 2015.



South Dakota Bankers Association

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SDBA has been the professional and trade association for the state's financial services industry since 1884.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WADE'S WELCOME.....	2	KIMBALL.....	46
ABERDEEN.....	4	LANGFORD.....	47
ALCESTER-HUDSON.....	5	LEAD-DEADWOOD.....	48
ANDES CENTRAL.....	6	MADISON.....	49
BALTIC.....	7	MITCHELL.....	50
BELLE FOURCHE.....	8	MOBRIDGE-POLLOCK.....	52
BERESFORD.....	9	MOUNT VERNON.....	55
BISON.....	10	NEW UNDERWOOD.....	56
BRANDON VALLEY.....	11	NORTHWESTERN AREA.....	57
BROOKINGS.....	13	PARKSTON.....	59
CANTON.....	14	PLATTE-GEDDES.....	60
CHAMBERLAIN.....	15	RAPID CITY.....	61
COLMAN-EGAN.....	16	RUTLAND.....	62
COLOMECONSOLIDATED.....	19	SCOTLAND.....	63
CORSICA-STICKNEY.....	20	SISSETON.....	64
DEUEL.....	21	SPEARFISH.....	66
DOUGLAS.....	24	STANLEY COUNTY.....	67
DUPREE.....	28	TEA AREA.....	68
EAGLE BUTTE.....	29	TODD COUNTY.....	69
EDGEMONT.....	30	VERMILLION.....	70
FLANDREAU.....	31	VIBORG-HURLEY.....	72
FLORENCE.....	32	WAGNER COMMUNITY.....	74
FREDERICK.....	33	WALL.....	76
GAYVILLE-VOLIN.....	34	WAVERLY-SOUTH SHORE.....	77
GROTON.....	35	WEBSTER AREA.....	78
HARRISBURG.....	39	WESSINGTON SPRINGS.....	79
HENRY.....	40	WEST CENTRAL.....	80
HERREID.....	42	WEST RIVER CTE CONSORTIUM.....	81
HILL CITY.....	43	WILMOT.....	82
HOWARD.....	44	WINNER.....	83
IRENE-WAKONDA.....	45	YANKTON.....	84

WADE'S WELCOME



DR. WADE POGANY
ASBSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of South Dakota's best assets is our great education system. From Kindergarten through 12th grade our kids demonstrate success in many different ways. Some are honored for their academic achievement, some for athletic or fine arts talents, while others for their involvement in clubs and organizations in their schools.

Our teachers, administrators and school support staff play a huge role in the success of our students, as do many community members in each school district.

It's important that we tell the stories of everyone who contributes to the education of our children, the future leaders of this great state.

The Good News Bulletin is our way of highlighting some of the stories that illustrate the achievement of our schools and a way of life in South Dakota.

The Good News Bulletin gives you a look at the many successes our schools produce. We received stories from schools across South Dakota, highlighting student achievement, community involvement and significant accomplishments.

It shines a spotlight on innovation, hardworking teachers and students who will someday continue their excellent work by leading our state.

We want to thank the board members, administrators, teachers and staff members from our school districts who submitted stories.

ASBSD is proud of our state and our schools. After reading the Good News Bulletin, we hope you will agree, South Dakota's education system is truly one of our greatest assets.

These are stories about our great South Dakota schools.



The Good News Bulletin

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NATIONAL SUCCESS IN SPEECH AND DEBATE

Aberdeen Central High School sent a school record 14 students to the National Speech and Debate Tournament in Dallas, Texas this past summer.

The students earned their way by placing in the top two in their events at the district tournament or a mock congressional event. Once qualified to the tournament, the students continued to practice their main event, but also selected supplemental and consolation events for which to prepare.

CHS Junior Jacob Womack, made his third appearance at the National Tournament. Once his main event competition, duet interpretation, came to a close, Jacob began competing in expository, which requires students to write and memorize an original five-minute informative speech on a topic with societal implications.

Womack continued to advance through seven rounds of competition, finding himself in the eighth and final round. His stellar performance in the finals earned him a National Speech and Debate Association National Championship, a \$1000 scholarship from Western Kentucky University and a \$400 Hall of Fame Scholarship.

Womack is the first national champion in school history.

Womack had advanced as far as the semifinal round the year before, and said his goal was just to get that far again. He appreciated the chance to finally put all his work in writing, memorizing and performing the piece in front of real audience in the final round.

“That was some of the most fun I’ve ever had!” Womack said of his final round performance.

Head Oral Interpretation Coach Roger McCafferty echoed Jacob’s excitement about the tournament.



“It was such a great experience just seeing his facial expressions as we stood on stage and they announced the final placings,” McCafferty said. “With each announcement, he got more and more excited.

“It was a great moment. It was a well-deserved honor for him.”

McCafferty described Womack as a hard worker who is constantly studying and trying to incorporate new techniques into his delivery.

“I never have to worry that he did not work on his selection between team practices because every time we work on his piece at practices there is something new, which clearly shows he puts in many hours outside of school,” McCafferty said.

Students competing in debate events at the tournament earned a special honor as well.

The combined debate performances of Sydney Gelling, Kallie Marske, John Prosper, Sam Mehlhaff, Collin Rumpca and Emily Meier earned Aberdeen Central a School of Excellence Award in debate. The honor is awarded to the top 20 schools accumulating points at the National Tournament each year.

Aberdeen Central was one of only five teams in the nation to earn this distinction in back to back years.

A very proud CHS Head Debate Coach Kerry Konda credited the students’ work year in and year out.

“It is a testament to the hard work and dedication our kids put in to the activity,” Konda said.

“The success comes from a combination of debaters believing in the process and realizing that they can compete with any program in the nation.”



A-H'S STEM GROWS

This year Alcester-Hudson offered a brand-new, STEM-based class that combines English and Science to explore issues and crusade causes that affect our community and planet.

"The class has been very busy this year with several projects," Alcester-Hudson High School Principal LeeAnn Haisch said of the class titled: Environmental Perspectives.

Students took part in a Big Sioux River Project, which had them partnering with Dakota Water Watch and East Dakota Watershed Development District. The class began testing strategic sites along the Big Sioux River (and its tributaries) to help monitor bacteria and nitrate levels.

The students have seen first-hand how this data is used in real research and research-based decisions at both the local and the state level.

"I was surprised to learn how the introduction of non-native species to an ecosystem can have far-reaching effects that may be completely unintended," A-H Sophomore Luke Christensen said.

To promote a city recycling option in Alcester, which would reduce our waste and landfill usage, the class researched the issue, presented at the November Farmers Market, composed letters to the editor, held recycled art contests, trudged through winter snow going door to door to obtain community input, compiled polling data and presented to the city council.

The council is currently working on the logistics of a recycling plan for the community.

The class also applied for the Samsung STEM Grant in hopes of receiving additional resources to help them in col-



lecting the data needed in the Big Sioux River Project.

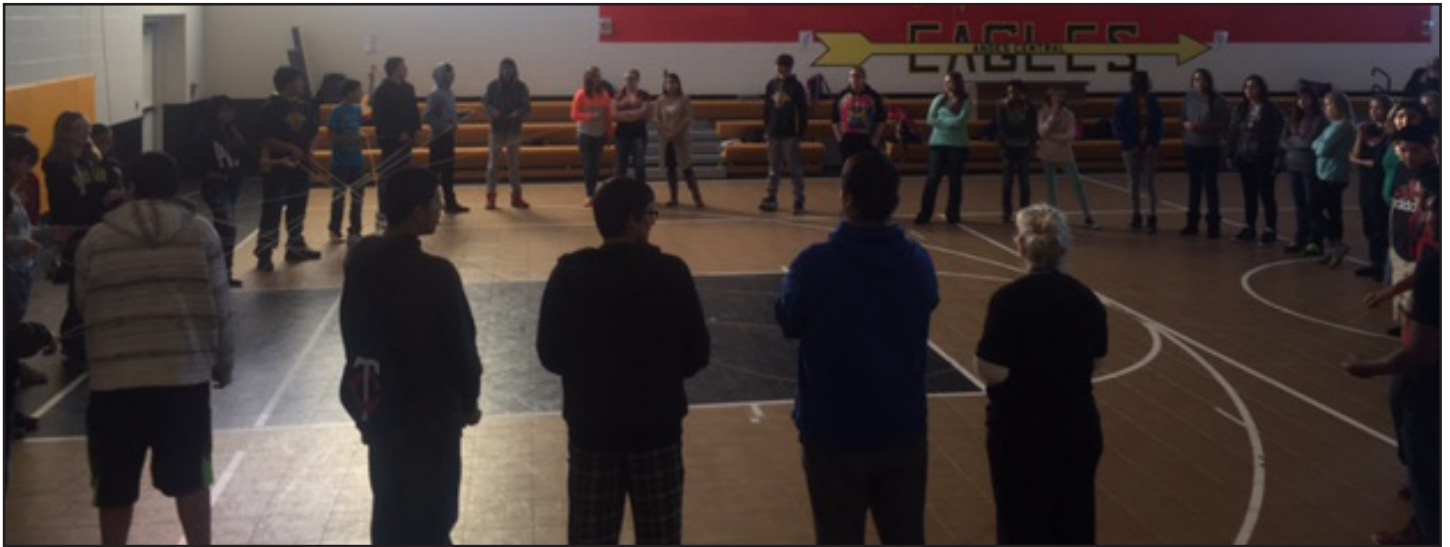
Alcester-Hudson placed in the top 5 finalists for the state of South Dakota and received two free Samsung Galaxy Tabs!

"It is our hope that the students realize everyone leaves an imprint on our environment - big or small, positive or negative, intended or unintended," Haisch said.

"Perhaps through this class, we can inspire them to be good stewards of the land and resources entrusted to each of us."



AC STUDENTS SET UP CAMP



Holding the camp strongly together is the translation: Wicoti Was'agya Oyunsapai

Originally this program started out as an anti-bullying curriculum for Junior and Senior students, but Andes Central Staff, along with community members and elders, made changes to the program to incorporate Traditional Dakota/Lakota/Nakota teachings and values, utilizing kinship systems and the concept of "Holding the camp strongly together".

"This reinforces the traditional teachings of being a Good Relative to each other and that what effects one person in our camp will impact everyone, whether it is something positive or something negative," Andes Central Superintendent Debera Lucas said.

The core values incorporated in this program are centered on four of the seven traditional values of the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota people: Respect, Courage, Wisdom and Generosity.

"The purpose of the program is to promote these values and help our students understand traditionally, what it means to be a good relative and how to practice this amongst their peers by using Traditional teachings of kinship," Lucas said.

Upperclassmen are encouraged to model these behaviors for younger students, students are encouraged to speak up when they see other students misbehaving or not being a good relative and students are told that as a good relative, they must remember that they are role models for their younger family member, peers and also for their families, communities and tribe.

Students are able to practice these values/concepts in both larger and smaller group activities.

Students meet in large school wide groups twice a month and meet in the smaller class groups during their advisor times each week. Each month has different theme that ties the large groups into the smaller more focused groups.

Lucas said the district has a staffing team comprised of teachers, counselors, cultural advisor and elders from that community to help identify activities/teachings based on needs of our students/community.

A special activity – known as the dreamcatcher activity – included students and staff forming large circles, with one student standing in the center of the circle, and tossing balls of yarn to one another in the circle until a web was made to show students how their words and actions were all connected to each other and how that could impact them as a camp if it was positive or negative actions/words.

The student in the center was asked if the words spoken against them – symbolized by the students throwing the ball of yarn – trapped that student in the web with negativity, and if that student tried to walk out of the web, how hard it would be unless other students helped each other.

The final lesson in the activity had the students holding up their pieces of the string so the student in the center could get out, symbolizing how the camp needed everyone to hold strongly together.

BROS EMBRACED BY BALTIC H.S.

Three years ago the Baltic Robotic Operation Systems team, or BROS, competed in its first BEST Robotics competition and team members have dominated ever since.

The BEST Robotics competition consists of four areas – Robot Performance, Engineering Lab Notebook, Booth and Interview, Marketing Presentation and Spirit and Sportsmanship – and this year at a competition in Brookings, BROS placed first in the Marketing Presentation and Booth & Interview portions and tied for first in Spirit and Sportsmanship.

That result sent them to the Regionals in Fargo where they competed against 36 teams from Minnesota, South Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and North Dakota.

BROS placed third in Booth & Interview, fourth in the Marketing Presentation, sixth in Spirit and Sportsmanship, and ninth in the Engineering Lab Notebook.

“This awesome group of kids spent countless hours after school and on weekends for 10 weeks to compete at this level,” BROS Coach Nikki Determan said. “I have never had a group of kids work so hard and with so much pride.”

What started out as a group of 12 students willing to try



something new and has now doubled to 24 members specializing in different areas.

“I think the success of the Robotics team has drawn new members,” Determan said. “Within the last three years we have gotten three large trophies and 10 plaques.”

“We have school wide assemblies each year demonstrating what our robot can do - it’s kind of like a pep rally – the student body really enjoys them.”

Determan said students approach BROS with pure excitement, anticipating what the task and field for the competition were going to be and planning fundraising options.

“When we started 3 years ago, we just wanted the students to understand the engineering process, but it has turned into so much more,” Determan said.

She noted students participating in BROS have gained and mastered skills needed to complete the engineering design process, improved their presentation and communication skills and mastered team work and meeting deadlines.

“Many of these skills will help them in college and more importantly in the workplace,” Determan said. “What I hope they take away depends on the student, but ultimately I want Robotics to be a challenging, rewarding, and positive experience.”

BFHS BUILDS PARTNERSHIP



A recent housing study pointed to the need for affordable housing in the Belle Fourche area.

The Belle Fourche High School Carpentry classes along with the Belle Fourche Development Corporation, the City of Belle Fourche, and the West River Foundation have partnered this year to build affordable housing in the Belle Fourche Community.

“The partnership between the community and school district is amazing,” Superintendent Steve Willard said. “We are addressing a housing need in Belle Fourche and giving students skills that will last them a life time.”

BFHS Instructors Eric Anderson and Graydon

Dailey believe building the houses are a great way to build a local workforce in the Northern Black Hills.

Willard said the carpentry class has been building houses for 12 years and this year 20 students, spread across two carpentry classes, are currently building a three-bedroom home with an attached two stall garage. Students receive credit for taking the class.

A lot has been secured for a similar home built during the 2016-2017 school year and plans are to expand to two houses per year in the future.

“The students will take away building skills, teamwork, pride in workmanship, and community pride,” Willard said.

ACTIVE ELEMENTARY HONORED NATIONALLY

In September, Beresford Elementary School was named a 2015 Let's Move! Active Schools National Award honoree. The national award is the top physical activity and physical education distinction for K-12 schools.

Beresford Elementary was one of 525 U.S. schools, one of eight South Dakota schools recognized for their outstanding efforts in creating an active school environment and increasing physical activity and physical education opportunities for students.

"The award celebrates a school's commitment to integrating at least 60 minutes of physical activity before, during and after the school day," PEP Grant Project Director Dr. Scott Klungseth said.

To earn a Let's Move! Active Schools National Award, a school must have met significant benchmarks in five areas: physical education; physical activity before-and after-school; physical activity during school; staff involvement; and family and community engagement.

At Beresford Elementary, some students are on the move even while sitting at their desks. The school integrated kinesthetic learning desks into its 3rd and 4th grade classrooms, so students



can complete their assignments and keep their legs moving at the same time.

The school schedule also includes recess and an afterschool program filled with physical activity options. Staff can boost their physical activity by participating in a faculty fitness program before and after school.

To promote healthy eating, food service staff overhauled the lunch menu to meet federal nutrition guidelines and the district replaced unhealthy snacks in the school's vending machines with healthier alternatives.

As part of their involvement in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Beresford Elementary School was honored in Washington, D.C. with a Bronze Award for their efforts to promote healthy living.

Let's Move! Active Schools, part of the First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative, is powered by a national collaboration of health, education, and private sector organizations that strives to bring the benefits of physical activity and physical education to every child across the country.

Beresford Elementary School received a banner, certificate and congratulatory letter from the First Lady.

"These schools are raising the bar by creating Active School environments where students are happier, healthier, and higher-performing. I am thrilled with their success through Let's Move! Active Schools – they're helping to create a new norm where physical activity is a fundamental aspect of a young person's success both in the classroom and in life," First Lady Michelle Obama said.



BISON CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS

The Bison School District has great reasons to celebrate this year.

“In a district this small every student is involved in many activities,” Azevedo said. “Students put forth a lot of effort and dedication to the many activities they are involved in as well as maintaining their academic standing to be able to play.”

Over the summer, Bison Students Collin Palmer and Reed Arneson became state champions and earned spots at the National High School Rodeo Competition in Wyoming, where they placed in various categories.

This fall the Cardinal football team made it to the first round of the playoffs for the first time in a few years where they played Hamlin and Superintendent Marilyn Azevedo said “although we did not win, our students represented us well and displayed excellent sportsmanship.”

“The community is very supportive of our school district,” Azevedo said. “In a community this small, athletic events and other activities are in the forefront and the people come out in force to support our teams and activities.”



The Bison cheerleading program was resurrected and the girls had the opportunity to join two squads, one for football and one for basketball.

The Oral Interp team represented our school at the state Oral Interp Festival in Sturgis this year and the Reader's Theater team scored a superior at this event.

Each year the school sponsors an Artist in Residence for a week. With the program growing immensely in popularity the district's high school art teacher arranged for the elementary school to participate in an art class, which provided them another exciting hands on curriculum area on a regular basis.

Finally, the school district has rolled out a new mentoring program for all new teachers in an effort to help our teachers with the everyday demands of their job and to foster teacher growth in our small school community.

“Our teachers work hard daily, teaching six different classes in the high school and elementary, coaching, being involved in booster clubs, and selling tickets and concessions,” Azevedo said.

“They support our school and students and are very active in our school and community. They truly put their heart into everything they do.”



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Story courtesy of Jill Meier of the Brandon Valley Challenger

Matt Mueller's classroom inside Brandon Valley Intermediate School may look more like playtime than a learning environment to some.

But the SmartLab – the first of its kind in any South Dakota school – is actually more about learning than playing.

“The end product is not the goal here,” says Mueller, whose recognized as a facilitator or coach in the SmartLab setting. “The knowledge that they gain here and the process is what we want to assess, and their growth from beginning to end.”

Unlike traditional core classes such as math and reading, students are subjected to quizzes and tests on their units of study. But in the SmartLab, it's a whole new evaluation process for both the kids and Mueller, who said Intermediate School principal Nick Skibsted sums up the evaluation process best.

“Mr. Skibsted said it best at the beginning of the year: ‘They’re evaluating themselves daily. We are used to a certain type of evaluation but when you are constantly evaluating yourself daily and your experiences it’s a new way of evaluating. They still have to assess themselves at the end and on their ability to take chances, how did they ask questions, when did they take risks, and they have to try to provide examples throughout their project of when they did those things,’ he said.

The kids also have to take note of the strength of their journal entries, their presentations, productivity and even time management.

“They assess themselves and I assess them as well at the end of their seven-day project,” Mueller said.

“For instance, kids shared with me how they had never had to work with someone for that long of time or how they had to cooperate and learned how to compromise. So that’s the coolest part about the lab is that we try to teach life experiences, and if you can learn that as a sixth grader, you are going to be much more successful in life if you can learn how to work with people.”

Every sixth grader at BV Intermediate School will be assigned to the SmartLab for one quarter of the school year. The lab is also being utilized by fifth and sixth graders involved in gifted ed program.

Time management is one of the key components for the students. Every seven days, the students who work in pairs, tackle one of a variety of topics offered on engineering, computer graphics, programming, robotics, Adobe Photoshop, and real life issues such as budgeting for these projects, which is something they would do in the real world.

“It’s a growth mindset,” Mueller said. “Some kids excel at different launches different than others but their ceilings – everyone’s ceiling - is different. You may be more geared toward an engineer-

ing launch, so your ceiling may be way different than someone else who may be more geared towards coding a computer or a game or a program.”

Mueller said students have been excited to get into the SmartLab, and said they’ve fully embraced this new way of learning.

“The biggest thing for them is their growth through their projects,” Mueller said. “As kids left the first quarter, they were saying how they had learned so much about how to learn differently. Through their experiences so many of them found themselves saying, ‘I didn’t know I could ...’ and that they liked taking chances like they were doing, and experimenting through the STEM process.”

Last week, Adam Smook and Devon Jones had a “light bulb” moment when the yellow security light lit up on their project.

“We started it yesterday and the whole day we were trying to line it up,” Smook said. “Whenever we would turn the security system

on, it would do the siren but after Mr. Mueller said we had to line it up perfectly, we were able to get it. You just have to try and think ‘out of the box’ about what you’re doing.”

“It’s actually exciting to see because it took so long for us to set it up,” Jones added.

Carter Holmes and Nathan Padgett were tackling the Arduino project last week. Basically, the boys came up with the right code to get LED lights flashing different colors, which was their goal for day three of the seven-day project.

“Our goal for day seven is to learn what all the buttons and sliders on this do,” Holmes said.

Each team of students work seven days on a project, which warrants their seven-day goal entries in their journals. The students also present their projects at that time and then rotate to their next engagement.




“They have to compromise on what they want to learn based on their research and their investigating that they do and then they select their project,” he said. “They can use the curriculum and follow it step by step or they can use that as a guide to set their own pathway.”

Mueller said students are using their new learning skills in other classes.

“I’ve been asking the core teachers, like the math and the reading teachers, what are you seeing with kids that have had the Lab, and they say they are not afraid to fail, they ask more questions, they want to know why something is the way it is, and for all of our learners, that’s what we want. We want them asking those questions of why and not me just telling them. The more articles that I’m reading lately is that this way of learning is so powerful. I think about myself as a kid – I had some tremendous teachers all throughout – but the things I remember the most and retain are the things I experienced myself because of my failures or things I was willing to try,” Mueller said.



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LETTERS TO FRANCE

Story courtesy of Eric Sandbulte of The Brookings Reigster

Sad. Scared. Surprised. Those are some the ways Jule Bullington's first-grade Medary class reacted to the news of November's terrorist attacks in Paris, but this was especially true for Sidonie Cledelein.

Sidonie has been in South Dakota for nearly two years now after her father, Cyril, moved to Brookings for his job as U.S.A. vice president of operations at Bel Brands, leaving behind family, including her aunt Isabelle Haas in Paris.

The Cledelein family was on vacation when ISIS terrorists attacked in Paris the evening of Nov. 13, resulting in 130 deaths and more than 300 wounded.

"We went on vacation at the time, and my husband saw the news on his phone. I just sent a text to my sister and maybe five minutes after, she sent me back. But it was five very long minutes," Sidonie's mother, Chloè, said. With other family living in the area, too, emotions were still running high.

"My sister was very, very close (to the attacks). Everybody was shocked, but fine."

In fact, Haas lives on the same street as one of the restaurants that was attacked.

When Sidonie came back to school the following Monday, she approached Bullington, "saying something like, 'Something bad happened in France,'" according to Bullington.

"I said I know. I was worried about her family and asked her if everyone was OK and what did you tell me?" she asked Sidonie, who piped up, "Yes!"

"So then we talked in our classroom that day, and it was interesting how many of our children were aware of what had happened. I suppose social media and the TV. Then the next day her mom came, and we visited a little bit. I said I felt so bad that this had happened in France and for her family," Bullington said.

It was out of this empathy that Bullington came up with the idea to have the class write out thinking-of-you cards to send to Haas and the rest of the family. Bullington intended to surprise Chloè and the rest of her family but wasn't sure how to get the packages to their final destination.

"So, Chloè helped me with the project, and I sent her a quick email. She said she was more than willing to send them across the ocean," Bullington said.

The class went to work on the letters on Tuesday, four days after the attacks, and it took the letters about nine days to reach their destination in Paris.

"I called my sister before sending them and explained to her that she was going to be getting a special gift from the postman," Chloè said.

Her sister was very emotional when she finally learned what the class had done.

"It was very touching, especially since Sidonie is her niece and a part of this. Sidonie was very proud of what her class did," Chloè said. She added, "She received all of the cards, and she shared them



with friends and family in Paris, and together they decided to put them at the foot of the Statue of the Republic and took a picture for the class."

The Statue of the Republic at the Place de la République features Marianne, a national symbol of liberty and the French Republic, and is an important figure comparable to the Statue of Liberty.

To go along with the letters, Bullington began incorporating more lessons about France into the classroom, such as writing exercises, teaching the class where Brookings is compared to Paris and comparing the American and French flags.

"We think it's very important for these young children to learn citizenship and caring for others. Not just caring for others in our classroom and in our school or community, but across the world. It was a timely learning experience," Bullington said.

"The kids love to learn about current events, and then you can get them excited about the world."

Still, she's constantly surprised at just how aware they are of world events.

"I think when you have someone who has been touched (by these events), it brings it to life more. It gives us a great chance to talk about other countries, too, because they might not have been on my lesson plan that day, but that's what they need to know," Bullington said.

This isn't the first time she's had her class write letters for people overseas (years ago, her class wrote letters to a student's uncle who was serving in Iraq), and it won't be the last time, she assured.

"It means a lot," Chloè said. "It means we're all in the same world, and we can feel that more. For us, this experience is a success. We feel good and had a warm welcome in Brookings, and it's incredible for us and especially our girl."

She continued, "We have another girl she's 3 1/2 and it's so great. I would like to have grown up like them and have this experience of learning something like this. I think she's a citizen of the world, not just French. I think she feels French and American together."

Brookings and the world, she concluded, "It's just warm and kind. It's very simple and big together. You feel better."

STEM OPPORTUNITIES GROW IN CANTON

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) will grow 17 percent by 2018—nearly double the growth for non-STEM fields and by 2018, the U.S. will have more than 1.2 million unfilled STEM jobs because there will not be enough qualified workers to fill these openings.

Simply put, STEM is where jobs are today and where the job growth will be in the future.

To help address this void, the Canton School District is taking steps to increase student awareness of the opportunities that exist in an effort to boost student enrollment in STEM courses offered at Canton High School.

The Canton Robotics Club is a new middle school group formed at the start of the 2015-16 school year. The Club is coached by five parent volunteers who organize and supervise the work sessions for the various student groups as they prepare for competition. Students have several facets of competition that they can be involved with including marketing, business presentation, design, engineering and programming among others.

The Robotics Club had a very successful first year and competed at several different events where they received awards. Currently, there are 21 students involved in the Robotics Club of which 20 percent are female.

Another strategy the district uses to get students excited about enrolling in STEM classes is to offer a summer Gateway Academy prior to high school.

The Gateway Academy, offered to students in grades 7-9, allows participants to explore the various STEM disciplines through challenging and fun educational activities.

Some of the more popular activities covered during the academy include: designing and launching water rockets, computerized flight simulator training; robotics contest; building construction using Autodesk Revit; engineering, designing and fabrication using Autodesk Inventor software and 3D printer; scavenger hunts using hand-held GPS devices; and piloting an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone).

The district is beginning to see an increase in enrollment in high school STEM courses as a direct result of the Gateway Academy.

An additional benefit the district receives is student mentoring. Former students who attended the Academy are willing to volunteer their time during the summer to assist with the Academy and work with the younger students.

Canton High School was the first in the state to pilot the



Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum, which provides a comprehensive approach to STEM education, and includes course offerings such as Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering and Architecture, Principles of Biomedical Science, and Computer Graphics and Animation.

Students are able to obtain up to 12 college credits in engineering through Augustana University, as well.

The activity-, project-, and problem-based curriculum allow students to apply what they know, identify problems, and find unique solutions.

“What I like best about the PLTW curriculum is that it not only engages students but it teaches them that being wrong is part of the learning process,” Superintendent Terry Gerber said.

PAWS PROGRAM PROVES VALUABLE TO KIDS

“I don’t know what I would do without the PAWS program.”

“My kids just love going to PAWS every day after school.”

“My daughter cries when I pick her up from PAWS because she doesn’t want to leave.”

These are only a few of the many quotes that could be used echoing support for the Chamberlain Elementary School PAWS program: Programs After/Before School, Winners in School Success.

Like other programs, PAWS started out with a small number of participants 10 years ago. Today there are 205 children, kindergarten through 6th grade, registered for the program and an average of 135 children who attend every day.

Lindsay Chilson is the PAWS Director and leads the program with incredible enthusiasm, dedication, and a heart filled with love for children. Supporting Mrs. Chilson with supervision and tutoring responsibilities are 10-12 high school students and six adult staff members, as it takes many people to plan, organize, and supervise the daily activities going on in the PAWS program.

The overall goal of the PAWS program is academic; to increase the percentage of students that score in the Advanced and Proficient categories according to the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

To meet this goal, a homework room and tutoring sessions are set up for students in need of extra help and certified CES teachers serve as tutors in the program.

In addition to the overall goal, the project has identified three target populations in need of services: 1) students and families who are economically disadvantaged, 2) students receiving special education services, and 3) Native American students and families.

Also included in the PAWS program are activities and outings to promote an appreciation of various cultures, to promote a healthy lifestyle through recreation, and to develop an appreciation for the arts.

PAWS has a before-school program, an after-school program and a summer program. Each school-day morning, parents and students are patiently waiting outside Chamberlain Elementary so that when 7:30 arrives, the children can easily hurry out of the vehicles and enter the school where breakfast is being served everyday through the Lunchtime Solutions Food Service program.

The after-school program runs from 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

The Summer PAWS Program is designed to run seven hours per day for nine weeks and begins within two weeks of school dismissing for the summer break.

When entering the many classrooms that house the after-school activities, one will find children working on art projects, taking a tour of a new city or country through the “Walking Wednesdays” program, participating in STEM Activities, or using the technology resources in the computer lab.

Children also participate in the “One Day without Shoes Project” and have “free play” with Legos, a kitchenette, games, and an assortment of toys.

The playground is another popular location for the PAWS participants as they get healthy doses of sunshine, running, playing tag, and tossing a ball with friends.

Partnerships and collaboration with local businesses and government agencies demonstrate their support of the program through financial assistance as well as in-kind donations.

All of these relationships promote the success of the PAWS program. Local banks provide literature, guest speakers and field trip opportunities. Law enforcement agencies and the Chamberlain Police Department along with the CSD School Resource Officer, provide educational safety programs and support to families in need.

The local movie theatre offers discounted tickets on movies for PAWS participants as well as free movie rentals for the PAWS program.

The City of Chamberlain allows use of the city parks, swimming pool, and other recreational facilities for PAWS participants. The Chamber of Commerce is willing to organize tours of the many historic and scenic sites of the community.

Local museums provide educational programs on cultural aspects of our area, authors in residence sharing, museum tours, and gallery walks. Cozard Memorial Library sponsors a summer reading program, craft/art sessions, puppet shows, and book readings.

It has proven to be a valuable program that is operated by caring dedicated adults and attended by children who enjoy extending their learning beyond the traditional school day.



COUNT ON CARTER

Colman-Egan Sophomore Carter Schmidt started his list of tasks performed for the school in the fifth grade – when he taped and live streamed all home games – and hasn't stopped adding to it.

"I tease him that he is my assistant and that someday he may be the superintendent like his grandpa," Superintendent Tracey Olson said. "Carter spends so much time here at the school a student joked, 'He probably has to call home to call in sick!'"

"I can't begin to say how much we all appreciate everything Carter does for us."

The list of everything Carter does is an impressive display of his dedication to the district.

He runs the display board for all home games, created content displayed on the board each night, runs Dak Stats for the boys and girls basketball games, announces lineups for all home games, is the libero tracker for the volleyball team, referees basketball games for the elementary team, does photography for the yearbook, operates the sound for school events and keeps stats for the girls basketball team.

"He makes my job a lot easier," Girls Basketball Coach Kristi Rae Smith said. "I am impressed with how easily he runs everything. As soon as



the game is over, he always has the box score e-mailed to me."

"I couldn't imagine our team without Carter being a part of it!"

Carter created Colman-Egan Sports Center, where he writes his own script, edits game film, interviews coaches, and puts the video together. When Colman-Egan had their All School Reunion this summer he created a video for them to use during the dinner. He also played an important role in creating a video application for special education students to use.

"Carter is a hard working kid that has a lot of pride in his school!" Technology Coordinator Julie Preheim said. "He is an awesome help in the technology department!"

Last year Carter took over the Daily Announcements on the intercom. He is vigilant about making sure he covers student success stories and is always searching for ways to use technology to benefit our school.

"Carter has such a positive and friendly demeanor," Olson said. "It is encouraging to watch his involvement and watch how other students tend to be more involved in these activities when they see his dedication."

MAKING A MARK

The Colman-Egan student accepted with open arms an extraordinary student.

Mark came to the school district as a 17 year old junior; he has Cerebral Palsy, is non-verbal, uses a wheelchair to get around, and has no controlled use of his right extremities.

Despite the obvious challenges that go along with his disability, Mark works hard every day to achieve his goals and prove that he is as much a part of the Colman-Egan 'family' as any one of his peers. He has a heart as big as the sun and loves school!

Mark is now a senior and is preparing to roll across the stage with his class and enter into the next phase of his life.

C-E students were were uninformed of Mark's disability at first, but through classroom visits, Mark used his assistive communication device to answer questions and students learned they had a lot in common with him.

Every day you can see Mark interacting with the elementary students via high five, fist bumping or waving.

Mark has been involved in many activities since he started school. He participates in VoAg, where he took part in working on small engines as well as landscaping projects. He has attended classes in the FACS room, cooking and learning about



nutrition & wellness.

Marks peers have never denied him access to any activity that he wants to participate in. They helped produce, as well as starred in, a video application for Mark to attend Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) this past summer.

Mark was nominated and voted 2015 homecoming king by his peers, which if you ask Mark, has been the highlight of his high school career.

He also attended prom and has worked in the community as a volunteer helping to keep the parks clean in Madison as well as assisting in light janitorial duties at the Madison Community Center over the summer months.

During PE you can find Mark participating in activities such as dodge ball, basketball and weight lifting.

Mark has had an impact on each individual he has come in contact with. Mark's success in school is accredited, not only to his determination and positive spirit, but to the people around him.

Students don't see Mark as a person with disabilities, but rather they see him as someone who uses his abilities to achieve success.

C-E STUDENTS SEE SUCCESS IN ACTIVITIES

The hard work and dedication of Colman-Egan students has paid off with success coming in education and extracurricular activities.

C-E FCCLA completing many activities and projects, including organizing a Turkey Bingo night and supper, a Winter Formal, Secret Santa exchange, and prepared for the district meeting. Members are organizing a Penny War to raise money for Make a Wish, while others are organizing a blood drive for the Blood Bank.

Students in FCA are planning to raise money to provide food to serve a meal at the banquet outside of the school day.

FBLA members enrolled in the Introduction to Business class have been busy making business videos for the school website. Students are learning about our local businesses and their business plans while using technology.

This process will carry on into their Business Communication class where they will also be looking for ways to promote the community as though they were part of an economic development board.

This year, Colman-Egan reintroduced the Oral Interpretation program and participants had a very rewarding year, with one student advancing to the state competition and one student another qualifying as an alternate.

This season 16 students participated in the One Act Play competition in Madison. Two students received outstanding performance ratings.

The Colman-Egan "Souper Bowl" event took place the week prior to the Super Bowl.

This friendly competition, between the elementary, junior high, high school and staff, has participants set goals and points are counted among the teams. All food items are donated to the Moody County Breadbasket, the big winner of the Colman-Egan School Souper Bowl!

The Colman-Egan School takes pride in honoring veterans in the area.

A special recognition program is presented on Veterans Day with students and staff participating in the program. Valentines for Vets has been an ongoing project of the school since 1999. Students make Valentines for Veterans and they are distributed to veterans at the VA Health Care facilities in Hot Springs, Fort Meade, and Sioux Falls and also distributed to veterans at Edgewood Vista and Riverview Health Care in Flandreau.

The excitement of the Colman-Egan music department began with a marching band camp in August, which helped prepare them for three marching band competitions, the homecoming



parade and a first time trip onto the field at the last home football field!

As the band was fine tuning their marching skills and pep band music, the choir was gearing up for an amazing day of music at their Tri-School Festival. C-E also had four high school students travel to Rapid City to participate in the All-State Choir Concert.

One of the students received special recognition for being one of only a few out of over one thousand attending to receive a four year pin!

Also traveling to Rapid City were three elementary students who auditioned for and were chosen to be a part of the South Dakota Elementary Honor Choir and a high school student who was the second chair horn player in the South Dakota All State Orchestra. That student is also in his second year with the South Dakota Youth Symphony which regularly performs at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls.

After the trip to Rapid City focus quickly turned to the holiday season with the band and choirs in the elementary, junior high and high school began working on the programs for two holiday concerts.

Elementary students in the third through sixth grades excitedly learned how to play xylophones and a small instrumental ensemble composed of seventh through seniors volunteered to practice and perform before school and at local churches.

>>> SEE **SUCCESS** [PAGE 18]

COLMAN-EGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUCCESS

>>> CONTINUED FROM [pg. 17]

Five students from the sixth through eighth grades 6-8 worked to perfect recorded auditions that were then sent to SD-MEA for consideration as South Dakota Middle School All-State Band attendees. Three of those students were chosen from the 395 who auditioned and were accepted into the top Honor Band with one student set to receive special recognition at the concert in March as a three year achiever!

Three students had the opportunity to participate in the Augustana Honor Band Festival and five students auditioned for and were accepted to the USD Quad State Honor Band Festival.

January brought All-State Band Auditions, as well as Solo and Ensemble Contest preparation for both band and choir students. C-E is excited to invite students and the public to their first ever recital!

Elementary students are mastering theory in grades K-6 and 3-6 grades are anxiously awaiting recorder season! Students will continue to play PEP Band at the majority of our home games, several students will sing and play the Star Spangled Banner and will work toward their spring large group contests and concerts.

Since 2002, sixth graders of Colman-Egan School have participated in the Grandfriend Program.

During the school year, students communicate with local senior citizens by exchanging letters. Through letter writing, students share of themselves and learn about their adopted grandfriends.

The mission of the Grandfriend Program is simply to unite the elders and youth with the wisdom and experiences of the past along with creativity and energy of our future. After months of correspondence, students honor their grandfriends in May and invite them to a special program.

"It is a heartwarming adventure for our students," School Counselor Vickie Leibel said. "I believe exchanges between older generations and young people can be so profound that it not only can change all of our lives for the better but can also strengthen our communities."

Jean Lellelid, a new Grandfriend, expressed her appreciation.

"Since being a grandfriend, I have learned more about school activities and I'm enjoying getting to know the students as well," Lellelid said. "I feel so much more included in the community."

Students are encouraged to maintain their relationship with their grandfriend by continuing to write letters.

"C-E students go above and beyond to help others," Superintendent Tracey Olson said.

"I am so proud of the character of the students, especially observing the simplest of things like how they all tell their bus drivers thank you every day and how respectful students respond when you ask them for help."

The Colman-Egan FFA Chapter sent four members to National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

The chapter will have its annual pancake breakfast, which is well attended by the community, during National FFA Week. The

23 FFA members are currently preparing for their respective spring CDEs with competitions beginning in March and ending at the State Convention in April.

The Ag. class is currently learning shop skills. Freshmen are building another set of bleachers for the City of Colman's baseball field. Last spring the seniors (with the help of some other classes) made foundations and poured 3 slabs of concrete for the bleachers to sit on at the baseball field.

Finally, C-E Senior Brody Wanner received the "Outstanding Affiliate" award at the National History Day competition in the Senior category for being the highest South Dakota scorer with the national judges for his exhibit: Nikola Tesla: Leader of the Electrical Age.

Brody also had his exhibit featured with other top entries in a special showcase at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.



PACKING THE BACKPACK

The Colome Consolidated School District launched Operation Backpack in November with the purpose of providing nutritious food to families and individuals in need.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food insecure households as those that are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire enough food to meet the basic needs of all their members because of insufficient money or other resources.

"Though the program is intended to help those children whose families find it difficult to have enough food for the entire month, all children are eligible for this program," Guidance Counselor Becky Heath said.

"It will replace the school meals that children miss during their weekend or extended breaks from school."

Operation Backpack works with school staff to provide a supply of meals and snacks to students, at no cost, who may need an additional resource over weekends during the school year. The program currently feeds 42 children each weekend.

Each weekend food bags contain enough food for two breakfasts, two lunches, one can of vegetables and one can of fruit. All food is nonperishable. The food is given to the children before they leave school each Friday.

Any child enrolled in the Colome Consolidated School District may participate in the program.

"We could not provide this worthy program without the help of surrounding businesses and private donors,"

Heath said, adding that letters were sent out to approximately 40 businesses in the surrounding area asking for assistance.

Supplies are kept on site for easy access and grocery shopping is done bi-monthly.

"It is not uncommon for several snacks or boxes of food to show up on any given week to help support the program," Heath said.



School staff and community members have volunteered food and time to help raise funds for Operation Backpack. The program recently hosted a Soup Supper fund raiser and has an upcoming Indian Taco Feed planned, as well. Heath said they hope to have a Glow Run and Grill this spring.

"Giving to those in need is truly a blessing to all of those involved," Heath said.

Heath said the National Honor Society and Student Council help make the program

a success by helping fill the bags ever week.

"We are excited about keeping this needed cause alive in our school," Heath said. "The community of Colome and the wonderful school staff and students are at the heart of Operation Backpack. It is my hope that students and adults alike will feel the joy of giving."

"Touching young lives through Operation Backpack is one small way of making our community a better place."

DISTINGUISHED HONOR FOR C-S

Corsica-Stickney Elementary School was named a National Title I Distinguished School in 2015.

Corsica-Stickney Elementary School was one of up to 100 schools throughout the country recognized nationally for exceptional student achievement.

The National Title I Distinguished Schools Program publicly recognizes qualifying Title I schools for the outstanding academic achievements of their students. It highlights the efforts of schools across the country making significant improvements for their students.

“This honor is a reflection of a dedicated and professional teaching staff that goes above and beyond to help students have success,” Superintendent Scott Muckey said.

Title I provides funding to school districts to aid in the education of economically disadvantaged students.

The National Title I Association implemented the National Title I Distinguished Schools Program to highlight selected schools that have successfully used their Title I federal funds to improve the education for economically disadvantaged students.

Corsica-Stickney was nominated for the honor by the South Dakota Department of Education.

“The school district is always very concerned with achieving goals for school and students,” Muckey said. “This is just a reinforcement that we are using best professional practices.”



HONORING THE HEROES OF HISTORY

The students of Deuel High School have taken on Project Based Learning with full force.

American History Teacher Matt Rosdahl decided to implement Project Based Learning after attending the South Dakota Innovation Lab workshop. After the workshop and additional development at the school level, Rosdahl made the decision to convert his American History courses completed to the PBL model.

One of the projects American History students completed over the course of the year was a filmed interview with World War II veterans, which culminated with a reception put on by the students for the community to honor the veterans and showcasing the interviews.

“Many students were excited about this project because it wasn’t reading from a book or creating a Power-Point,” Rosdahl said. “It was a chance to learn about the real life hardships and experiences faced by World War II veterans from the veterans themselves.”

Students needed to finish a series of tasks before the project was fully complete.

Students were separated into groups with each group being assigned two veterans to interview. Many were excited to share their story with the students. The first step was to conduct pre-interviews in order to learn more about the veterans. Pre-interview questions were designed to get background information on the veterans service.

After the pre-interviews were done, the students did research on the war, specific to the experiences their assigned veteran lived through.

That research and information was then used to craft questions specific to each individual veteran. Then it was time for the actual interviews. The students worked with the veterans to set up a date, time, and place for the interview.

The interviews were filmed and recorded using the multimedia cameras and equipment. After the interviews were completed, students, working with the multimedia class, edited and put together all of the videos.

Within the groups, there were certain members in charge of the reception.

They made a list of food to bring, made invitations and organized the date and time for the party. Along with planning the reception, students that partook in the planning process also delivered invitations to the veterans, collected pictures and memorabilia and set up the gym with chairs and tables.

The memorabilia collected was placed on a decorative display table for the students, veterans, and general public to see. These items included pictures, letters, and a Japanese flag that was recovered from wreckage in the Pacific theatre.

“Many veterans and community members came to the reception and really appreciated all of the hard work the students put into the project,” Rosdahl said.

“The veterans were especially thankful.”

Veterans thought the student interest in the stories they had to tell was great and American History students Morgan Engelkes and Morgan Bublitz noted how much they “enjoyed hearing the stories the veterans had to tell and they really appreciated the veterans meeting with them.”

The plan is for this to be an annual project progressing through the American wars.

This year’s juniors will be researching the Korean War, interviewing the local veterans associated with that war, and putting on a reception to honor them. The following year will be the Vietnam War and so forth.



DISCOVERING DEUEL COUNTY

Before Deuel students go and change the world, it's important for them to know where they come from.

Deuel Elementary Fifth Grade students enjoyed a field trip that captured the beautiful natural sceneries, while taking a trip back in time to discover the community's rich history.

The class made a stop in one of the oldest towns in the Dakota Territory, Gary, which was established in 1872. They also walked the halls of the first blind school of South Dakota built in 1900, which today has been restored as Buffalo Ridge Resort and Business Center.

Students visited the local Gary Historical Museum to view artifacts from long ago. Each artifact and memorabilia tells it's very own story.

Just on the edge of town the class stopped to see the Native Lookout Point. Back in the mid-1800s, Native Americans would use it to be able to see for miles in any direction. Also at the top of Native Lookout there is an Ancient Native compass formed from rock back in the mid-1800s.

"This is one of the most spectacular sites in eastern South Dakota," Fifth Grade Teacher Jon Peterreins said.

The next stop took the class on back roads in the Coteau des Prairies, which is a plateau approximately 200 miles in length and 100 miles in width, rising from the prairie flatlands in eastern South Dakota.



"The view took our student's breath away and they were surprised this landscape existed in Deuel County," Peterreins said.

From the rolling Coteau des Prairie to the spring fed Lake Cochrane, Deuel County provides a variety of landscape with stories rich in history.

"Our students at Deuel School can always appreciate nature's beauty in their very own county," Peterreins said.



DHS BIO CLASS STUDIES STREAMS

At Deuel School the students in Senior Biology/Biology 153 spend most of the first quarter outside studying stream features and stream organisms.

Students learn to collect data in the same manner wildlife biologists do and to participate in the kind of research scientists do to evaluate the health of two local prairie streams. The students do a comparison of the aquatic community and habitat variables by identifying stream characteristics and collecting minnows and macroinvertebrates.

critters collected at each stream. Students learn how the condition of the riparian zone, the land nearest the stream, affects the health of the stream.

By reading and researching about human impact on the health of streams, students discuss the possible impact of humans on these particular streams. Upstream activities are researched and their possible effects are also discussed.

Often students have identified 11- 14 different species of minnows and this is surprising and fun for the students. Reporting of



Budding biologists also take physical measurements of the streams such as pH, dissolved oxygen and turbidity.

By using special nets (D nets) for collecting the organisms and seining for minnows, students learn to identify several species of minnows and 20 -35 kinds of macroinvertebrates, depending on the weather and physical conditions. Many of the smaller organisms are called macroinvertebrates and range from crayfish to mayflies and stoneflies to leeches and aquatic worms.

Students measure the width and depth of the streams and velocity of flow to determine volume of flow as a comparison between streams. They describe the bottom of the streams as the amount of cobble or rocks that are visible and how much of the cobble is covered by silt or sand.

The health of the river is recorded as an overall report card and includes physical features as well as an inventory of the variety of

data to South Dakota Heritage program has been ongoing and rare species of minnows and fish have been identified, including the endangered Red Belly Dace and just last year a Brown Bullhead was captured. The Brown Bullhead is currently the only known specimen captured and identified in eastern South Dakota.

As a culminating project, the students visit the Redwood River at Camden State Park near Lynd, Minnesota.

What do the students say they learned from this field work and study?

Comments ranged from how many “critters” there were in the stream they were now aware of, to amazement about all the “little details of the organisms I didn’t previously know the organisms had!”, with a focus on the great deal of new information resulting in students looking “at streams and that habitat differently from now on” and, most importantly, students “had a lot of fun learning.”

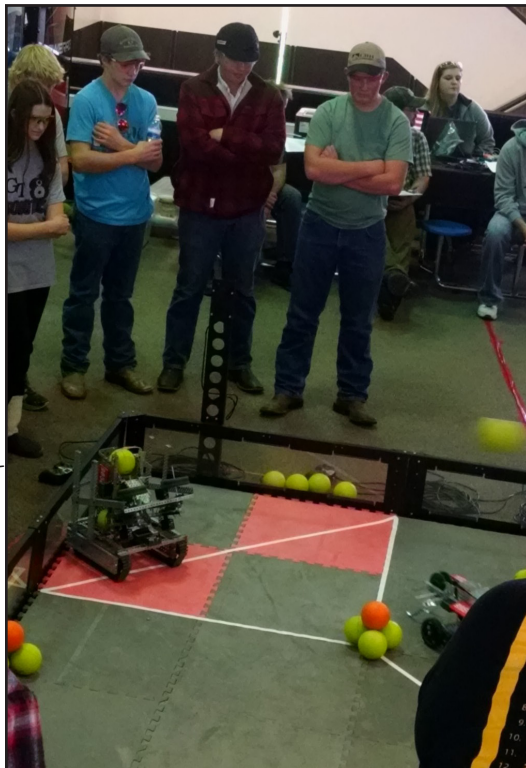
DSD GOES EXPLORING

The Exploring Computer Science (ECS) curriculum in the Douglas School District provides lessons intended to support an inquiry-based, equity-focused, computer science rich classroom.

The curriculum covers topics such as, Human Computer Interactions, Problem Solving, Web Design, Coding/Programming, Computing and Data Analysis, Boot Strap, and Robotics. Teachers are able to adapt the context of particular activities to fit the interests of their students.

A robotics club was also started in the high school, with students involved in the robotics club developing higher order thinking skills that requiring creativity, design and problem solving skills.

“Most of these skills developed, students can use in a career or continuing education after high school,” Superintendent Alan Kerr said. “Students also have the opportunity to apply for various scholarships which both FRC and the Vex competitions.”



Technology Education at Douglas High School is quickly growing with a number of students showing interests in Career and Technological Education. The district currently offers Intro to Technology, Building Trades, Begin and Advanced Welding and soon to come Robotics.

“We want our students to be prepared with skills, ownership and confidence once they leave high school,” Kerr said.

He also noted each course involves science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the classroom, and also exposes students to higher order thinking skills that uses creativity, design and problem solving skills.

Programs also incorporate new skills such as coding, programming and being a part of a team competition and open the door to physics and mechanical system concepts.

“I am excited for the future of the industrial technology program here at Douglas,” Kerr said.

EDUCATION EXCHANGE



Douglas High School World Languages Teacher Kathy Keffeler recently welcomed Dr. Adriana Rabino, a teacher from Uruguay, as part of an exchange program between the two countries.

“Hosting the visiting teacher was a window to another world,” Keffeler said. “The Uruguayan system of education is very different from ours and it was an eye-opening and enlightening experience for many teachers and students in our district.”

The Visiting Uruguayan Educator Program provides a professional development opportunity for participating educators to share best practices on issues of mutual interest to their schools, students, and communities.

Rabino spent two weeks in February in Douglas observing educators and gaining insight into American schools. One of Dr. Rabino’s highest priorities was to learn and implement new teaching techniques and to create connections as she and Keffeler continue their professional dialogue.

“We have established a new international and collegial friendship,” Keffeler said, adding the pair started the seeds of what will hopefully be a real life exchange with Uruguayan students and Dr. Rabino’s school.

Keffeler became involved in the educator exchange program in 2011, when Douglas High School first hosted a teacher. She said the best part of the experience has been the support and encouragement she has received from her principal and the school board.

PATRIOT P.R.I.D.E, POSITIVE RESULTS



Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a program at Douglas's Badger Clark Elementary school that recognizes the positive contributions of students.

The goals are to help each child develop self-discipline and make good choices. The PBIS process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students.

Routines and common language with respect to appropriate school behaviors are consistent throughout our school. As a result, instructional time is effectively used to teach, and the overall school environment is calm, pleasant, and conducive to learning.

The staff of Badger Clark is focused on working with students and their families to promote positive behavior in all school settings. On a daily basis we are reinforcing the ideas of Patriot P.R.I.D.E.

P.R.I.D.E stands for: Polite, Respect, In Control, Don't Quit and Encourage Others

Expected behaviors for all areas are displayed on the Patriot P.R.I.D.E. posters in all classrooms.

When the school rules are followed, students have an opportunity to be recognized for their efforts by receiving Patriot PRIDE bucks. Patriot PRIDE bucks are given by staff members acknowledging positive behavior.

Once received the bucks can be accumulated or spent as each child chooses at our Patriot PRIDE store. Only PRIDE bucks can be redeemed at the store and all PRIDE bucks from each grade are saved for a possible school-wide reward.

Thus far, students have redeemed nearly 15,000 Pride Bucks!



NEW YEAR, NEW SCHOOL



After years of planning, under the direction of the Douglas School Board, past Superintendent Dr. Loren Scheer and Buildings and Grounds Director Ron Minks, the new Vandenberg Elementary School in Box Elder opened its doors to start the school year.

An 81,500 square foot one-story masonry structure, features a central area with commons, 24 general purpose classrooms, four special education classrooms, one Title One classroom, a 2,500 square foot library, a computer and art room, vocal and instrumental music rooms, a large conference room, gymnasium, cafeteria, and office area with a small conference room.

Almost 450 fourth and fifth grade students spend their day in the building with each grade level occupying 12 general-purpose classrooms. An extra five classrooms are available for future growth.

The classrooms, library, and conference rooms are furnished with Smart Boards with projectors. The students each

have an iPad and an individual locker and laptop carts are available.

The school is adorned with red, white and blue fixtures, floor tiles, lockers, bleachers, and furniture sporting a patriotic theme to honor the high percentage of military families and being close proximity to the air force base.

Input from teachers and staff was considered during the design of the building.

The Vandenberg student council's fundraisers along with money from saving cereal box tops and labels were used to purchase trees to add to the landscape. Each classroom adopted a tree and has been responsible for its maintenance and care.

"The district is thrilled with the outcome of our new school," current Superintendent Alan Kerr said. "It was because of a large number of people and factors that the building of Vandenberg became a reality. I would like to personally thank everyone involved."

WHAT DOES CHARTWELLS BRING TO YOUR TABLE?



eat.

We keep students healthy with delicious meals prepared on-site with fresh, locally grown ingredients.

learn.

We go beyond the café with nutrition education in the classroom and in the community.



live.

We give back to the community through educational programs, community enhancement projects and volunteering.



With **Chartwells** at your table, there is great food, education and people to make a difference in your community!



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CHEERING FOR A CURE



The Dupree High School National Honor Society annually teams up with the High School Student Council and Girls Volleyball Team during the month of October to sponsor the "Pack the Place Pink" event where the groups help bring awareness to breast cancer.

The "Pack the Place Pink" event was created in October 2009 to help cheer on a teacher, Mrs. Vicki Young a teacher in the district for 20 years, as she began her fight against cancer again. Mrs. Young lost her battle against cancer in January of 2011, but the event continues annually in honor of her.

Initially, Dupree National Honor Society members decided they wanted to do something to help Mrs. Young with her medical expenses and what started out to be a small silent auction as a fundraiser grew into a live auction



and raised more than \$20,000.

Groups have also raised funds by selling pink themed baked good items, pink beads and pink bracelets to financially support the "Vicki Young Memorial Scholarship" originally established by the Dupree High School National Honor Society.

A \$500.00 scholarship is awarded annually to a Dupree High School Senior based on their academic achievement and community leadership.

"The school and community support the annual event overwhelmingly by wearing pink, creating human pink ribbons and wearing pink mustaches," Dupree Business Manager Connie Alspach said.

"The students recognize the importance of getting involved and how they too can help make a difference."

E.A.G.L.E. CENTER SOARS

The E.A.G.L.E. Center was created to refresh the warrior spirit for students in grades 7-12, and today the program provides customized learning alternatives made available through three different programs.

The E.A.G.L.E. Center's mission is to empower all learners to succeed using customized learning, nurturing cultural, academic, and personal growth, and to support students' natural motivation to learn, resulting in a stronger sense of well-being. The educational approach involves the E.A.G.L.E. acronym: Education, Assessment, Goal Setting, Life Skills, and Employment.

The delivery system involves using multi-dimensional modes of instruction, offering unlimited stimulus materials, annually writing individual student plans for 70-100 students and monitoring academics and behavior through informal and formal meetings that strengthen the nurturing components of stimulation, certainty, and recognition.

"The E.A.G.L.E Center has helped students for the past twenty years to rediscover and reinvigorate the warrior spirit!" Superintendent Carol Veit said.

The idea of an interim setting for the Cheyenne-Eagle Butte

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress testing, which is administered three times yearly.

The EC uses a research-based curriculum Anywhere Learning System (ALS) that features the full range of core academic subjects based on Common Core State Standards and South Dakota standards.

Each course has a set list of assignments according to these standards, and teachers assign pre-assessments so that students can test out of assignments as soon as they begin the course. Through use of this program, many students who would otherwise drop out are able to recover credits and earn their high school diplomas.

Social/interpersonal growth and community impact are measured through the social skills curriculum, Olweus Bullying Program and PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) instructional opportunities, and semi-annual surveys such as the EC Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey, the EC Student Satisfaction Survey, and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Title I Program Parent Survey.

The EC staff has developed a unique social skills curriculum for EC I, and every year the program has seen marked improvements in re-



School, grades 7-12, emerged during the 1995-96 school year when Dr. Vicki Birkeland was hired as the Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School's Discipline Principal.

The high number of discipline incidents during the 1995-96 school year was mostly gang-related, and the school was looking for a solution. It was found that the students the EC served needed more individual attention, opportunities for more intervention or enrichment, customized learning plans, and specialized school schedules among other accommodations and modifications.

Since 1996 the students the EC staff has been called to serve within the school system have varied from those health issues or physical disabilities, teen parents, students in juvenile detention, and students with oppositional defiant or withdrawn behavior.

The three unique programs serve different groups of students: The EC I Program (started in 1996) serves fifteen students in grades 7-9, the EC II Program (started in 1997) serves 60-100 students in grades 9-11 yearly and the EC III Program (started in 2010) primarily serves students who are eighteen and older, are in transition to another setting or are parents.

EC measures success in multiple ways and from multiple perspectives, including academic achievement, academic growth, social/interpersonal growth, and community impact.

Academic achievement is measured in summative course assessments and the yearly SmarterBalanced and DakotaSTEP testing. Academic growth is measured in formative course assessments and the

ports of disruptive behavior, peer-relations and adult-relations incidents, and other issues that hinder learning.

Students in the EC I program in particular show a renewed enthusiasm for attending school, and their parents notice the difference. EC I students are provided with weekly counseling, and all other EC students can request regular counseling as well.

Staff members have a goal that students should be prepared for college, career, and life skills, and they plan lessons about everything from following instructions to proper table manners, and offer opportunities for older students to prepare for the drivers examination and ACTs.

The staff also works to represent the EC well through writing newspaper articles, inviting community members to planning meetings and monthly parent involvement activities, and encouraging their students to get involved in community organizations.

The E.A.G.L.E. Center (EC) held two Winter Wopila Awards Day Programs on Thursday, January 22, 2016, to recognize and honor EC I students and ECII/III students for their first semester accomplishments.

It was a celebration of the authentic self – gifts, skills, abilities, interest, talents, insight and wisdom ("woksape") and with recognition, enthusiasm, and positive revitalizing energy.

Chiefeagle, Teton Sioux stated, "Your mind must be like a tipi. Leave the entrance flap open so that the fresh air can enter and clear out the smoke of confusion."

"There is not much guessing needed at the EC," Veit said. "The students are "doers" and know how to get things done."

EDGEMONT EMPOWERED

To begin the 2015-2016 school year, the Edgemont School District invited Paul Bernabei from Top 20 Training to present to our teachers, students, parents, and community about discovering the power of choice.

Bernabei's message centered on participants recognizing whether their thinking is above or below the Line, on helping our children to learn from mistakes and celebrating confusion as a natural and necessary part of learning.

Bernabei spent a lot of time talking about "the line." He said when we are above the line, our thinking, learning, and communicating is effective and problems we encounter don't even seem like problems because we are positive, focused on what is important, and maintain the power to control our own lives.

According to Bernabei, when thinking is below the line it causes thinking, learning and communicating to be ineffective and we lose focus of what is important and become powerless victims who make a mess of decisions.

"All of us have above the line and below the line thoughts every day," Edgemont Assistant 7-12 Principal Amy Ferley said.

Bernabei noted it is within our power to decide whether to accept the invitations to Below the Line parties, with invitations coming in many forms, and when we do find ourselves Below the Line, we need to find a trampoline to get us back Above.

Bernabei spent time talking to students about the levels of

listening with a goal to listen "In the Zone" which means being focused, present and engaged in the moment and avoiding distractions that can keep them from getting to this optimal zone.

While he spoke to parents, Bernabei focused on helping our children learn from mistakes. When talking with the teachers, Bernabei really emphasized, "Human being precedes

human doing," meaning all of us have a basic need to be recognized and heard before we can perform well.

"Our jobs as teachers, he told us, is to help students fail and then get up with a smile and try again," Ferley said. "He encouraged us to celebrate confusion as one of those necessary steps toward learning."

Ferley noted the difficulty in summarizing Bernabei's message, but nevertheless, the results have been powerful in the Edgemont School District.

"Around our school, students and teachers have been able to discuss effective and ineffective thinking in ways that talking about 'attitude' have not accomplished before," Ferley said. "It has given students a common language to discuss their feelings

when they didn't necessarily have the vocabulary to before."

"It helped everyone establish classroom norms for a safe place to share and learn. Students and teachers really approached the new school year with excitement at the possibility the year held. Top 20 Training provided a great introduction to our Good News for the year."



SENDING A SUPPLY

In November, the Flandreau School District started a free program supplying elementary aged students with food for the weekend.

Flandreau Kindergarten Teacher Sarah Kills-A-Hundred and her husband started the “Backpack” program, which packs a supply of food in a bag on Thursday evenings and distributes the bags to classroom teachers

“Students and parents have been very open to the program,” Weber said. “How the students receive the bags of food before the weekend is so seamless that everything just goes smoothly.”

Monetary donations and food donations have allowed the program to grow. Weber said the program recently received \$2,500 donations from Monsanto and



on Friday morning, who then put them in the student’s book bags.

“There was a need for this type of program for the students and families in Flandreau,” Superintendent Rick Weber said.

Parents sign up their kids for the program, which started with about 20 students participating and has grown since its beginning, said Weber.

a local family.

“The community has been so supportive,” Weber said.

“We have had many community members inquiring how they can help or contribute to the program. Community members stop often at the school office to donate funds to the program.”

POSITIVE CHANGES FOR FLORENCE SCHOOL

The Florence School District has taken on several positive changes for the 2015-2016 school year.

First and foremost is the addition and completion of a building project that provided the school with a new gym, kitchen, and commons area. The facility was much needed, as the old gym and kitchen were terribly out of date and limited

space was an issue. The Florence School District has taken on several positive changes for the 2015-2016 school year. First and foremost is the addition and completion of a building project that provided the school with a new gym, kitchen, and commons area. The facility was much needed, as the old gym and kitchen were terribly out of date and limited

students, each semester, took dual-credit courses. This year, two students took courses over the summer, one student took a course during the fall semester, and five students are currently taking dual-credit courses. At the elementary level, Sarah Spiering's third grade class is starting a "Random Acts of Kindness" project.



space was an issue.

The new accommodations offer a much-needed facelift to the look, functionality and sense of pride in the school and community.

Florence has also seen an increase in enrollment this year; the 2015 student count of 257 swas up from 245 students last fall and up significantly from 2012 when enrollment was 218.

Students at Florence High School also have the option to make positive changes in their futures by enrolling in dual-credit courses that will give them both high school and college credit.

This year, a record number of students are taking these courses.

The first year the program started (2014-2015), 2 stu-

Their goal is to complete 100 random acts of kindness by the end of the school year throughout the school and community.

Stacy Busskohl's fourth grade students work every week to collect papers, plastic, and other items from each classroom in the school that can be recycled to help make the school and community more eco-friendly.

The school also works closely with the community at the Country Schoolhouse Museum.

The goal of the Country Schoolhouse is to celebrate the past while embracing the positive changes being made in the future of education and the community. The museum is run by volunteers in the community, but often works with classes in the school on various projects and fundraisers.

FREDERICK F.Y.I. FILLS NEED

A typical small town in South Dakota, Frederick relies on a communication system to learn about past events and the schedule of future plans.

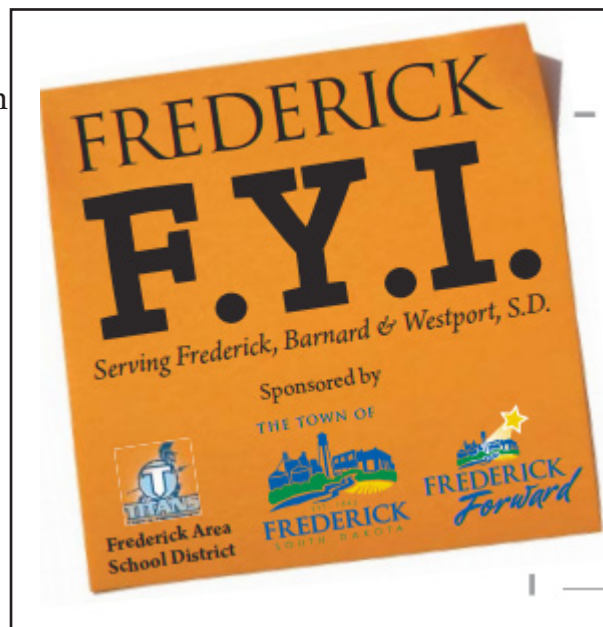
Starting in the fall of 2012, the Frederick Area School has been involved in collaborating with the city of Frederick and a local organization called Frederick Forward to write, edit, and print a classy local newspaper known as the Frederick FYI.

As there is no official city newspaper for Frederick, the community is very receptive to the paper as it fills a huge need for the community.

Community member Krysti Mikkonen has been the crucial community link who is a liaison between the city, school and Frederick Forward.

She is a committee member along with the

school team of Teacher Brock Pashen, Principal Jessica Ringgenberg, Business Manager Deb Klapperich, IT Director Justin Brotzel and Superintendent Knute Reierson.



Each of these team members, along with 12 Frederick High School Junior and Senior students – enrolled in the Yearbook/Journalism class – work together generating articles, writing, proofreading, editing, printing, and mailing nearly 600 “FYI” papers to the school patrons each month.

Students decide on appropriate school topics to write on and interview

people or gather information about their article.

“Students and staff work hard to put out this monthly newspaper and are proud of what it looks like and the service it provides,” Superintendent Reierson said.

NEW FACILITY FOR G-V



This past year brought on the completion of a major project for the Gayville-Volin School district.

The district finished construction on a top notch outdoor track facility that began in 2013 and included a great deal of involvement from the community, who helped raise more than a quarter of a million dollars for the facility. Many local groups also donated time and expertise to finish certain areas that include; cement work, irrigation and drainage, said Superintendent Jason Selchert.

“We have had a great outpouring of support since the completion of the project,” Selchert said.

The facility and we hosted four track events including the Region track meet. Selchert said there was a great deal

of community help to organize and run the meets and look forward to hosting meets this spring and into the future.

This year the facility will host a Junio High track invite, Tri-State Invitational, Great Plain Conference Meet and the Tri-Valley 7-10 meet.

Selchert said the facility has been really well received by staff and student and is frequented by community members.

“One of the selling points of the facility was to get our students and community members off the streets when it comes to exercise,” Selchert said. “The facility allows both leisure activity as well as physical education classes to utilize the track and field when not in use by sports.”

NEW GROUP AT G-V

Gayville-Volin School District began a FCA group for high-schoolers at the commencement of the 2015-2016 school year.

The group of 25 students meets Wednesday before the start of the school day for discussion and to share fellowship by eating breakfast together.

The group also has held movie events, had a cook-out, and is planning on doing a group-building activity. Staff members have also joined the group.

“Students have even volunteered to lead the presentation and present a message to the group,” Group Leader Tamara Lee said, adding the group aims to solidify student values.

“We also want the youth to know that, as adults, we support them and are available for them,” Lee said.



INTERN OPPS FOR SENIORS



Groton Area High School offers an internship class that is available only for high school seniors. It has been available within the school system on a limited basis for many years but is now being expanded. The expansion of the program is primarily due to Brooke Lingbeck, the school's business teacher.

Lingbeck was hired in the 2014-2015 school year. In addition to managing the internship program, Lingbeck teaches accounting, business law, introduction to business, business management, and personal finance as well as being the advisor for the school's chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America.

Class time is provided for Lingbeck to not only spend some time instructing the students but will also now include time for

her to visit the students on-the-job during their internship.

The opportunity to watch her students while working is one of the changes in the program for the second semester in 2016. Lingbeck will also change the beginning of the internship class by having the students write resumes and prepare for interviews.

The students are also to select the businesses and/or places where they would like to work and apply for a position rather than having the teacher make the arrangements. Various on-the-job details will also be covered, such as promptness, appropriate attire, and work ethic.

At the end of the semester, the students are required to do a class presentation about their internship. The students will explain what they learned, what skills were necessary, what their responsibilities were on the job, and whether or not this experience had any effect on their future plans.

Businesses in the area welcome interns as do teachers, administrators, and other school employees. All students must work inside the city limits in order to avoid wasted time traveling, both for the students and for Lingbeck who will be visiting them while they work.

There were 23 students first semester who worked as interns in a wide variety of businesses and in the school itself. Some of these include working for the drugstore, a body shop, a computer service company, the lumber yard, a local restaurant, and others. Several students did their internships in the ag, chemistry, vocal music classes and in various elementary classrooms.

OI TEAM SEES STATE SUCCESS

Oral interpretation, formerly called declam, has been an extra-curricular program in the Groton Public School system since at least 1935, according to the oldest yearbook available. Kristen Gonsoir has been the oral interp coach for more than twenty years. Gonsoir, the physical science and chemistry teacher, is also the debate coach.

The sixteen members of the oral interp team in grades 7 through 12 have had a great competitive season this school year. Students received awards for poetry, humorous, readers theatre, duo interp, drama, and non-original oratory.

A small team of seven students garnered enough points, high rankings, and wins to earn the first place sweepstakes award for "A" schools at the McGovern tourney in Mitchell in November.

Due to their hard work and continual striving to improve,

the team qualified an unprecedented eleven students for the State Festival in the following categories: readers theatre, poetry, duo, and drama. Two additional students were chosen as alternates for State in non-original oratory and humorous.



The OI team attended seven different contests, including the State Festival. Groton students earned various awards and honors at most of these events. The team has been consistently more successful this year than in many previous ones.

The students on this team are Lily Cutler, Katie Miller, and Kelsey Iverson, seniors; Keri Pappas and Erin Smith, juniors; Jennifer Fjelstad, sophomore; Caroline Graf, freshman; Katlyn Kyar, Riley Rousenau, Kayla Jensen, and KaSandra Pappas, 8th graders; and Samantha Pappas, Alyssa Fordham, Tiara DeHoet, Sage Mortenson, and Hailey Monson, 7th graders.

OST OPENS DOORS FOR KIDS

More than ten years ago Sue Foster, the Groton Area elementary principal at the time, applied for and received a grant that established the out-of-school time (OST) program. Foster worked tirelessly before and after school to plan, organize, and set up what has evolved into an amazing daily opportunity for students in grades K - 5.

Elementary principal Brett Schwan, also the OST director, is in charge of OST from 7 - 7:30 a.m. Gail Kyar, a paraprofessional at the school, takes over from 7:30 until 8 a.m. when the other staff members have arrived. The state-licensed program requires one adult for every 15 students, and there are usually about 25 in attendance in the mornings.

After school Kim Weber, the OST co-ordinator, supervises OST from 3:15-6 p.m. The afternoon group is around 40 students. Several paraprofessionals and even some high school students help Weber after school.

Homework help is available until 4 p.m. for those who need it. All students needing help go to the fourth grade classroom where teachers and paraprofessionals work with them. This time is district supported, not part of the OST hourly charge.

As soon as school is dismissed for the day, the OST students check in at the elementary gym, using thumbprint technology. This thumbprint reader takes about 3-5 seconds per student and is not only easy for the children but a time saver for the adults in charge.

Snacks are provided every day for all OST children. There is usually a beverage, with water as an option, as well as fruit, vegetables, crackers, popcorn, etc., as long as the food is peanut-free.

Following snacks several choices for activities are offered. Playing outside, even in really cold weather, is a favorite one for most children.

Other options include play dough, Legos, blocks, checkers, etc.

OST is also offered during the summer with an even wider variety of activity choices, including crafts, bowling, and swimming among others. "I believe that the students are happier and more content when they can decide for themselves what they want to do," Weber explained.

OST director Kim Weber continues to come up with new

and interesting activities. "We went Christmas caroling in both Rosewood Court and the Golden Living Center," she said. "We actually go to Rosewood Court once a month to play Bingo with the residents."

"We are trying to teach the children to do community service and to help each other," Weber stated. "We made gifts for the nursing home residents and for the children's parents. We also do things for the high school students such as making posters for the football team and having a send-off for the volley ball girls."

"Last summer, my first time on the job, we visited the Granary, played learning games on the computers, and went swimming and bowling. Next summer we also plan to host 'summer camps' at the school in order to add more variety," Weber explained.

"Many of these activities require transportation," Weber admitted, "and elementary principal Brett Schwan volunteers his time to drive the bus, a cost-savings for the OST program."

"Mr. Schwan has also been very supportive of the children in OST and their various activities," Weber said. "Last summer Mr. Schwan drove us around town for a Minion scavenger hunt that ended up at the Dairy Queen for treats."

In addition to the \$2.50 per hour cost for attending OST, students need to provide extra for bowling, swimming, and special outings. Punch cards are used to keep track of these expenses. Students also need to bring a sack lunch during the summer.

"I'd be lost without all of the help I've received from others," Weber admitted. "For example Jan Hoffman has volunteered her time to teach painting on canvas, and the high school girls in FC-CLA come here to help out a lot."

"Several of the activities we do cost extra money," Weber stated, "so we have fundraisers to help with those expenses. So far this year we sold soft pretzels following the homecoming parade and sold T shirts and sweatshirts with the Groton Tiger logo on them."

"There are many more activities planned, but we try to emphasis helping others and becoming more independent," Weber explained. "The OST program is not just a 'daycare'; it provides a safe, learning environment for the children."



TECH CLASS TRIP

Groton Area High School's tech teacher Don Donley took his tech classes on a field trip to Trail King Industries, Mitchell, SD. The 28 students in these classes are freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. They also toured Mitchell Technical Institute.

Trail King sponsors a contest for high school tech students. "There were 12 schools attending this event," said Donley. "The students were divided into small groups of 4 or 5 for the competition."

"Each group was given ten to fifteen minutes to

"My students and I really appreciated the tour given by Shane Thorstenson, recruiter / education specialist, for Trail King Industries," Donley said. "We are also very pleased to have received the award check."

Many of the students in Donley's tech classes are interested in careers in the construction and welding industry. Trail King is always looking for new employees who are hard working and reliable. Trail King highly values people with a good work ethic and



construct a tower out of marshmallows and spaghetti," Donley explained. "The tallest tower that could stand for at least 5 minutes would be declared the winner!"

"One of our teams, consisting of Reed Sattler, Joe Groeblichoff, Shane Simon, Nick Menzia, and McClain Lone, won second place," Donley said. "The school was awarded \$800 for this achievement. I think we will use the money to buy a new welder for the school."

rewards them with good salaries and great benefits.

Trail King Industries Inc., a business that is dedicated to quality, believes that it provides the best trailers, the best sales, and the best service. Trail King not only manufactures trailers, but it also refurbishes and repairs various pieces of equipment.

The trailers they construct have load capacities ranging from 6000 to 1,000,000 pounds. Its reputation for quality, performance, and reliability is unsurpassed.

OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY

The opportunity classroom first opened its doors in the fall of 2004 with Mrs. Kiersten Sombke, guidance counselor, establishing this new program. Sombke averages approximately 30-35 students in her room on a daily basis.

These students are assigned to have their study halls with Sombke as well as being free to seek her help before and after school or at other times during the school day. Referrals for placement here can come from other teachers, the parents, or the middle/high school principal.

The students in the Opportunity Classroom are usually struggling with school for a variety of reasons. Some have trouble finishing assignments; others feel overwhelmed in a regular classroom; and still more having trouble understanding the fast-paced explanations, etc.

Sombke's classroom is unlike others found in the high school. It is brightly painted, cheerfully decorated, and furnished with comfortable chairs, cushions, and even a kitchen table. Outside her door is a lawn chair which one of her students refinished and painted with the following saying: "Imagination Sets Me Free."

The students agree that this room is relaxing, comfortable, peaceful, and quiet, conducive to their trying to do their work and understand the explanations given by Sombke. JoAnn Donley is also here periodically to help the ELL (English language learner) students with their assignments.

"The goal that I have for my students," Sombke explains, "is for them to eventually exit the program. I try to help them learn responsibility and self-discipline so that they can work on their own, get their work done, and become successful."

"I struggled with math when I went to school here," Sombke admitted. "Ironically, most of the students I work with every day find that math is their hardest subject. After all of these years, it is becoming easier for me, but I had a great college math teacher who helped it make sense to me. Hopefully I can help these kids the same way!"

Watching Sombke in the classroom with her students explains a lot about the success of this program. She is patient, understanding, gently prodding, and always, always encouraging.

When a student does something on his own that they've been working on, Sombke is quick to give positive feedback such as "I'm so proud of you for getting that assignment done all by yourself. I knew you could do it."

Sombke won't "toot her own horn," but her students are quick to do it for her. Several of her students shared their experiences in her classroom and gave her a lot of praise, credit, and thanks.

"Mrs. Sombke really helps me to understand the assignment and to transfer that onto a piece of paper to hand in," claims Tyler Richards, a junior from Aberdeen. "I would not be doing as well in school as I am without this classroom and her help."

Joy Nay Htoo, an ELL student from Thailand, has been in America for seven years. "My main issue with school is the English language," Joy admits. "Mrs. Sombke helps me to understand math, my hardest class. As a senior I'll be graduating this year and might go to college or into the military."

"Joy might find math to be difficult," JoAnn Donley said, "but he has been able to learn all of the times tables, how to do long division, and proceed into basic algebra, all in one year!"

Hai Ku, a junior from Thailand, has also been in America for seven years. Like most of Mrs. Sombke's students, Hai Ku finds math to be the most challenging for her, "but algebra is my favorite subject anyway," she admits. "I also have language trouble, but Mrs. Sombke is patient and very helpful."

"After I graduate next year, I might go into cosmetology," Hai Ku said,

"but I'd really like to be a medical receptionist. I guess I have a whole year to make that decision."

Senior Tia Thompson appreciates the opportunity classroom for several reasons.

"I have learned better study habits under Mrs. Sombke's guidance," she explained. "Mrs. Sombke is also a great motivator, helping me to want to learn."

"The positive learning environment in this classroom," Thompson said, "has taught me that failure is not an option. After all, Mrs. Sombke looks for the best in each of us."

"I often get behind in math," admits sophomore Aleaya Worlie. "I need to ask questions and get more help, but I'm embarrassed to do that in a class full of other students."

"Mrs. Sombke's classroom is peaceful and relaxing where I can actually concentrate and get my work done," Worlie explained. "Mrs. Sombke will quietly remind me about work that I have to get done and helps me to understand the assignments. I am very shy so being in here relaxes me and reduces my stress."

"I need help with math too," Kayla Fordham admits. "My favorite subjects are English and art since I like to write and do colored pencil drawings and painting. I know that math is important and that I have to do my work."

Mrs. Sombke helps me to build up my self confidence and work harder. She allows me to be myself and feel comfortable. We can talk about anything in this classroom, be listened to, and respected," Fordham explained. "Mrs. Sombke is sort of like the shepherd, and we kids are her little sheep!"

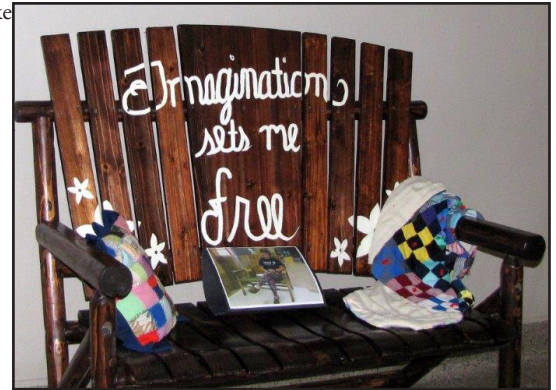
Junior Doug Dobbins was the last student available during class to express his appreciation for Mrs. Sombke and her class. "I need her extra explanation about math so that it finally makes sense to me," Dobbins smiled. "Math and ag are my two favorite classes."

"I am undecided about what I'll do after graduation but am considering Western Dakota Tech, Spearfish; Dakota State, Madison; or Lake Area, Watertown," Dobbins said. "I might go into exercise science or welding and mechanics. The self-discipline and self-confidence I've received in this classroom have already helped me a lot."

"The school has given me a great deal of flexibility in how this program operates on a day to day basis," Sombke admits. "That is part of the success the students and I appreciate and enjoy."

"More important is that the Groton Area School District recognizes the need for such a program as this," Sombke explains. "I strongly recommend that all school districts in the State of South Dakota establish one similar to this and adapt it to fit their school and their students."

Even though Sombke makes this sound simple and easy, she is the key to its existence, its success, and its value to the school. Sombke is the ideal person for this job with her generous heart and spirit. As Kayla Fordham said, "Even though I need the help I get here, I wouldn't come if Mrs. Sombke weren't the person offering that help!"



TIGER RESERVE TAKES ON ADVANCED LEARNERS

What is being done to challenge advanced learners?

Knowing that advanced learners need access to challenging classes that require them to stretch intellectually every day, more complexity, depth and sophistication in their learning tasks and daily opportunities to interact with academic peers in rich discussions facilitated by a supportive teacher the Harrisburg School District offers several evidence-based options.

Identified elementary students can elect a full-time placement in a Tiger Reserve classroom that provides content acceleration, increased depth and complexity focused on essential questions and principles of the disciplines, and teachers who build an environment that supports risk-taking and personal responsibility.

Curriculum Units are built around state standards one to three years above grade level and include processes and products that call for high levels of synthesis, analysis and evaluation.

Tiger Trek offers mini units of study once a month to identified students in multi-age groups at each of our elemen-



tary schools.

At the middle school and high school level Harrisburg offers advanced classes/Pre-AP in Math, Reading & Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.

The content and standards are accelerated by one to two grade levels, the pace of learning is faster, the level of critical thinking and problem-solving is extensive, and students take more responsibility for their learning and the quality of their work products. Advanced course options are available in both the classic/traditional and the personalized learning options at the secondary level.

“Harrisburg strives to effectively meet the needs of all its students,” Harrisburg Director of Advanced Programs Laurie Wenger said, “by ensuring that each child comes to school to stretch and grow daily and providing curriculum for advanced learners is one of the many steps we have taken to accomplish this goal.”

STUDENT COUNCIL CREATES CHANGE

Students in the Henry School District are looking to make a positive change to the school culture this year through the presence of their student council.

The student council consists of students from the 6th through 12th grade in Henry who were elected by their peers. Throughout this school year, the students have put on events and fundraisers to help boost school spirit and improve the atmosphere around the school.

“This is a huge change for the positive in Henry, as prior to this year, Henry has never had an active Student Council,” Henry Superintendent Steve Zirbel said. “

They decided to pursue this goal through various fundraising events and activities around the school to boost school spirit and create a positive culture change for Henry.”

These events started the first week of the year, when the student council led a community cleanup. Using teachers as captains, they took students throughout the town of Henry and cleaned up any and all garbage that was on the streets.

By doing this, they felt like they could begin to show the town how the school is changing, especially in a way that will positively impact and improve the community.

Another event the student council took charge on during the school year was homecoming spirit week. During this week, they had three different dress-up days including: toga day, Disney character day, and old people day. They also lead an Olympic competition between teams made up of middle and high school students.

The spirit of competition helped bring the students together through the use of friendly and fun games that everyone grades five through twelve could compete in.

“Even though the students may have been on different teams that day, it showed them all that we are still all students of Henry, and that is something we should all be proud of,” Zirbel said.

The competition between classes didn't end during homecoming week.

In November, the student council put on a staff-student basketball game. The entry fee for this game was a can of food, which was donated to the Salvation Army. Unfortunately for the staff, the students won, 49-39.

Most importantly the event brought in over 100 donated cans

of food.

When the holidays came around, the group came up with different ideas to create a cheerful spirit for the holiday season.

First, they decorated the middle and high school side of our school with Christmas lights, garlands, and stickers representing the joy of the holiday season, then in the last week of the school before break, they lead a Christmas spirit week.

Events in this week included such things as an ugly sweater contest, a pajama day, a Christmas color day.

“It was an amazing sight, seeing many of the students in the elementary, middle and high school dressed up in their best ugly sweaters, and funniest sets of pajamas,” Zirbel said

“This week was a great way to break up the winter blues, which definitely raised school spirit.”



After leading some events to boost school spirit, the council went about trying to create a positive culture in our school, and tried to help bring the Henry community together through the use of fundraisers for a great cause.

One of the early fundraisers put on by the Student Council was a 5K race to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. The race was held in September and

participants had to pay an entry fee of \$20, with 60% percent of this entry fee going to the Children's Miracle Network.

There were two different versions of the race: running and walking. More than 60 people from the community participated in this event and the student council was able to raise approximately \$2500 for the Children's Miracle Network.

The student council didn't stop fundraising there. At every home game, students in the Student Council have sold 50/50 raffle tickets, with a majority of the proceeds going to the Children's Miracle Network. The selling of these tickets has been very successful, bringing in approximately \$800 for this organization.

This has been a great year for a positive attitude change in Henry with the student council raising school spirit through spirit weeks, class competitions, and hallway decorations and improving their presence in the community through fundraisers for charitable organizations, such as the Children's Miracle Network.

“This has been a great year for our school,” Zirbel said, “and we look forward to seeing what further changes can be made in 2016 to improve our school and our community.”



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FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS



Night games had not been part of the Herreid football field's landscape for nearly 50 years, until this past fall.

On a Friday night in September, Herreid – who co-ops with Selby Area for football – hosted its first night game in decades. The team capped off their nearly yearlong trek towards Friday Night Lights with a 54-34 victory.

“There was a great deal of anticipation leading up to the first game,” Superintendent and Head Football Coach Jeff Kusters said. “The atmosphere was incredible and the evening didn't disappoint.”

Kusters added that compared to previous seasons' home games, which would start at 3 p.m., crowds tripled in size for

the three home games hosted, including a first round playoff matchup.

“I feel that the overwhelming majority of patrons felt it was a great thing,” Kusters said.

Many of those patrons contributed to the project through fundraising and other efforts. Kusters cited Brent Reilley as a key contributor from the community who donated 100% of his services spearheading everything associated with the electrical portion of the project.

“The community involvement was phenomenal,” Kusters said. “There were several individuals and businesses who were instrumental in helping to get the project completed.”

TAKING FLIGHT!



Summer 2015 took off in Hill City as nearly 60 students a day took part in Hill City Elementary's "Flight School!"

The six week academic enrichment and remedial program was open to all students pre-k through fifth grade and offered participants the opportunity to build mathematics and reading skills using innovative instructional methods, which included games, book talks, peer to peer instruction, technology driven instructional supports, and good old fashion fun.

Five Hill City elementary faculty organized and delivered 24 days of amazing morning activities for four weeks in June and two weeks in August that promoted student engagement in academics during the summer months.

Children started their day in groups organized around current United States Air Force units from Ellsworth Air Force Base as well as South Dakota and Wyoming Air National Guard units.

"Flight School" students were given unit patches from these outstanding commands just like the ones Air Force personnel wear on their uniforms.

"Our students took great pride in learning more about the U.S. Air Force right along with their academic studies!" Hill City Superintendent Mike Hanson said.

The day didn't end after morning activities as the Hill City Summer Food Service Program complimented the Flight School program by offering a well-balanced lunch free of charge to all students. On average, 100 children took part in this wonderful food service activity.

Flight School participants were also treated to three weeks of "Tech Camp" in the afternoons after lunch. Students kindergarten through fifth grade were introduced to many levels of technology skills that would make a positive impact during their school day once classes resumed in August.

On the last day of Flight School, Black Hills Life Flight landed their medical helicopter on Ranger Field! Children were given a guided tour of the helicopter and learned more about emergency life flights from the outstanding Black Hills Life Flight crew members.

"A great day to spend with these amazing first responders!" Hanson said. "We look forward to Summer 2016!"

EXPERIENCING THE REAL WORLD

Howard School District's Youth Internship program has been providing students with real world, hands-on experience.

During the past five years, over 20 area businesses have hosted over 50 Howard High School Seniors with goal to get them into the workplace two days a week for 90 minutes to allow for enough time to be able get immersed in activity at hand.

"The feedback from Youth Internship participants has been positive and they are thankful for the opportunity

that helps them decide whether a career path is for them," Howard Superintendent Todd Lee said.

The core of the Youth Internship Program includes a change in the way

students are taught by focusing on application rather than lecture, and by connecting students to the world of work in their community.

Another key purpose of the Youth Internship Program is to give students work experience in a career field they are interested in, but do not yet have any work experience.

"Overall area businesses have been really supportive of the program," Lee said. "Each business does their best to really get the students hands on experience versus just shadowing experience."

The program also provides the opportunity to see if their expectations of the career match up with what it offers; therefore, a youth internship experience can help students

decide on appropriate post-secondary education goals.

Two of the main career fields Howard students have been interning with are mechanics and healthcare.

Howard Auto Clinic, Al's Service, Howard Farmers Co-op, Canova Service Center, and Dakota Body Shop are all area businesses that have hosted more than 15 students over the past five years. Howard Avera Clinic, Howard Physical Therapy, and Whispering Winds also host students every year, serving more than 10 students over the past five years.

"Each career cluster is somewhat different as to what can



be offered to the student intern due to the need for specialized training," Lee said. "Every year we have students requesting different career experiences so every year

our database of businesses seems to grow."

Other area businesses instrumental to the success of the program include the Howard School District for teaching, City of Howard for electrical work, Homestead Lumber for construction, Secure Banking Solutions of Madison for network security, Howard Good Sam for food service, and Rustys Food Store for job skills training.

Students have also interned with Miner County 4-H Extension, Bordgers Insurance, Children's Care Corner, Miner County FSA, Lee Ag Repairs, and Sturdevant's.

Without the willingness of all our area businesses, the youth internship experience would not be possible," Lee said.

I-W'S READERS ACCELERATING

Second through 6th grade students at Irene-Wakonda Elementary are proving just how much they love to read this year.

Students have taken more than 1,400 Accelerated Reader tests this school year, which equates to more than 11,000,000 words read and tested on!

“Students are motivated to see how many points they can get through the AR program,” I-W Elementary

Principal Debra Lyle said. “They are encouraged by the success that they are able to achieve.”

Lyle said the district has utilized the Accelerated Reader program for 10 years and the elementary staff notes importance of using AR to help with student comprehension and enjoys

the unique learning aspect the program provides students.

Parents, especially with students at the younger grade levels, are seeing the hard work of the students pay off.

“(Parents) are amazed at when their child first gets into reading and is able to read them a

story,” Lyle said.

Lyle hopes the amazement from parents carries over to students and they continue



their hard work.

“I hope they are able to gain confidence in their ability to understand the stories they read,” Lyle said. “I hope it motivates them to keep pushing themselves to the next level of reading.”

BUILDING A FOUNDATION THROUGH EDUCATION

Nearly 20 years ago the Kimball High School Industrial Technology classes, under the instruction of Dale Taylor, built the first of 14 single dwelling houses.

At that time a board member approached Mr. Taylor and the administration with the idea for the IT department to build a home at no cost to the school. The home would then be auctioned at the conclusion of the school year and if any money was to be made the district would keep the profit.

Each of the previous 13 homes were constructed during a school year and then successfully auctioned.

Today these homes can be found in the rural Kimball, Platte, Pukwana, Chamberlain, and Wessington Spring areas, as well as near Lake Mitchell, and in the cities of Lake Andes, Mt Vernon, Platte, Mitchell, and Chamberlain.

The fourteenth home – built during the 2014-15 school year – sits across the street from the school and



now provides housing for the school superintendent.

Students in the Industrial Tech classes are directly involved from start to finish in the house projects.

The various stages include the design beginning with the use computer-aided drafting programs; estimation of materials needed; construction/framing; working under the direct supervision of local contracts for the plumbing and electrical work; and the finish working including priming, painting, kitchen cabinetry

and trim work.

“It is a large scale project and students learn about work ethic and sticking to a start-to-finish project”, Mr. Taylor said.

Students have also completed many other projects over the past 20 years, including: beautiful oak cabinetry for the school administration offices and library within the new high school, storage shed for the football field, a concession stand and press box at Houda Athletic field.

THE LEFSE MAN

Langford Kindergarten Teacher Sara Jensen's class loves books!

And they not only love reading them, but writing their own. During the year, the kindergartners wrote and illustrated a few different types of books.

"I thought it would be fun for them to publish their very own book," Jensen said.

Jensen said to make the story meaningful, the class chose a subject that is familiar to the Langford Area: making lefse.

"In order to write a good book, all authors should do research," Jensen said. "We planned for a Lefse Day in our classroom."

Six women from the community visited the class and taught them how to make lefse. The children learned about what ingredients go into lefse and learned there are two kinds: milk and potato. They rolled, cooked, turned and ate lefse.

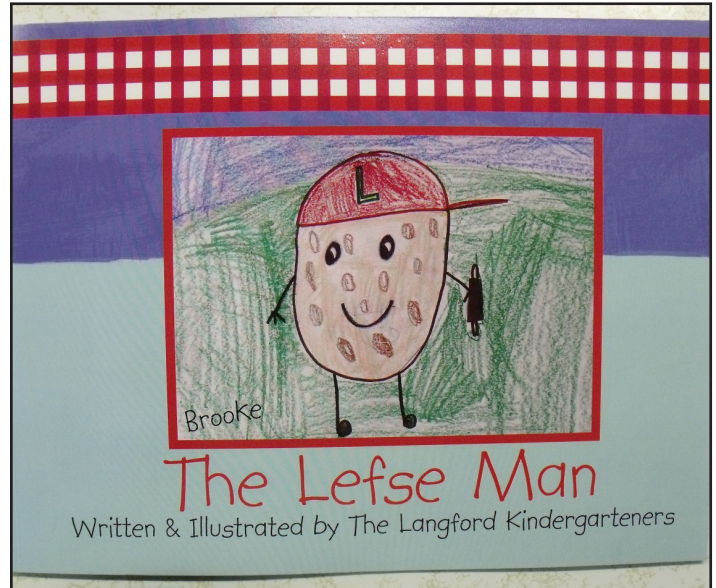
"It was a very fun research day!" Jensen said.

Following Lefse Day, the class started writing their story. Familiar with the story of The Gingerbread Man, the student decided to title their story: The Lefse Man.

After a few sessions putting together the storyline, the kids were on to creating the illustrations. They made a storyboard and each child made their selection and went to work.

Once the illustrations were completed, Jensen went to work compiling everything into a book to be published.

"They had lots of good ideas!" Jensen said. "They were taking this process very seriously, knowing that they were



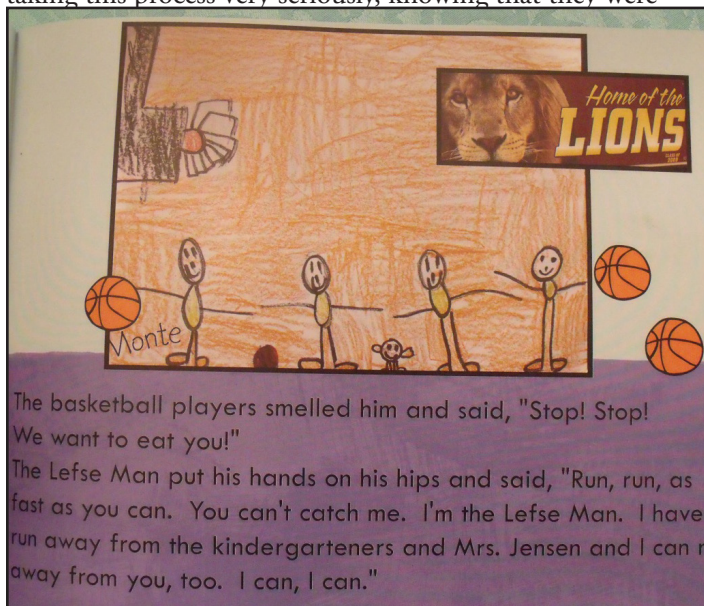
creating their very own book."

In April, the class hosted a Publishing Party.

Family and friends came to read their book for the first time and the children loved reading their story at the party.

Each child received their very own copy of The Lefse Man and they shared all the different books they had created throughout the year.

"Their love of reading grew throughout the year, and that really was my goal," Jensen said. "They also learned how to make lefse from the community experts and found out how delicious eating it can be."



INTEGRATING INNOVATION



“Why do I have to learn Geometry? When am I ever going to use this?”

Sound familiar? This is a common refrain heard in schools everywhere.

Educators at Lead-Deadwood High School decided to go beyond the traditional academic learning environment into contextualized mathematical learning innovations.

Contextualized learning uses the real life or “context” environments to engage active learning. It brings the learning from a lecture format to an activity that is reinforced through social and community engagement.

This method can engage and excite students in learning math while instructing the necessary math skills needed for different career paths.

Career and Technical Education Instructor Jim Studioso and Math Instructor Perry Stulken attended the Geometry in Construction curriculum workshop presented by Contextual Learning Concepts, LLC.

This curriculum integrates geometry concepts with the construction activities. The program evaluation report concluded that overall Geometry in Construction students had higher annual assessment scores than the regular geometry students.

The new class was introduced into the 2013-2014 school year.

The first year, 10 students completed projects such as a shed, trellises, and benches. The trellises and benches were constructed for a local church camp and the shed is still used today to store tools at the job site.

The students learned to use math to correctly estimate, cut and construct the projects. Engaging in physical activities as a group

that use previously instructed geometry concepts strengthen student understanding for long-term math skills.

“We are just expanding the math that has always been done in CTE,” Studioso said. “Having the students solve construction problems with the math skills they just learned gives them the incentive to learn more.”

“And they are having fun at the same time!”

The second year, the students completed a small cabin that included a bathroom and kitchenette, for another local church camp. Construction skills and math concepts are used to build and finish the cabin. Plumbing and electrical work were introduced.

This year, the Geometry in Construction class has 25 students and another cabin is under construction.

“The increased number of students interested in this class shows how much the students are responding to contextualized learning,” Stulken said. “We have students from all learning levels taking this class. This curriculum is a positive and engaging method for math instruction.”

The students are gaining a fuller understanding of how math can be used in the “real world” and answering the question of why do I need geometry for themselves. They develop improved thinking and problem solving skills.

Superintendent Dan Leikvold believes the program gives students opportunities to be successful on multiple fronts.

“This course provides students with the chance to learn critical math concepts, while at the same time learning real life skills that will prepare them for life after high school,” Leikvold said

“This course helps foster student creativity, innovation, and teamwork.”

THE POWER OF ICU

In the summer of 2010, Madison Middle School Principal Cotton Koch and several teachers attended a conference in Mitchell on the Power of ICU.

The main focus of ICU is for students to complete quality assignments in order to enhance their learning of a subject or concept. By not completing assignments, apathetic students are cheating themselves out of a complete understanding of a subject, said Koch.

ing and sending out the list.

“We started the program experimentally that fall by offering ICU after school to sixth grade students,” Kock said, adding that the seventh and eighth grades were eventually added in.

“During that first year, we discovered that a working lunch had benefits, so we took a supply cart to the lunchroom and offered help to students who wanted to



Koch, along with MMS faculty and staff, decided they would no longer accept incomplete or below standard assignments. Students would not be able to “take a zero” or settle for an F in order to avoid doing the work.

“All students would complete all assignments, all of the time,” Koch said. “Students with late or missing work would be put on a list by the teacher they owed. In order to come off the list, students would have to complete the work at 80 percent or better of the expectations.”

Special Education Paraprofessional Diane Friesz became the “head lifeguard” with Seventh Grade Math Teacher Kindra Wiese supervising a portion of noon ICU and Administrative Assistant Tonya Ehlers organiz-

avoid staying after school.

Over the next few years the program evolved into offering ICU before school, at noon and after school each day.

“It is our goal to end each grading period with no missing assignments and no failing grades, and we have achieved it many times over the years,” Koch said.

In 2013 the district was selected as a Power of ICU Spotlight School due to the success of the program.

“Our ultimate goal is that all students come to school with competently completed work and use ICU as a time to get extra help,” Koch said.

“We are not there yet, but we are a lot closer to reaching our goal because of ICU!”

YOUTH GIVE BACK

Four years ago, an idea to start a collaborative group that has had a large impact in the Mitchell community was born. The Rotary Club of Mitchell approached Second Chance Alternative High School to try forming a student based group that could collaborate with the local chapter of the Rotary.

It was then the Interact Club began.

“It was an idea to take at-risk youth, attending the alternative high school, and connect them with their community and members of the Rotary Club,” Mitchell Superintendent Joseph Graves said.

The club is led by Social Studies teacher Jasmin Vant and Director of Second Chance Shane Thill and they help guide the students in their projects.

Since its creation, the Interact Club has made many community service based contributions to the city of Mitchell. Every month they hold meetings, with the main student elected leaders, to gather ideas for various community service projects and discuss the needs in the Mitchell community.

In the past, those projects have included helping at local elementary school carnivals, volunteering to park vehicles and take tickets at the Bull Bash, decorating the Corn Palace for the annual Pheasants Forever Banquet, handing out candy for Trunk-or-Treat, working with the Impart Lives Foundation, assembling and delivering goodie trays at Christmas to places in Mitchell and people who work over the holiday, and volunteering to ring the bells for the Salvation Army.

The list of volunteer projects goes on and on.

Every one of these community service efforts is backed by support from the Rotary Club and its members, where



there is very much a role model/mentoring relationship between students and adults.

Several members of the Rotary attend the monthly meetings to stay connected and offer support to the students and their ideas. The Rotary Club has had a large impact in making the Interact Club successful and supporting its students along the way.

In recent years, Rotary has started providing three \$500 scholarships to Second Chance High students to help with their continuing education and support their futures.

“With the support of this local chapter and their continuing interest in students’ lives, the Interact Club at Second Chance will continue serving the Mitchell community for many years to come,” Graves said.

PENNY WAR RAISES FUNDS FOR PROGRAM

L.B. Williams Elementary

The start of the New Year brought a Problem Based learning activity for two multiage classrooms at Mitchell's L.B. Williams Elementary.

A group of first through fourth grade students analyzed items in the Snack Pack program to see if they included the major food groups and then decided what could be done to improve the nutritional value of each pack.

After analyzing the Snack Packs, one group of students identified funding as an obstacle for the Snack Pack Program; other groups worked to collect canned foods, which was also successful. Some groups launched ideas to include protein, but they learned that it was not feasible at this time.

The "fund raising" group decided on holding a school-wide penny war.

They created and sent home fliers, created and made announcements, contacted a local business to provide the containers, carried their plan through, which included going to the banks, adding negative and positive numbers and creating a spreadsheet of results.

More than 500 students participated in the Penny War.

Each class worked to collect pennies, which counted as positive to their total, and competing classrooms "sabotaged" other classes by dropping in silver coins, which brought negatives to their total. The class that raised the most money earned a popcorn party and the second place winners received an extra recess

The students were very proud to plan, implement, and deliver a check to the Snack Pack Program in the amount of \$2,518.95.

"It was rewarding for them to see the difference they can make in our community," Teachers Cheryle Aslesen and Stacy Morgan said.

"Students also realized that they can impact our community by identifying problems and being the solutions to those problems!"

"It makes the students realize the impact on real life situations in their community and how they can work towards being a solution, even at their age."

ENRICHING EDUCATION

The MOPO Robo Team was the first Mobridge-Pollock team to place within the top eight qualifying teams at the Jack-rabbit BEST competition at SDSU in Brookings this fall.

“We are so proud of the effort that the students and teachers have put forward in developing our Mobridge-Pollock Robotics Team,” Superintendent Tim Frederick said. “The students are so committed to doing their very best. Hours and hours of trial runs and design changes demonstrate teamwork, critical thinking, and a deep passion to learn more.

“This is why the Mobridge-Pollock School Board supports the students and the teachers that make this happen.”

The result qualified the students for Regional Best candidacy at NDSU in Fargo in December.

The construction of a website, establishment of you-tube video and twitter accounts and designing of a t-shirt were new things added to the regional competition. Perfecting their product, enhancing each area and finalizing the equipment were necessary steps for the regional competition.

Teams were judged on five different areas with each area requiring the best of the students’ abilities.

“I truly believe that this year’s team worked together to produce a high quality product in all categories of the competition,” Coach Pam Wells said. “Nothing was lacking. Everyone put their heart into it, and worked together to get the job done well. It was all about teamwork.”

“I couldn’t be more proud if we had won.”

The Robotics Challenge fits the bill for enriching education in Mobridge-Pollock.

“Enriching the education our students receive is one of our top goals in our schools today,” School Board Member Jane Looyenga said.

“Challenging enrichment in competition where students are working and designing together in a harmonious, playful



environment that is most pleasing to their learning is the best education we can offer.”

Introduction to Manufacturing/Introduction to Design and Drafting is course offering designed to take advanced welding students to the real world of welding in the Mobridge-Pollock School system.

During the first semester of this year, the class comprised mostly of seniors, was broken into teams and had the task of manufacturing a product. The groups chose a picnic table, fire pit, and garbage can racks after explorations of Runnings, Real Tuff, and a trip to a nearby farm where welding was frequently done.

Each student then pitched an idea to their group and did a SWOT product analysis to secure a good working project.

Each group consisted of a foreman, CFO, and a marketing director who was in charge of their area. The CFO was responsible for keeping track of spending and final consideration for a price of the completed product with a general rule to double the input costs to come up with a price for the project.

The foreman was responsible for the manufacturing plan and the flow of the product around the shop. The marketing director was responsible for advertising and promoting the project. People who purchased the product made payment to the school district.

“The biggest learning for the students was realizing that products cost a lot to make, take a lot of time, and someone else was always making them cheaper than they were,” MF Instructor Philip Russell said. “They also realized that one class period is not nearly enough time to run a business!”

The second semester will involve modeling these products in 3-D and working on welding drawings for the products. Then students will be allowed to model and build a project of their choice using the skills they’ve learned in MoPo Metal Fab.



A SPECIAL EFFORT



Teachers are a great resource in the Mobridge-Pollock School District and are a very necessary part towards excellent learning for the district's students.

Science Teacher Pam Wells earned the NEA Foundation's Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence this year, which included \$10,000 and a host of items for her classroom.

"Learning how to reflect on my teaching, my pedagogy, was, and still is, one of the most important tools I use to analyze my day, my week, my year," Wells said.

But until she read *Enhancing Professional Practice* by Charlotte Danielson she did not know how to reflect on her teaching.

Since then, taking every available professional development class and workshop guided her in comprehending the practice of teaching and she learned much from discussion of the framework with colleagues and administrators.

Wells took time to review her teaching practices and the responses of her students.

"I know students need more from me than content," Wells said. "They need a teacher who would transform into a mentor, or a facilitator, or an advocate. They need me to be their champion, their guide, and sometimes, their shoulder to cry on."

"I truly believe building connections with students is the most important component of teaching kids."

Wells notes when she makes a conscientious effort to connect with students, she is better able to hear their stories. These stories allow her entrance into a child's life and she can understand and reflect.

"It lets me know why a child wants to stay in my room after school eating peanut butter crackers, as there is no one at home and no food in the house," Wells said "A child comes to school early so I can let him or her in the locker room to shower, because they have no hot water in their home."

A great honor of the job is the trust she builds with students, said Wells, adding she strives to keep constant vigilance of these connections, which are the most important components to her teaching style.

In her classroom, rules are simple: Everyone has a voice; it is okay to have different opinions; and if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

"Every child has a chance to communicate his or her ideas," Wells said.

If a student does not want to talk, "sticky notes" are provided. Assignments in her classroom come with options to meet the needs of the students.

"Each day is a learning experience for me, and I go back to my first tool—reflection," Wells said.

"With relevant reflection, I become more aware of various learning styles of students."

She believes a one size fits all mentality does not fit into a classroom of students with varied abilities and backgrounds and she is continuously looking for new materials, activities, and practices to keep students engaged in the learning of the content that best fit the needs of the class at the particular time.

"Actions, reflections, and connections are what I do each day," Wells said. "Some days are more productive than others. Some days are just days of going through the motions. But some days, I hit it spot on. I get it because I have listened; I have found connections, and I have reflected on what I have done or not done."

"I regard each day as a gift to be a teacher."



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A CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Students in Mt. Vernon Communication Arts/Technology Instructor Jeff Sand's CTE broadcast technology class are presented with a unique, project-based learning opportunity each school year.

The Creative Commercial Challenge requires teams of three to four students to work together to write, create, edit, and produce a commercial for a local business on their school's local Santel Communications television channel and the school's Facebook page.

Sand has partnered with local businesses in the Mount Vernon community and Amanda Swenson, Creative Services Manager at KDLT, to create an authentic commercial-making experience for students.

As part of the beginning stages of the project, students learn how to properly operate camera equipment, create visual effects using various camera angles, upload footage to a computer, learn the essentials of video editing on both a PC and a Mac, and analyze and evaluate commercials produced in South Dakota.

Once students understand these vital concepts of commercial production, Sand takes his students to KDLT studios in Sioux Falls to meet Swenson and the rest of the KDLT team.

Swenson discusses commercial projects she has worked on in the past, offers advice and discusses how students can be successful during their commercial project. Students also get a chance to tour the news room and experience what is like to be live on set at KDLT.

After students have learned from industry-professionals, they must work collaboratively with their client to determine a vision for



the commercial. Students use storyboards to create a shot-by-shot sequence of the commercial for their client.

"This helps all stakeholders gain a better understanding of what the commercial will look like prior to filming," Sand said.

Once the storyboard has been approved by the local business owner/manager, students film, edit and produce the first cut of the commercial. Each group then sends the first cut via a Google Drive link to Swenson for constructive feedback.

Swenson's timely critique helps each group to revise the commercial and prepare it for client viewing.

Once each group has revised their commercial, they schedule a time to meet with the business and present the commercial. If all goes well, students finalize the project as a video file and upload to both the school's television channel and Facebook page.

"The businesses in the community that students have created commercials for have been overly delighted of the time, effort, energy, and creativity that the broadcast technology students have put into making the commercials each year," Sand said.



A COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER

In 2014, two tragic life events happened to New Underwood School District students and lead student and staff to jump in and help.

A third grade girl was diagnosed with cancer and a first grade boy had a severe injury resulting in his right leg being amputated from the calf down.

“Both of their stories touched the heart of every student and staff member in our school along with the community,” New Underwood District Newsletter Publisher Assistant Amanda Trople said.

“Their strength, faith and positive attitudes were inspiring to us all.”

Almost immediately as the students and staff of New Underwood School learned of the illness and injury, they began to look for ways to help our students.

The Student Council, National Honor Society, the staff and student body, along with outstanding community support, rallied to help these families.



A Soup Supper event was held and students also sold yard lines at a home football game between Wall and New Underwood, as a benefit fundraiser.

“Not only was the New Underwood Community involved with helping, we also saw support coming in from the Wall Community,” Trople said.

Staff and students also hosted a benefit event for both students. The event included a chili cook-off, bingo and other games for all ages and inflatables that were brought in by the National Guard. Modern Woodmen Financial supported the event and matched the funds raised.

“As you can imagine both of these events were very tragic for these families,” Trople said.

“But the New Underwood students and staff teamed up with the community and did an amazing job to show that we were behind them.”

INKING SCHOOL SPIRIT IN-HOUSE

What started as a small school project has turned into a legitimate community business.

Northwestern Ink, an in-house screen printing business started in 2005 in the Northwestern Area School District, provides high-quality apparel not only for school activities and events but also for local businesses.

“This has been a fantastic opportunity for our students and community. Even though we are not a professional screen printing business, I feel our students create a quality product as best as they can at a competitive price, especially for those who have



smaller orders,” NW Ink adviser Anne Frericks said.

“This is also a great opportunity for students who have not been able to get work experience because of other activities. I believe every student should have some work experience before they leave high school. Having this experience allows them to be more successful when they are in a work setting for the first time outside of school,”

NW Ink was officially started in the fall of 2005 by Frericks, art teacher Jennifer Schell and Dave Hosley, the previous shop teacher.

At the end of the 2004 school

>>> SEE *SPIRIT* [PAGE 58]

NORTHWESTERN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPIRIT

>>> *CONTINUED FROM [pg. 57]*

year, the school board approved a loan to rewire the dryer and purchase equipment from a company in Tennessee; the company in Tennessee also sent someone to the school to train them for two days.

Now, 11 years later, NW Ink still utilizes the same equipment that was initially purchased, except for occasional maintenance. NW Ink also recently purchased a heat press machine for putting names and numbers on shirts.

The process of making a shirt at this in-school company begins with a design.

Schell controls this area of the process. Then, the colors of the design are separated, turned to black and white and printed onto vellum paper. Next, the screens have to be degreased, dried, emulsed and dried again for 24 hours. Then, workers burn the design to the screen. Each color must be burned on a separate screen.

During the burning process, each piece of vellum paper is lined up and taped onto the back of the screen, the screen is placed in a burner (flatbed with fluorescent lights and a cloth cover), the taped-on design exposes itself to the fluorescent light for three minutes (which hardens the emulsion), water sprays onto each side of the screen, the emulsion washes away as the water continues to be sprayed and the ink can be pushed through the holes in the screen in only the design area.

Next, workers line up the screens on the screen printer. Then, the workers push ink through the screen and flash-dry between colors. After all of the colors have been set on the shirt, the shirt runs through the belt dryer.

Finally, the screens have to be washed out to be used again. This includes using ink remover to wash off all of the ink, using emulsion remover to break up the hardened emulsion, washing off the screen, degreasing the screen and emulsing again.

NW Ink combines art, computers, and business skills with real-world experiences.

The students learn how to work in an actual business setting. Not only do they acquire a specific skillset, but they also learn how to work independently to produce a quality product with efficiency and learn to use good communication skills.

This year, the six employees work at three different times, and they must communicate from one group to

the next about what they have worked on, how the dryer has been running, where to place the shirts, how many times ink colors have been screened and much more.

Students use a program called CorelDraw to design a graphic that can be screened onto the shirt. The design most acceptably contains one to three colors, contains words and graphics and makes the screening as easy as possible for the screeners by avoiding the overlapping of words and images.

“We could not do this without each other,” Schell said. “We combine our talents (art and business) to make it all work.”

The business class, comprised mostly of juniors, also takes part in NW Ink.

Currently, its business, named the NW Shop, has been making and selling its own products, including items such as T-shirts, sweatpants, sweatshirts, keychains, lanyards, stadium chairs and much more. These students create designs, screen shirts and control finances.

The entrepreneurship class does the actual screening of the shirts, excluding the shirts made by the business class. Talents they learn include art, computer, communication and business skills as well as leadership, independence, responsibility and teamwork.

Aside from school athletic teams and other extracurricular activities, area businesses also use this company as an advantage to provide apparel for their company, including Redfield School, Warner School, Huron School, Redfield Area Arts Council, Dow AgroSciences, Aberdeen Hockey, Redfield Energy, American Bank and Trust, Tulare Patriot Market, Spink County 4-H, Relay for Life, Brentford Auxiliary, small groups such as family reunions and many other businesses.

NW Ink provides Northwestern Wildcat apparel for students, staff, athletic programs and other school activities. With this in-school advantage, Wildcat fans can quickly and easily equip themselves with apparel to show off their school spirit and pride.

“We like to use NW Ink for our volleyball apparel because the business is student-run and student-driven, and it gives our students an opportunity to showcase their talents,” English and Journalism Teacher Nora Groft said.

“And the customer service is better than you will receive in any other business from which we could purchase our products.”

PARKSTON PASSING THE TEST

The Parkston School District has had continued successes since the publication of the last Good News Bulletin.

“We are most proud of our students, staff and community in building a strong, progressive school system,” Superintendent Shayne McIntosh said.

Parkston Elementary School was proud to be identified as a Status School this fall. Like other teachers in South Dakota, the teachers here have worked hard to implement Common Core Standards over the past four years and were anxious to see how the students fared on the assessment.

Even when looking at initial scores there was some uncertainty due to a lack of other scores to reference or compare with. However, once the School Performance Index scores were published this year the teachers balanced happiness with a drive to continually improve.

“To that end staff have worked both collectively and individually to identify the path towards that improvement,” Superintendent McIntosh said.

The Parkston staff looked at their data, identified goals, and created a committee to lead professional development. The district has also introduced one-to-one Chromebooks in fourth, fifth and sixth grade classrooms.

This change allowed them to take their iPads from those grades and create full sets of iPads for each classroom from Kindergarten through the third grade.

“The staff has spent time collaborating in an effort to better understand the standards and to utilize the resources available to us,” McIntosh said.

Individually, teachers have partnered with their students to either improve projects from past years or to create new projects. Whether it is math talks, literature circles, or biography presentations, teachers have emphasized the need for students to express their thinking to their peers.

Teachers and students have set the bar high with goals in programs such as IXL Math where one class has completed nearly 50,000 problems already this year.

“These partnerships have kept the school moving in the right direction,” McIntosh said. “Led by staff members that are willing to challenge themselves and their students we strive to improve collectively and individually.”

Parkston High School students took advantage of the dual credit opportunities provided them.

PHS had 45 students take 65 courses first semester with 40 students scheduled for 55 courses second semester. PHS students also completed the NCRC this fall with nearly a 100 percent of students receiving a certificate.

The Parkston School District was also very active in the Governor’s Workforce Development initiative.

It began with the district being an active contributor during the workforce summits, and continued with their presence at the Governor’s announcement of his workforce initiative.

The district was successful in leading their grant submission to form workforce development partnerships in our area.



The Parkston School District led the coalition that designed and secured this grant, which will serve area students through two programs: helping area schools overcome barriers accessing classes at the Mitchell Career and Technical Education Academy and second providing area schools with a Career Coach.

“This three-year program is a matching grant and was successful due to the hard work and diligence of the school district,” McIntosh said.

Not only did the district secure over \$115,000 in grant dollars from the state, but also formed partnerships with Trail King, Avera St. Benedict, Avera Health, the Mitchell Development Corporation and Advantage South Dakota.

These organizations will provide an additional \$130,000 over the next three years towards this project.

“We are proud of their commitment to the children of the State,” McIntosh said.

The district worked with area schools to form a partnership that will provide the final part of the match, nearly \$72,000. The purpose of the project is two-fold: the district hopes to educate students to the tremendous job opportunities in the area and provide area districts with an incentive to engage more students in career and technical education opportunities.

“While in it’s infancy, we feel very good that we are headed in the right direction,” McIntosh said.

Parkston High School has continued to excel in extra-curricular activities. The strong run began in the fall of 2015 when the PHS Boy’s Golf team earned State Runner-up honors and continued when the Trojan Wrestling team won their third straight State Championship.

Things continued in the spring, when the Girl’s Golf team won their fourth straight State Championship. The team has had five State Championships and two State Runners-up over the past seven years.

Finally, the school’s marching band had an excellent year placing in multiple competitions and winning first place in their division at the Sioux City Star Fest and Vermillion Quad State Marching Competition.

P-G STUDENTS PROGRESS IN PLTW

The minute Platte Geddes students walked into the first day of the new course offering of Principles of Biomedical Science (PBS) in the fall of 2015, they knew the class was going to be different than any other.

Immediately, the students in grades 9-12 were immersed in the mysterious death of Anna and asked to investigate, document, and analyze evidence to determine the cause of her demise.

Platte-Geddes PBS Teacher Darren DeNeui has been amazed by the progress of the students through this Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program that is an approved lab science course.

At first, DeNeui thought this would be a class for accelerated learners, but he quickly realized all students could find success when they embrace the autonomous

nature of the course and become problem solvers who can think critically and synthesize information for use across multiple projects and scenarios.

“Students must be able to demonstrate their understanding of the content and its interconnectivity, not just memorize factual information, which are skills for all students,” DeNeui said.

In order to implement the Biomedical Science program at Platte-Geddes, DeNeui attended a 2-week Lead Teacher Training for PLTW at Sanford Research in Sioux Falls in July of 2015. The training prepared

DeNeui to facilitate the learning in his classroom and also provided him with the tools necessary for successful implementation back in his classroom.

Recently, the students completed a study of diabetes and the students made real life connections to their learning in understanding the affects their unhealthy diets could have in the short and long term. Another lab included a study of sickle cell anemia.



The kids learned about the disease and then turned right around and applied their learning in their study of Anna.

“That is what makes their learning stick—knowledge to application,” DeNeui said. “Everything fits together and the kids see it fit together.”

Another component of PLTW programs is exposure to careers in STEM and

in this case, biomedical careers. The real world, hands-on learning is linked to actual careers as the students work to solve the case.

“The kids asked if they could ‘Lab Up’ and walk around in the halls to show others how ‘Scientifical’ they were,” DeNeui recalled. “It is exciting to see kids enthusiastic about science and learning.”

The Platte-Geddes administration is already considering expanding the PLTW offerings for next fall after over 20 students made requests to opt into the PBS class at the semester.

RAPID CITY GIVING BACK

For the sixth year in a row Black Hills Power employees have raised money to buy each and every student at General Beadle Elementary School a present.

This year was no different.

"They have been great partners for us," Dean of Students Gina Kimball said. "They go out of their way to help with whatever we need or ask."

The teachers did the shopping and the General Beadle student council wrapped the presents.

That same week 560 students, many of whom live below the poverty line, at the school opened their gifts.

"It's pretty neat to see the kids in action," Kimball said

The staff at General Beadle are incredibly grateful to Black Hills Power employees for their generosity and kindness this past holiday season.

"Every year the students are excited and grateful," Public Information Manager Katy Urban said. "Many classrooms write thank you notes to BHP."



Peer leaders at Rapid City Central High School are bringing their highly successful program Cobbler-to-Cobbler to students around the region.

The program's roots are from a grant-funded suicide prevention program called "Sources of Strength." Central High School leaders sought out the program in 2008 following a 30-month period where 14 teens took their lives.

Sources of Strength focuses on preparing a group of students to be capable peer leaders for prevention activities with staff mentoring. It also helps students recognize and use some of the protective factors that make them resilient and focuses on positive strengths and resources and breaks down codes of silence.

"The main thing is who and what are those protective factors in your life that will help you avoid risky decisions," Rapid City Central High School Counselor Tim McGowan said.

More than seven years later, the program is proving to be successful. The last suicide to impact the school happened in 2011.

The program's success is getting the attention of surrounding districts. In 2015, peer-to-peer leaders and advisors trained students at 22 different schools. The program is peer trained and peer lead.

"They really enjoy the opportunity to take what they built here and take it to other schools," Public Information Manager Katy Urban said. "It is about supporting others and building that sense of community.

"We are connected by so many common themes and they can make positive cultural change when given the opportunity."

In addition to prevention programming, the students involved with Cobbler-to-Cobbler this year also helped organize a number of community events including the Safe Halloween event, Special Olympics, the 10th grade career fair and other events.



Students with the Teen Up program are spreading Christmas cheer at Mommy's Closet, a Volunteers of America program that assists mothers and children with basic needs. Teen Up is a Partnership Rapid City initiative created to give teens a voice and encourage them to be active in their community.

The organization's Christmas and Cookies event features Santa and his elves. A Teen Up photography student also took pictures of children and families with Santa.

Students dressed up as Santa and his elves, which brought smiles to the faces of kids. The kids also beamed when the Toy Shop volunteers handed them a toy and a book.

"The event definitely sparked interest for teens to help more families during future Christmas seasons," Public Information Manager Katy Urban said. "Student gained a better understanding of the needs of families in our community. (They) expressed an interest in doing more for the community during future holiday seasons.

"The students found it difficult to limit the 'gently used' gifts that were provided to each child who attended the event. They wanted to give more."

RUTLAND REPRESENTED AT WWII MUSEUM

Rutland High School Senior Brianna Renaas was chosen to represent South Dakota at the opening of a new exhibit at the World War II Museum this December.

Last spring, Brianna won first place at the state National History Day contest for her documentary on South Dakotan Joe Foss.

Social Science Teacher Lauren Olson noted the extraordinary effort Brianna put into her completely self-driven project.

“She absolutely deserved this opportunity,” Olson said. “I was very happy for Brianna when this opportunity presented itself. She is an excellent representative for Rutland High School, as well as South Dakota.”

Because of her World War II themed project and qualifying for the national contest, Brianna then became eligible for this trip to New Orleans. Brianna was nominated and selected by the South Dakota NHD affiliate.

“I felt honored and excited. I was proud to represent South Dakota at the museum,” Brianna said. “I thought it was cool that there was a Joe Foss display in this national museum and a lot of people see it.”

The World War II Museum in New Orleans selected one student from each state to be among the first to view its new exhibit, with all expenses for the trip paid for by the museum.

The New exhibit, Campaigns of Courage Exhibit Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries, was opened to these students on December 11.

As a part of this experience Brianna also told the story of another South Dakota World War II veteran. Brianna’s research on Ralph D. McKee will now be a permanent part of the World War II museum’s archives.

“I hope Brianna recognizes and appreciates the significance of World War II in our nation’s history,” Social Science Teacher Lauren Olson said. “I also hope that she realizes that sometimes hard work is rewarded in unexpected ways.”



WRITING THEIR OWN SUCCESS STORIES

For almost ten years at Scotland Middle School Laura Haase's literature classes have participated in the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest, which is sponsored by the local VFW.

Across the country each year, more than 125,000 students in the sixth through eighth enter the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest, competing for awards that total \$50,000. Each state selects one winner whose essay is then sent on to the national competition. The national winner receives an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to showcase their essay about patriotism and what it means to them.

The students at Scotland Middle School have seen amazing success in the last few years, particularly two sisters whose patriotic essays have earned them a combined \$5,000 at the national level.

In 2012, Seventh Grader Kate Kruse placed first in the state of South Dakota and ninth in the nation, earning her \$1,500. Three years later,

Kate's younger sister Tracy placed first in the state and third in the nation earning her \$3,500.

Patriotism and excellent writing skills run in the family because Kate and Tracy have a younger brother who has also placed high in the local competition and has his eye on more awards for his family in the coming years.

"Scotland is proud of these students and their accomplishments, as well as the dedication and hard work of Mrs. Laura Haase, who in 2013 was selected as the VFW District Teacher of the Year for her efforts and success with the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest," Principal Chris McGregor said.

Participating in this essay contest falls right in line with the Scotland School District's mission to develop students into good citizens through its focus on Character Counts.

"Mrs. Haase and her students have represented the Highlanders very well through this contest and there is sure to be more to come," McGregor said.

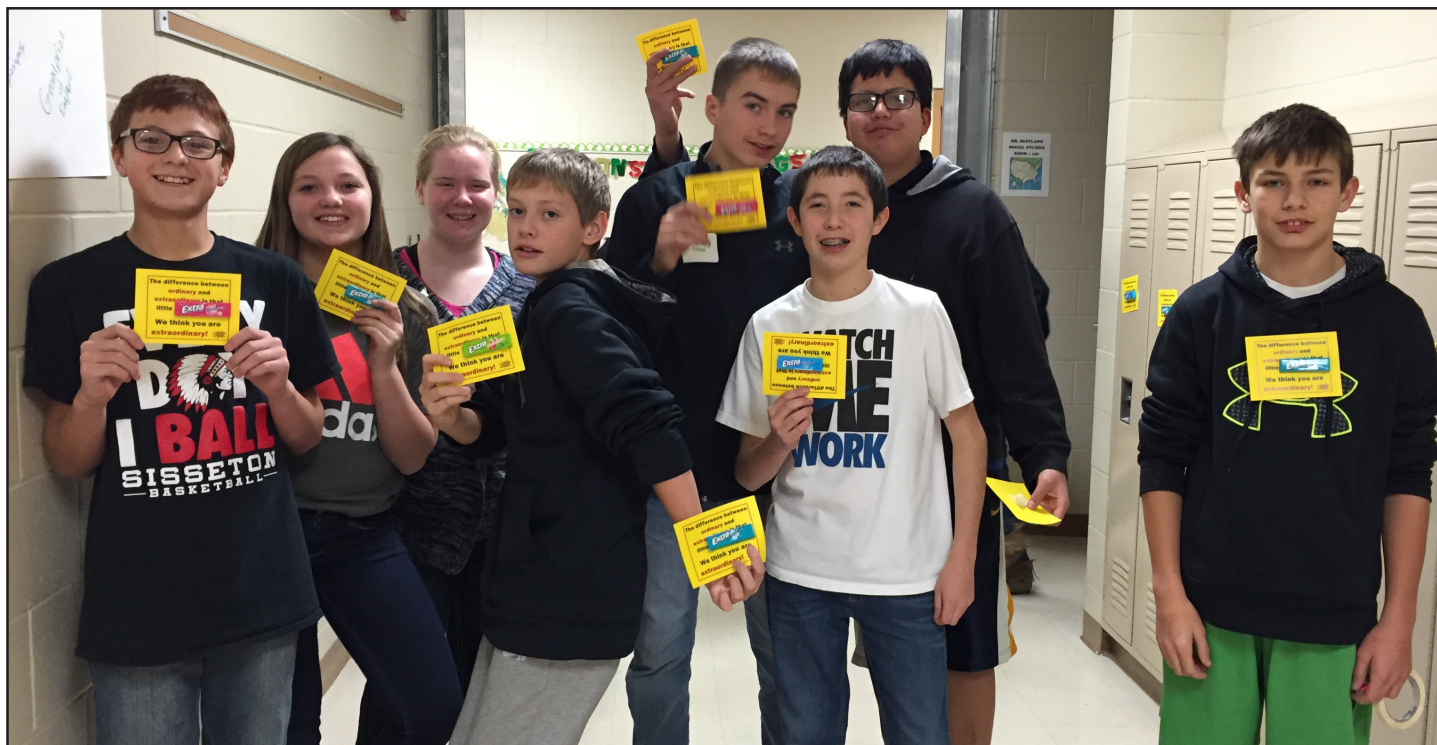


STUDENTS LEARN TO BE HEROES

Story courtesy of Katy Heinecke of the Sisseton Courier

The Sisseton Middle School students are learning what it means to be HEROES and not heroes, such as Superman or Batman. HEROES stands for Helpful, Encouraging, Responsible, Optimistic, Enthusiastic, Sensational. Students have been introduced to Drew Dudley's Everyday Heroes and were presented a challenge to recognize someone who has been helpful in their lives. The concept is to present this person with a lollipop and a certificate recognizing

from Watertown where they participated in small and large group team building activities. The Ben Reifel gymnasium was full of 180 Sisseton 6th, 7th and 8th graders doing activities with the Watertown students. Guidance counselors, school principals, Sisseton teachers, and others were in attendance for a fun-filled morning. Tammy Meyer, Sisseton Middle School Principal had been having similar thoughts as Todd Brist, Watertown Middle School Principal about the Drew Dudley Everyday Heroes Program. It only made



how they've been helpful. The purpose of this project is to emphasize a positive message to all students at the Sisseton Middle School and to show case how small, positive interactions can make a big difference in others' lives. This campaign began December 11th and will continue through the remainder of the school year.

Watertown Middle School Students Visit SMS

The Watertown Middle School recently finished up the HEROES campaign in their school and visited the Sisseton Middle School on Tuesday, Dec. 22nd to participate in a shared, 90 minute leadership workshop. Twenty-nine students attended the workshop

sense to bring the two schools together to learn from each other.

"You have a lot of good, caring teachers at your school," said Jason Buechler, teacher/counselor for Watertown Middle School said. "It's fun to see so many kids willing to be laughed at comfortably with strangers from another school in a comfort zone." There was 100% participation by all of the students and a great time was had by all. Todd Brist, Watertown Middle School Principal added, "The fact that they are all interacting is great. Kids are great! We just need to give them a chance."

>>> SEE HEROES [PAGE 65]

HEROES

>>> CONTINUED FROM [pg. 64]

Skyping with Drew Dudley

After team building/leadership activities in the gymnasium, the kids were treated to a skype conversation with Drew Dudley in the Performing Arts Center. Brist spoke to the students about what a change each and every one of them can make and everyone has the potential to be a leader. "I challenge you to pay it forward, not out of obligation or force but because it is the right thing to do". He encouraged the students to make a choice, make positive experiences more enjoyable. "You are in control of every day". He added, "The every days are always going to out-number the extraordinary days. Make the most of every day you have. It's your choice. Make it a good one". The advice he gave to these Middle School students was simple and to the point. "If it is to be, it is up to me." It doesn't matter what age you are, these words are great advice to all of us.

Drew Dudley skyped in live from Canada with more advice to the students. "How many of you guys have a lollipop moment, a moment where someone said something or did something that you feel fundamentally made your life better? How many of you have told that person they did it? Every single one of you has been the catalyst for a lollipop moment. You have made someone's life better by something that you said or that you did, and if you think you haven't, well, you're just one of the people who haven't been told".

We ALL have the Potential to be a Leader and a Hero

He went on to say, "We need to get over our fear of how extraordinarily powerful we can be in each other's lives. We need to get over it so we can move beyond it, and our little brothers and our little sisters, and one day our kids -- or our kids right now -- can watch and start to value the impact we can have on each other's lives more than money and power and titles and influence. We need to redefine leadership as being about lollipop moments, how many of them we create, how many of them we acknowledge, how many of them we pay forward, and how many of them we say thank you for".

"We've made leadership about changing the world, and there is no world. There's only six billion understandings of it, and if you change one person's understanding of it, one person's understanding of what they're capable of, one person's understanding of how much people care about them, one person's understanding of how powerful an agent for change they can be in this world, you've changed the whole thing. And if we can understand leadership like that, I

think if we can redefine leadership like that, I think we can change everything. And it's a simple idea, but I don't think it's a small one".

One Small Gesture, One Huge Impact

Dudley shared a story of how one person made a huge impact on a homeless man named Larry. The guy would give a small donation every single day to Larry, who stood at a red light, soliciting money from strangers in order to survive. This went on for over three years and in the end, Larry, the homeless guy, turned out making a huge impact on the life of the man who had been so kind to Larry. It was just a small gesture on his part, made a huge impact on Larry's life, and in the end, made an even bigger impact on his own life, by simply giving a few cents a day to a complete stranger.

Start making your own lollipop moments. Give a lollipop to someone who has made you feel like you have mattered, that you do matter or that you will matter. But, make sure you tell this person why you are giving them the lollipop and then encourage them to pay it forward....to give a lollipop to someone else.



Sisseton Middle School is Making an Impact

Tammy Meyer and staff at the Sisseton Middle School are working diligently to teach students what a huge impact they can have on other people's lives with just a small gesture of kindness. They pick a project for each and every month to tie in with the HEROES program. "We are showing them that we all need to be a part of the bigger community", said Meyer.

The afternoon of December 22nd was spent making tie blankets that are then donated to Coteau des

Prairies Healthcare and the Tribal Child Protection Program. This is the 2nd year that the students have done this project and the school staff plans to continue this project every year. They work in conjunction with the VFW Women's Auxiliary and the gals come show the kids how to get started on the blankets. The student council pays for the cost of the blankets and this year they were able to make 20 blankets, from start to finish, in one afternoon. "We like to bring community service into our building, not only during the school year but also during the holidays", said Meyer.

The Enrich students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades were all given the opportunity to participate or opt out for the afternoon activity. Not one single student opted out! The kids made blankets, watched Christmas movies and were treated to pop and popcorn. The school also hosted a Middle School Dance last week and students were asked to bring items to donate to The Kitchen. It is very heartwarming to see all the positive things that are going on in our Sisseton Middle School.

MAKING LEARNING FUN

There is more than one type of learning as identified by Benjamin Bloom.

The Bloom's Taxonomy higher of thinking skills includes six levels starting with knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and, finally, evaluation.

For the past six years, the third grade teachers at Creekside Elementary in Spearfish have been collaborating as a team putting the Bloom's Taxonomy higher order thinking skills to work, through a fun and motivating project.

Teachers work to plan a three week chunk of time in which students spend around an hour each day working on this project giving students a calendar with deadlines for their specific project tasks.

"This was an interesting project," Third Grader Baylee said.

Students select a book club to take part in. They are then placed with a group of students who shared the same interest and they then begin reading and discussing their chapter books. Once the students finish reading their books, they create a large ball using 12 pentagons.

"I really had to think about the book and understand the book well enough to complete all of the parts," Third Grade Student Lyndey said.

Each pentagon asks the students to apply a certain skill from Bloom's Taxonomy's six categories.

Some pentagons simply require the students to recall simple information like the title and author; however other pentagons ask students to make connections, summarize and evaluate.

"They were tough work but they were worth it," Third Grader Jessa said.

Third Grade Teacher Ashley Uthe noted it is important teach-



ers do not only teach lower order thinking skills at the bottom of Bloom's taxonomy, such as knowledge and comprehension, but also teach higher order thinking skills at the top of Bloom's taxonomy such as evaluation.

She added that when students are evaluating and judging and using the higher order thinking skills; they are more likely to retain information, perform better on standardized tests, and most importantly, achieve the ultimate goal of becoming lifelong learners while having fun.

"This project actually made reading a lot of fun" Third Grade Student Luca said.

EXCELLENCE AWARDED

The Spearfish School District received the 2015 Award of Excellence from the Spearfish Economic Development Corporation. The award honors an area business that exemplifies dedication and commitment within the areas of business development, capital investment, and job creation.

"We work hard to maintain positive relationships in all of our dealings with the public, and it helps being recognized for that effort," Superintendent Dave Peters said.

"We will continue to take part in the business of our community, serving on Boards, committees and service groups that impact the well-being of all citizens."

With about 260 employees the school district is one of the largest employers in Spearfish.

"Like all schools, we are a major contributor to the financial health of the community we serve," Peters said. "To be recognized as such is another level of support and trust within our community."

Peters added he believes the district having a strong partnership with the community "fosters trust and support as the school functions and interacts within the community on a daily basis."



TAKING STEPS



The start of the 2013 school year brought news that no school wants to hear: Stanley County Elementary had been placed on the FOCUS school list.

While many may take this as a negative, the staff at Stanley County Elementary decided to look at it as an opportunity for change. Those changes, in part led by South Dakota's 2016 Teacher of the Year Sarah Lutz, paid off last fall.

"The elementary leadership team took a hard look at all programs, schedules, daily practices, and data and began to tackle the issues and factors that could be changed," Elementary Principal Michelle Glodt.

The team used research to begin to change the materials and teaching methods used in the classrooms. This was driven by the opportunity to be a part of the CORE Literacy Professional Development and coaching provided by TIE and the state Department of Education.

The elementary implemented a new math series in the fall of 2013 to promote a deeper understanding of math content while better preparing students to become mathematical thinkers. This math series implementation was also paired with math professional development and coaching in the classrooms for the teachers.

"Coaching in both reading and math allowed staff to get real feedback, advice, and assistance from experts in the field in a non-evaluative setting," Glodt said.

Taking advantage of the additional grant money, provided to schools on the FOCUS list, Stanley County was able to expand

professional development and purchase materials that may not have otherwise been possible.

Glodt noted the school was able to update and expand the intervention materials available for teachers to use within Power Hour, an RtI-like structure. The scheduling of Power Hour also became a priority with 45 minutes to an hour every day spent on student interventions at all elementary grade levels.

"All of these pieces, along with many other changes, lead to Stanley County Elementary being able to celebrate test scores that were nothing to hide," Glodt said.

Stanley County Elementary scores in third grade were more than 20 percentage points above the state average and fourth and fifth grade scores were not far behind in matching that success.

As if this was not enough good news, October brought another celebration.

At the Systems Change Conference, Third Grade Teacher Sarah Lutz, an integral part of the school turn-around plan, was named 2016 Teacher of the Year.

"While always a reflective and outstanding educator, she embraced and encouraged change and lead by example," Glodt said. "This honor now gives her a wider audience to inspire and lead through her example of educational excellence."

"Stanley County Elementary has celebrated the successes but these were just the beginning steps toward continued academic excellence."

TEA AREA THRIVES



The Tea Area School District is a young and growing District.

The District opened its doors in the fall of 2003 and has experienced tremendous growth in its first 13 years of existence.

As the 16th largest school district in the state, the district had 1608 students enrolled in the fall of 2015.

“This growth has brought growing pains and challenges along the way as our student population continues to grow out of our buildings,” Superintendent Jennifer Lowery said.

The patrons of the Tea Area School District continue to support their growing district through their time and financial support.

“Tea is a tremendously supportive community and the Tea Area School District continues to thrive in this exciting time of its young existence,”

Lowery said.

Most recently, the district moved forward with the new Tea Area Frontier Elementary, which opened its doors in the fall of 2015.

The patrons also supported a 14 classroom addition, lunch commons, and office complex to their current elementary, Tea Area Legacy Elementary. Legacy’s addition will open in March of 2016.

Finally, the district has moved forward with a security entrance onto the high school which will funnel all visitors through the office. Construction will be finalized in the spring of 2016 on this project, as well.

“The patrons of the Tea Area School District have the unique opportunity and responsibility to build the traditions and legacy of our district with each step we take forward,” Lowery said.

TC ELEMENTARY TAKES ON EQUINE THERAPY



October 13, 2015, was a big day in the lives of Todd County Elementary School (TCES) Students in Mission, South Dakota on the Rosebud Reservation, when three beautiful horses moved in to live on campus.

Since the beginning of time, the Lakota people have had a sacred relationship with horses, having seen or experienced examples of the healing power of their connection with the equines.

Last March, Sinte Gleska University (SGU) asked the Todd County School District (TCSD) to partner with the University and other entities on the Rosebud to cooperate on the Tiwahe Glu Kini Pi (TGKP) ‘Bringing the Family Back to Life’ project. TGKP works to transform the way Mental Health Services are provided for Lakota youth with serious emotional and behavioral disturbances. It uses Lakota culture therapy, traditional western counseling, and intensive wrap-around care coordination in keeping with the Lakota philosophy of “Mitakuye Oyasin” (We are all related to each other and

all of creation).

The plan was to bring horses to the Todd County Elementary campus, thus exposing more children to the healing spirit of the Sunka Wakan Oyate (Horse Nation) and allow TCKP therapists to assist the children during the day at school, rather than transporting them in vans to the SGU Ranch.

A Ford Motor Company Grant provided materials to build a winter shelter, with a fence and tack room. The SGU Vocational Education Department began construction adjacent to the TCES Campus. SGU Student Frank Kills In Water directed the project.

So, on a beautiful Fall day, the dream of uniting the young students with the gentle equines became a reality. The children surrounded the fence, admiring the horses, and asking many questions, as they were instructed on the care and feeding of their new charges. The horses stood quietly, as if really understanding the importance of their time with the children.

CONSTRUCTING THEIR FUTURE

Vermillion students wishing to pursue a post-secondary technical education or to enter the work force right after high school will be better prepared to do so, thanks to a grant from Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

This program will offer closer working relationships with the school district and Vermillion business community. The Vermillion School District is one of 12 in the state that

received a grant from the State of South Dakota's Future Fund, which is aimed at improving career and technical education programs.

The grant was used to construct a metal pre-engineered building south of the high school on school property. This facility is a heated and insulated building and is fully outfitted with

the latest construction equipment. The building will shelter students and supervisors during construction projects as part of a partnership with Vermillion Chamber and Development Corporation.

Currently, students are constructing a new home inside this structure. Materials for this home are provided through start-up funds provided by the Vermillion School Board.

"The program, run through a course called 'Residential Construction' will give students real-world experience working in carpentry, electrical, and plumbing," Superintendent

Mark Froke said.

"This program will enable students to have an opportunity to learn construction skills and attend a post-secondary school or go right to work in the construction industry right out of high school. The program will also address a critical workforce need in the area of building construction."

This is a new Career and Technical Education (CTE)



course will allow a capacity of up to 24 students working in two-hour time blocks. Students in the course will build a 1600 square foot house that will be sold to a successful bidder in the spring of each year. The home has a living room, kitchen, dining area, three bedrooms, and two bathrooms.

The partnership with the Vermillion

Chamber and Development Corporation will allow the buyer to locate the home on a new development in the city or move the home to a point of their choosing.

Froke said a dual-credit program for the course in residential construction is currently planned that will allow students to earn credit at post-secondary institutions, should a student choose to attend a technical school after graduation. Currently, all students must pass a dual-credit OSHA safety course at the beginning of the program as a pre-requisite to participation in residential construction.

STEMS SEEKS SOLUTION



The Homestead Act of 1862 began a homesteading era where over 1.6 million people stepped-up to the challenge to claim and settle more than 270 million acres of public land. For decades, South Dakota homesteaders have contributed to the legacy of America's Bread Basket.

Today, South Dakota farmland remains abundant with corn, wheat, and soybean fields. Despite the crop abundance and the farming community status, one in four children in Clay County, South Dakota, where the Vermillion School District is located, are food insecure.

Food insecurity is one of the largest obstacles facing children in Clay County, South Dakota.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics for Sustainability is a community innovation project conducted by Eighth Grade Students at Vermillion Middle School. The Bush Grant in cooperation with the South Dakota Community Foundation funds this project.

The project has two goals. The first is to complete data analysis regarding socio-economic status and food distribution through expert education and a field experience to the local food pantry. The second is to design, build,

and maintain a school garden or Living Laboratory that will educate generations of children that are able to grow, harvest and share their own food with their community.

STEMS includes an Eighth Grade Science poverty education component in tandem with a Living Lab.

The Living Lab allows students to investigate farming practices for sustainability, while creating a local food source for local families in need.

The 2015 growing season yielded over five hundred pounds of fresh and organic produce for the Vermillion Food Pantry. One hundred and seven students participated in the poverty and farming curriculum. The curriculum will continue to be integrated in the Vermillion Eighth Grade Science curriculum.

"The goal of VMS STEMS is to advocate for and provide a solution to our local situation," Middle School Science Teacher Natasha Gault said.

"The VMS STEMS project will inspire and empower the younger generation and our community to become educated and to act meaningfully and thoughtfully."

V-H CHAMPIONS CO-TEACHING CLASSROOM

Several South Dakota school districts and USD are working together in order to maximize the positive impacts a year-long residency can have on both training teachers and K-12 student achievement.

Viborg-Hurley is one of those districts.

“We have continued to build our relationships and are excited to be entering into a partnership with them,” Superintendent Rob Sylliaasen said.

Sylliaasen said initially, the district started with two co-teachers, expanded to four the following school year and currently have six co-teachers, with plans to place nine in the district next year with the main focus on placing them in K-2 classrooms.

The district has incorporated more team teaching approaches allowing instructional delivery to improve student to teacher/co-teacher ratios.

“The co-teachers have been very beneficial for our district to build our reading to intervention (RtI) program,” Sylliaasen said. “The co-teachers are each assigned a group of students to work with during our half-hour RtI times.”

Sylliaasen said the district has benefitted greatly working with USD when building schedules for co-teachers and the district has made slight changes since the first year, which allowed them to have a consistent schedule for co-teachers throughout the entire year.

The consistency of co-teachers for specific learning times in classrooms has assisted the district in improving student outcomes.



“The residency has changed student teaching. No longer are the student teachers expected to observe for several weeks and gradually take over the class,” Sylliaasen said. “In our district, we clearly communicate with co-teachers during the interview process that we expect them to be working with students and meeting students’ educational needs from day 1 to the last day of school.”

“We believe that co-teachers are not going to get a better preparation for their first year of teaching than what USD and partnerships like ours provides.”

In addition to the positive impact year-long residency has on training new teachers, it also is having an impact on classroom climate as well as student achievement.

Through co-teaching practices, the mentor teacher and co-teacher candidate work together in strategizing best instructional practices in addition to supporting one another if disruptions occur. The district has seen less student behavior concerns because of the residency co-teaching model.

“I see less students coming to my office which allows me to get into classrooms more often,” Sylliaasen said.

Instructional Integrationis Michelle Schoenefeld noted the huge educational impact co-teaching is having on the students and staff.

“When I walk into a classroom, it is hard to tell which one is the teacher and which one is the co-teacher, as it is seamless,” Schoenefeld said.

“The co-teachers are in the trenches daily with co-planning, co-teaching, differentiating instruction, assessing students, participating in professional conversations, and are well prepared for their future.”



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SEED PLANTED THROUGH SUMMER ENRICHMENT

The Wagner Community School District planted a seed two years ago with their summer enrichment gardening program, which has blossomed into a new geodome/aquaponics program that has impacted the entire school district.

Aquaponics systems are a great alternative food source that are currently being researched by NASA and can be utilized in areas of our world that struggle from famine. They can be an important aspect of science curriculums across the country when the new science STEM standards are implemented.

The aquaponics system combines a recirculating system that incorporates fish, plants, and bacteria. The fish provide the ammonia to the plants that bacteria convert to nitrites and nitrates. The plants benefit from the nitrogen and nutrients from the fish water while removing the nitrogenous wastes from the water that is then returned back to the fish tank as clean water.

Two years ago, JAG middle school students built the first aquaponics system during the summer enrichment program with Gregg Fripp out of Omaha Nebraska assisting. Students have been planting vegetables in their grow beds and have felt the full impact of the success of their projects by harvesting their garden and eating their Tilapia fish.

The students maintained the system along with a small outdoor garden and, not only did they get excited about learning, but they also showed progress in learning over the summer months according to the district's MAPP scores.

The district's second system in the high school was also built with the assistance of Fripp and was funded through the Kelly Lane Earth and Space Science Grant awarded in 2015. The system contains an eight foot grow bed and is one of the largest systems he has built for a school district.

This same group of middle school JAG students presented their Geodesic dome proposal to the Wagner School Board in the spring of 2015.

They wanted more students to have the same enriched experiences that they did during the entire school year. Upon approval,



our adventure began and our geodome/aquaponics program was born.

The Growing Dome greenhouse is a state of the art greenhouse perfected over 25 years of business from out of Colorado. The dome shape is immensely strong and wind friendly. The Growing Dome greenhouse has withstood over 130 mph winds and over 8 feet of snow in a single storm. It contains a 3,100 gallon tank and houses a large aquaponics system with multiple grow beds.

Students have assisted in building the dirt grow beds, work table, and the aquaponics grow beds. Throughout this entire process, the projects have been student-driven.

One of the special aspects of the new program is what is happening with it across the school district's curriculum.

The Spanish class is conducting a world hunger project and is growing vegetables in the dome to help feed the hungry in the community. The life skills classes have been learning how to propagate house plants while practicing their writing and reading skills.

The district's librarian has conducted book reading jamborees in the soothing environment, elementary sci-

ence classes are scheduling plant experiments for the spring semester, next semester the middle school horticulture class will use the geodome as the classroom and the district is hoping to start a high school class next year.

There are also plans to have students work with Fripp to conduct real research in the geodome and with the aquaponics systems that enables them to help people in America and other countries combat famine. There will be opportunities to travel with Mr. Fripp to Haiti to work with the systems as missionary work.

The students have also have discussed building systems and maintaining them for nursing homes or serving other community needs. They want to include the master gardeners in their community and create a year round gardening program through a school and community partnership in Wagner.

The program is constantly evolving, and the district considers its future to have endless possibilities through the dedication of staff and students.

LEARNING NEVER STOPS IN WAGNER

Learning continues in the summer in the Wagner Community School District.

Summer Programming at Wagner School has a hands-on spin.

The program, which used to take place in June has been moved to July, is now open to all students enrolled in the district.

Students are in the school building five days a week from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. and all students are provided free lunch from the summer lunch program.

In the summer of 2015, there were on average 155 students who attended and over the course of four weeks, the students were able to delve into hands-on activities and partake in a variety of field trips.

This past summer, students spent time working in the school garden, tie-dyeing shirts, cooking, and learning to canoe and fish. They had the opportunity to go on weekly field trips to Kreyck's Elk and Buffalo Ranch, the Washington Pavilion, the Yankton Fish Hatchery and many more exciting places.

Wagner brought in a variety of people to work with students each week. SEPA (a group from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln), Dallas Chief Eagle (a Native American hoop dancer), Sheltered Reality (a drum group), and Gabrielle Seeley (an artist) were a few that came to work with students and share their talents.

Each week the parents and community were invited to perform-



ances so that the students could showcase their hard work. Wagner also partnered with the University of South Dakota, Vermillion to bring in interns each week. The interns were able to help reduce the teacher to student ratio.

Summer programming has been very successful over the past two years and the hope is students will learn to follow their curiosity, think creatively and work cooperatively with others not only in a school setting but in their everyday lives.



NEW COMPLEX SERVING COMM.



The Wall School District recently completed a modern, state of the art outdoor athletic complex that includes a football field and an all-weather synthetic surfaced track.

The old football field and track were close to 50 years old and in need of much repair. This was one of the major reasons the school district elected to construct a new athletic complex.

The football field is comprised of an artificial turf field and is one of only four artificial turf fields west of the Missouri River in South Dakota and the school district is one of the smallest in the state with a facility of this magnitude.

The all-weather track, installed by Sam Fisher of Fisher Tracks, uses a technique that allows for the concrete to be ‘tightened’ and ‘adjusted’ as it settles and forms, which prevents the cracking and breaking up of the concrete under the track and based on Wall’s loca-

tion, the district will benefit greatly from this technique which will give a greater lifespan to the track.

This past fall, the district hosted their first home varsity, junior varsity, middle school, and pee wee football games at the facility, among other events, and this spring will also host its first track meet.

Superintendent Cooper Garnos said the Wall School District’s goal has also been to have a facility that could be used by not only the district, but the general public, as well.

“The Wall School Board deserves much credit for their well thought out plan, prudent saving of tax payers dollars for the project, and a vision of what they wanted to achieve for the school and community,” Garnos said.

“The new athletic complex will serve the Wall Community and area for generations to come.”

SHARING THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS



Fourth grade students at Waverly-South Shore wanted to help make the holidays a little more special for someone, so they raised money to purchase gifts for two children off of the Angel Tree at Walmart in Watertown.

For an art project, each student made a scarf and sold it for \$5.

With scarf sales and a few extra donations, the class raised \$115!

The class went to Walmart one morning and helped pick out presents for the two children they had selected from the tree.

They had to decide out how much to spend on each child, help add up the items bought, and figure in the tax.

The students picked out a basketball, sweats, shorts, jacket, and candy for one and a Monster High Doll set, outfit, and hair accessories for the other.

“These fourth graders were very excited about this project and were happy to be able to give to someone in need!” W-SS Fourth Grade Teacher Sarah Strang said.

COMMUNITY ENGAGES STUDENTS AT SUMMIT

In the fall of 2014 the community of Webster engaged in a community development charrette with several vision teams developing as a result of this process.

The Webster Area School District immediately became most involved with the workforce development team. The district hosted a workforce summit in February 2015, where 70 people from industries and education came together to brainstorm challenges and solutions for workforce needs in our community.

“These efforts sparked many great projects such as student internships, new courses, industry participation, and possible sponsors,” Assistant High School Principal Amy Miller said.

The Webster Area Development Corporation (WADC) and the Webster School have become strong partners throughout all of this, with WADC assisting with funding for event facilitators, sponsored professional development, put a school faculty member on their board and involved faculty in community events.

Even though the students were the central part of everything the workforce team was doing, they weren't involved from the start. However, in November of 2015, a youth summit (sponsored by WADC) was held



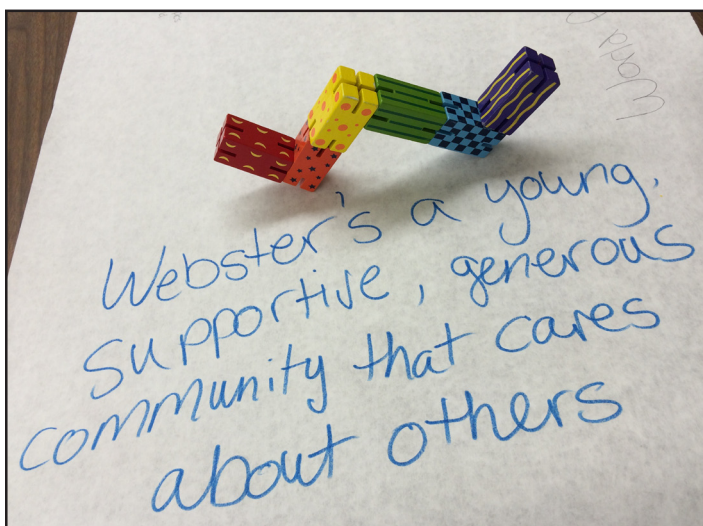
with 40 top student leaders from grades 7-12 invited to spend a day with a motivational community planner.

The students went through a similar discussion as the one from the workforce summit hosted by the district and identified challenges and solutions in the community.

For the final hour of the summit nine adults that had been heavily involved in the vision teams were invited to come in and team up with the kids.

“It was amazing how many of their ideas mirrored the adults but they had new visions that the adults may not have considered,” Miller said.

“The goal of this day was to give students power in the future in their community and to link these student leaders up with the right adults and committees so they could become active with their service projects.”



WESS-SPRINGS CYBER SCHOOL SEES SUCCESS

The third year of the Wessington Springs Cyber School saw an average of 20 students from across the state enrolled in courses offered and brought about the first two graduates from the program.

As a leader in innovative education, Wessington Springs School District provides an outstanding online schooling option, which works in conjunction with DIAL Virtual School, that provides a robust and rigorous curriculum for South Dakota students.

The programs offers more than 30 courses meeting graduation credits, more than 40 CTE/Elective courses and credit recovery, dual-credit tutoring and post-secondary remedial coursework.

Students enrolled in the Cyber School receive the online curriculum for free, use of a laptop for a small annual fee and the district pays up to \$300 for all dual-credit college courses, which adequately covers the cost for any state funded post-secondary institution.



SOUTHEAST CORNER COLLABORATION

For six years, school districts in the southeast corner of South Dakota have come together to collaborate on education topics at an event organized by the West Central School District.

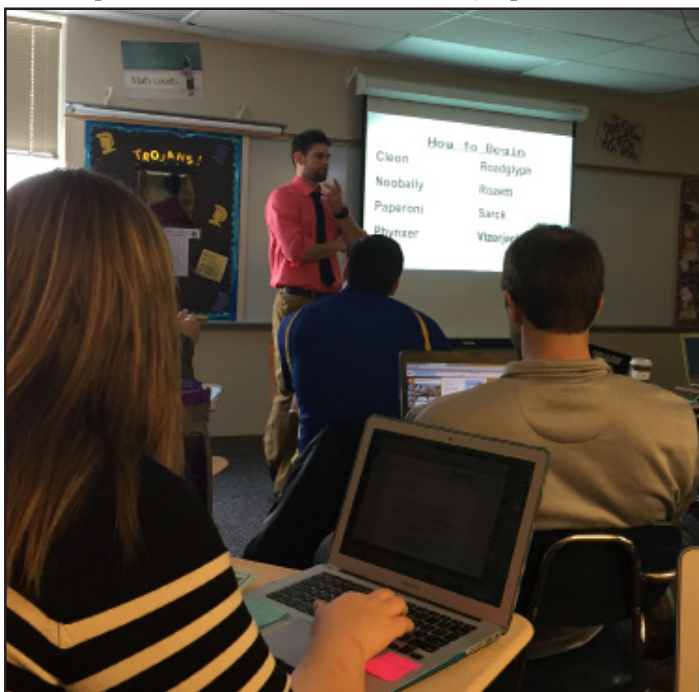
More than 400 teachers and administrators from seven school districts attended this year's edition of the West Central Winter Symposium.

"Topics at the West Central Winter Symposium are all

and making the day about what they want to learn," Weber said. "The variety of options is always something that benefits those attending!"

Weber credited West Central Superintendent Jeff Danielson and 2008's AdvancedEd Review as the impetus for the event.

She said administrators worked together to come up with multiple professional development experiences for the

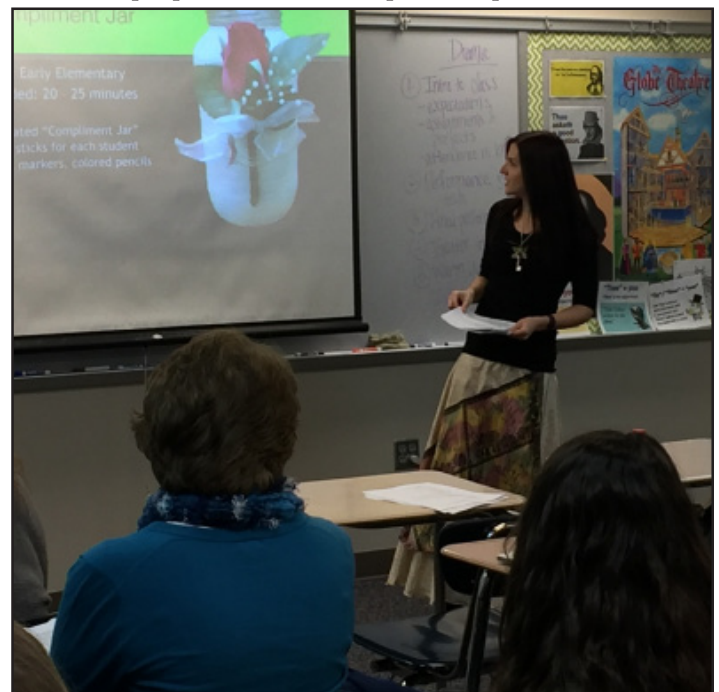


driven by the educators who attend it," West Central Differentiation Coach Sarah Weber said. "We take the most popular topics and then find people in the districts attending to present on them."

"Another reason why this is a popular venue for teachers to learn from is that they know the presenter so they can call or email to ask any questions they may have."

Weber said topics included transformative learning, QR codes, and paperless classrooms, among others and districts attending, along with host West Central, included Montrose, Garretson Tri-Valley, Madison, Baltic and Viborg/Hurley. McCook Central has also been a past participant.

"The teachers really appreciate having options and choice



teaching staff, with one being a district run mini-technology conference known today as the West Central Winter Symposium. Weber also credited the West Central School Board for their support of additional training opportunities brought on by technology.

"The Winter Symposium is a group effort," Weber said. "We start planning at the beginning of the school year as we have grown every year."

"So every year we have had to come up with a new plan for scheduling and organizing. This year we had our biggest one yet with 14-15 different sessions offered during each breakout."

DISTRICTS COMBINE EFFORTS FOR CTE

Four South Dakota school districts combined efforts to form a consortium to bring CTE courses to their students in a creative manner.

Approximately 100 students from the Burke, Colome Consolidated, Gregory and South Central School Districts are enrolled in one of four CTE courses brought to them in a mobile classroom.

The four mobile units rotate to each of the school districts within the West River CTE consortium. This year Burke has the Biomedical unit, the building trades unit is in Colome, students in Gregory are using the Metal fabrication unit and the Pre-Engineering unit is in South Central.

“Each school district within the consortium is responsible for providing a highly qualified teacher for one of the units,” Gregory Superintendent Sara Klein said.

Startup costs for the consortium – including the four mobile units, tools and materials to equip the classrooms, vehicles for travel for each of the four teachers and initial training for staff – were funded through

a grant submitted by Burke superintendent Erik Person and each subsequent year the four schools fund the administration of the program, insurance, consumable materials and other needs.

“The biggest benefit is the addition of four CTE elective courses that we couldn’t bring to our students based upon the economic requirements individually,” Klein said, adding that students are exposed to engineering and forensic type sciences that may not otherwise be offered in the individual high schools.

“This consortium brings new opportunities to our students on an annual basis.”

Klein noted the students have welcomed the opportunity with those in Gregory last year having an opportunity build a house through a partnership with the lumberyard in Gregory. This year, Gregory students completing the welding course will have the ability to become certified welders.

“It’s been a wonderful addition to our schools and communities as a whole,” Klein said.



CHRISTMAS COMPASSION



During the recent holiday season Wilmot School District students spread holiday cheer

Students in grades 7-12 from different advisory groups completed a variety of community service projects.

A number of advisories collected non-food items (toiletries, shampoo, laundry detergent, etc.) for the and the local FFA donated fruit to the Horizons Food Pantry.

One group baked Christmas goodies and distributed them to local volunteer Fire Men and another did the same and distributed them to the local day care and

preschool children.

The Student Council helped Horizons Food Pantry distribute care packages to area needy families. Finally, a group organized and played Bingo with members of the local Senior Home.

Superintendent Larry Hulscher said the reaction from the community was “very positive” and felt students were driven by a desire to help others.

“I believe is shows their care and compassion for others and a desire to help others,” Hulscher said.



READING AT WINNER

Winner Elementary School has been working to improve reading skills in all students. Reading has become a priority in several ways for the school. First of all, every grade level has a scheduled reading block of 90 minutes. During this time, student are not to be pulled out of the room for extra activities and classroom disruptions are limited. An aide is scheduled to be in every room for at least 30 of the 90 minutes.

Along with scheduling reading for 90 minutes a day, principal, Brian Naasz, works hard to ensure that grade level teachers have a common planning time once a day. By having open time together, teachers can share ideas about reading and other subjects to enhance student performance. This time can be used for reading collaboration, parent meetings, IEPs, or other situations that may arise. Using this time to work together benefits students and the reading curriculum.

Reading Recovery is a specialized reading intervention program that services 1st grade students on a one-to-one daily basis. All 1st grade students go through an abundance of testing at the beginning of the school year and the students needing the most help for the one-to-one program are prioritized for service. Some of the 1st grade students, who are not prioritized for the one-on-one program, are still given supplemental reading help, in groups, by the Reading Recovery teacher. The Winner School District has been fortunate to have the Title 1 funding to be able to use the Reading Recovery program for their 1st grade students for the past 10 plus years. The school district is committed to continue this important reading intervention program for years to come.

To continue to enhance reading, Jaime Keiser, a first



grade teacher, had a vision for a summer reading program at Winner Elementary. The district was able to provide a reading program with incentives, plus open the school library one day a week so that students could check out books.

Research shows that early exposure to literacy is important for the success of every student. Emily Tideman, Beginndergarten teacher, had a dream to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Winner. This program sends out a monthly book to children ages 0-5. The biggest hurdle she faced was funding. Although very reasonable at about 2 dollars per book, it still takes funds to make the Imagination Library a success in Winner. The program was started with a generous donation from the local Shopko and has been a huge success. Currently, over 120 children enjoy receiving a monthly book in the mail.

"With all of these actions and activities, the Winner School District hopes to make reading a priority not only for students, but their families as well," Kimberly DeMers said.

STUDENTS KEEP TO THE CODE

Courtesy of Alissa Woockman of the Yankton Press & Dakotan

As a part of Yankton School District's Five-Year Strategic Plan, educators are working to integrate more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs into the schools.

One program recently added is a coding club for fifth graders. Coding is what makes all computer programming possible, including the creation of websites and apps. It has become a vital skill in the 21st century.

Beadle Elementary School students were the first in the district to join the club. Principal Carey Mitzel partnered with Yankton's Southeast Job Link to create this technological opportunity.

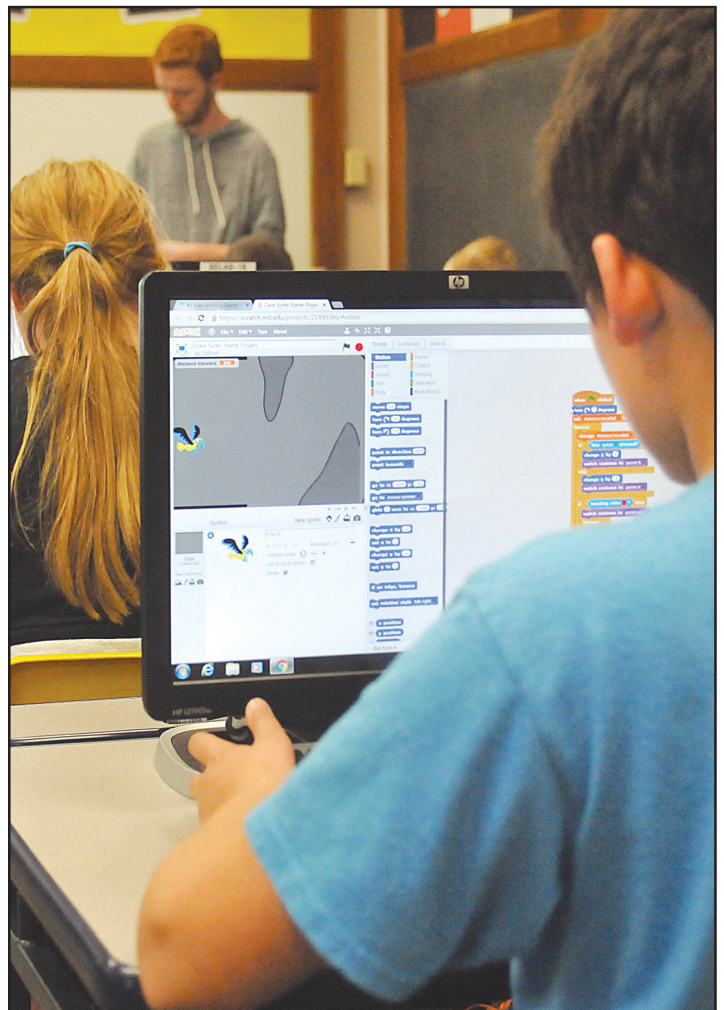
"I think coding is hot right now," Mitzel said. "When you talk in education circles about STEM projects, you hear about coding often. There are big names from Bill Gates to Facebook about coding initiatives. They want kids to be involved with that."

Sherri Duke, director of Southeast Job Link and instructor of the coding club, works with the non-profit learning center to teach a variety of skills and realized the importance of this skill.

"This is what we do to get them that exposure to potential careers down the road in the world of coding," she said. "We are showing them that you can do marvelous things with it."

The coding club uses a program called Google CS First. It's a free, online software that students can access with any computer, which was an important factor when deciding on a type of software to incorporate in the club, Duke said.

"If you're going to teach someone how to do something, they have to have constant access to it to continue



to work with it," she said. "We wanted to find something that was accessible to everyone beyond the classroom."

Google CS First has a variety of coding lessons, from social media to fashion design. Both Mitzel and Duke decided that video game design would capture the most intrigue from students.

Students watch instructional videos and essentially

>>> SEE **CODE** [PAGE 85]

CODE

>>> *CONTINUED FROM [pg. 84]*

create their own video games. These games involve racing, exploring and maze games. They get to design their own game characters and environments.

Students build a code to take the character through the game, creating “what if” scenarios for the characters to follow. For example, one of the games that students worked with Tuesday involved a bird that needed to go through a maze. Kids could set up the program to have the player lose if the bird ventures outside the designated path. If the bird made it to the finish line, the students could program that character to win the game.

“When people ask me what coding is, a lot of it is problem solving,” Mitzel said. “It’s using a computer and being able to understand a computer language -- not just responding to what the computer tells you to do, but telling the computer to do something.”

Since Yankton’s School District students are not exposed to a computer class until they reach sixth grade, this introduction to coding is meant to help students find it less intimidating and more fun.

“These kids will recognize what coding is,” Mitzel said. “They won’t be intimidated by it, especially staring out with something like game design.”

The coding club features an eight-week program every Tuesday after school. Kids will be able to follow along by using videos and step-by-step instructions to build their own video games.

Beadle’s eight-week program run from Sept. 8-Oct. 27, ending with Tuesday’s meeting. The schedule for the other elementary schools is as follows:

- Lincoln: Nov. 3-Dec. 22;
- Stewart: Jan. 12-Feb. 9 and Feb. 23-March 8 (an in-service day is scheduled for Feb. 16, so there is a one-week break);
- Webster: March 15-May 3

The district was awarded a venture grant of \$3,000 from United Way which covers the cost of staff time and instruction in the aspects of code training. This allows each student to participate in the club for free.

Yankton High School’s National Honor Society students act as teaching aids for Duke during club time to help kids become more comfortable with the technology.

The elementary schools also hold the classes within their own buildings to prevent unnecessary hassles with transportation and time constraints.

“You don’t have to get on a bus,” Mitzel said. “You don’t have to worry about mom and dad picking you up. They get to stay right here where they are comfortable.”

The club is limited to 25 fourth- and fifth-grade students, depending on the preference of the school. Duke admits that the program is best served by only including certain age groups.

“I’ve had second grade parents call me and say that their child would love to take this,” she said. “But I’m not sure how young we can go because, technically, there is an age limit it has to be adhered to.”

But the age cap for this program won’t prevent all Beadle students from participating in coding. Mitzel has arranged for all grades, kindergarten through fifth grade, to experience coding activities within the classroom. The week of Dec. 7-11, as a part of Computer Science Education Week, each class will experiment with an hour of coding. Despite age limitations, younger students can still test those skills with “unplugged coding.” The lessons relate to different levels of the same aspects of problem solving, but not on a computer.

“I think it is a great thing that the school is doing -- getting the kids ready for their next level of education,” Duke said. “They don’t have to have massive computer skills. Kids have enough technology with phones and iPads. That exposure gets them prepared and gives them the leg up in their next computer class.”

BIGGEST BUCKS FAN

Courtesy of Jeremy Hoeck of the Yankton Press & Dakotan

A year ago, Sylvester Wagner wasn't able to celebrate on the DakotaDome turf with his Yankton High School classmates after a state football championship.

He hoped he would get that chance this fall.

And sure enough, after the Bucks beat Pierre in an overtime thriller last Friday night, Wagner was one of the first students to rush the field. Wearing his red state football t-shirt, Wagner – a 15-year-old sophomore at YHS – made sure to shake hands with players and tell them congratulations.

The thing was, the players heard “nice game” from an automated voice.

You see, Wagner – whose friends call him “Sly” – has a speech defect. He communicates with a device called a Nova Chat 5, which you'd confuse with a cell phone (it's actually a Samsung), and it enables him to communicate through various phrases and commands that have been input into the device.

It's probably not something most of us are familiar with. You probably think such a device would be bulky; that it would be something you'd have to lug around. But no, it's a cell-phone sized device on a strap Wagner wears around his shoulder.

You would also have no idea he needs the device to communicate until you ask him, like I did this week, what it was like to be in the front row of the YHS student section last Friday night.

“It was fun to be close to see everything,” the automatic voice replies, after Wagner pushes the correct button – much like you and I would click on the Facebook icon on our smartphones.

By all accounts, the device has helped Wagner open up to his classmates and teachers.

And it's also helped that Wagner has been spending more and more time with Amberlee Mueller, a paraprofessional in the YHS special education department. Mueller, a YHS and Mount Marty College graduate, isn't with Wagner all day, but it's clearly a connection that is helping him.

“He's really good with me, because I'm with him a lot,” Mueller said this week, while sitting with Wagner. “We're trying to get him to use it more with other students, to introduce himself and meet new people.”

To ensure that Wagner's communication with others is always improving, Mueller works – almost on a daily basis, she says – to input more replies, questions and other items. All of his teachers are also in the device, most with photos, as well as students in his classes.

For example, ask Wagner where he likes to eat and you'll hear “Yesterday's” (Yesterday's Café). Or ask him his class schedule, and you'll hear the name of the course, the name of the teacher and which room the class is held.

Yes, the device is set up to allow easier communication for Wagner, but it's also proving to be helpful for his teachers, Mueller said.

“For teachers, it's a lot easier,” she said. “I try to work with them to say, if there is something they'd like me to put in there, to let me know.”

Science class, for example, would be one of those classes where



Mueller is constantly entering new terms – with the idea that Wagner would be able to participate during class.

Imagine participating without the ability to talk. Imagine the hundreds of short conversations you have throughout an average day. Now imagine doing that having to push buttons on a phone.

And yet, through all that understandable frustration, Wagner is a happy kid. He likes to tell you about his favorite class (physical education). He likes to tell you about his favorite sport (basketball). He actually plays Special Olympic basketball). And he smiles when you ask him about watching the Bucks.

“My favorite part about the games is that it's just fun to watch,” the device says, when he pushes a button.

All he wanted was a chance to watch his beloved Bucks play in the DakotaDome. Wagner had never stepped foot inside the building in Vermillion. Last Friday was a whole new experience for him.

“His reaction walking in was pretty amazing to see, for someone who had never been there,” Mueller said. “He just kept saying how big it is. He was saying, ‘Wow.’”

Wagner, who found a spot in the front row of the YHS student section, moved all the way down to the corner of the bleachers to watch the final play of overtime.

Yankton's Tanner Frick jostled loose a Pierre two-point conversion to seal the second straight championship for the Bucks. The location of the play, though – in the back corner of the end zone – obscured the result for a few seconds. You couldn't tell right away who won.

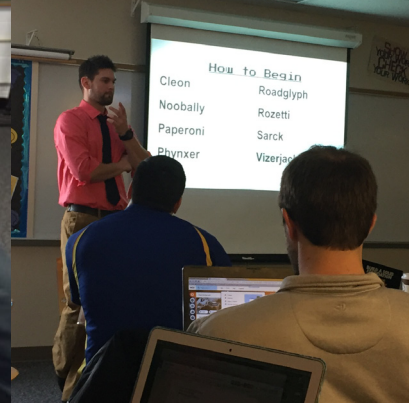
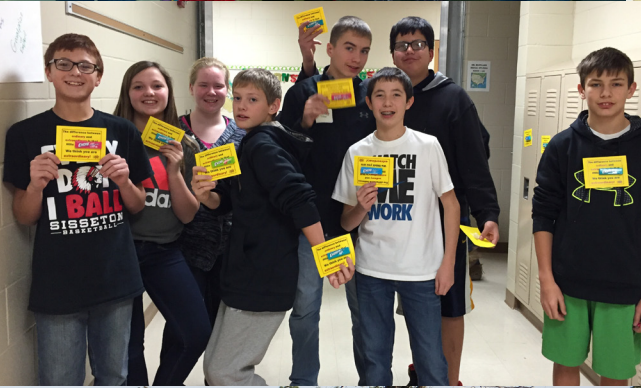
Wagner had a perfect view, however.

“He was probably the only one that knew,” Mueller said, smiling. “He was on the goal line watching.”

It was the perfect early birthday present for Wagner, who will turn 16 on Sunday.

No doubt, he'll be pushing the ice cream button on his device that day.







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