

Did You Know?

A rundown of news and events from Fridley Public Schools

SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT NEWS

COPS CAFÉ SERVES UP MENTORING AND FRIENDSHIP

“Is it hard being you?”

“Are you scared when you’re doing your job?”

These hard-hitting questions are what 3rd and 4th graders taking part in a new program at Hayes Elementary have for Fridley police officers.

Cops in the Café originated with an idea from Jennie Marquardt, paraprofessional at Hayes, who thought students lunching with officers would foster mentoring and positive relationships. Liz Chevalier, Fridley Police Youth Specialist, was

enlisted to make the program happen on her end. Thus far, there have been two sessions. To all involved, they have been a resounding success.

The students assist the officers through the lunch line, and then sit together at a pre-assigned table. The last five minutes of lunch are designated for questions and answers, giving all students a chance to participate.

“Our Hayes students asked such wonderful questions,” said Marquardt. “‘Who inspired you?’ one of our 4th grade students asked. The

officer’s answer? ‘Teddy Roosevelt.’ He asked the students if they had learned about him yet to which they enthusiastically nodded yes in unison. He then recalled studying Roosevelt in school and that’s how he knew he wanted to become a police officer.”

“Seeing the students smiling, being so thrilled about important community members essentially giving them the message that they are important, they matter... It is fabulous!” she said.



Fridley police officers taking part in Cops in the Café are, from left to right: Chief Brian Weierke, Captain Michael Monsrud and Officer Mark Mickelson.

STUDENTS AND STAFF MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOWARD ENDING HUNGER

Approximately 85 students, family members and staff from Fridley Middle School worked together on December 15 to pack food for the Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) program. The hand-packed meals they created are specially formulated for malnourished children, and sent around the world where they're used in orphanages, schools, clinics and feeding programs to break the cycle of poverty. FMSC food has reached more than 70 countries with the effort of volunteers such as those from FMS.



LUX STRING QUARTET ENTERTAINS, EDUCATES

Benjamin Davis held his almost amber-colored instrument up high for all to see.

"This is a viola," he proclaimed. "It's like a violin, but a little bigger." Davis then joined Erika Blanco, who held her instrument next to his for comparison as Stevenson Elementary students 'ooh'd and 'ahh'd.



The Lux String Quartet appeared at Stevenson on January 7 through Minnesota Public Radio's Class Notes Artists program. MPR sponsors ensembles like Lux, sending them throughout the state to introduce new generations to classical music. Excerpts from Bach, Mendelssohn, Dvorak and Piazzolla allowed the musicians to demonstrate melody and how each stringed instrument's unique sound affects the feel of the piece.

Davis and Blanco were joined by other members of the Lux String Quartet, Sam Rudy (violin) and Lars Krogstad Ortiz (cello).



BEDTIME MATH ADDS VALUE TO FAMILY TIME AND EDUCATION

A story full of math does not sound like an ideal bedtime story. But as more than 100 first and second graders and their families discovered during a special kick-off event, Bedtime Math is no ordinary story time.

The objective of Bedtime Math is to bring math into children's homes through story time and to obtain a commitment from parents and students to learn math. Each child who attended the January 7 event at Stevenson Elementary School received the first volume in the three-part Bedtime Math series.

This program was made possible by a generous donation from an anonymous Fridley couple and Medtronic Foundation. Veronica Westerman, district

PYP and math coordinator, explained to those in attendance she tested the program on her twin 4th graders first and found it to be a valuable component.

"My two boys immediately loved Bedtime Math. The story passages are filled with fun and quirky facts. The leveled math questions start out simple and gradually become more challenging. This sets all students and families up for being successful when engaging in the math problems."

The school will examine individual achievement at the beginning and end of the program to provide growth and improvement. Families attend the opening session and return each book and activity log within a designated

amount of time. Documentation of 10 minutes of Bedtime Math four times per week from January through May is also required.

"We are excited about how this program will easily help families with a simple reading and math routine that can create long-term benefits. This program will also provide us with more opportunities to spend time and connect with our families," said Westerman.

Families that complete the entire series will receive an Android tablet and Bedtime Math Parent Flyer, along with training on target math and reading apps to use with their child over the summer.



2016 FRIDLEY DISTRICT CHOIR FESTIVAL PRESENTS AMERICAN FOLK FAVORITES

Fridley Public Schools' individual choirs converged upon the high school auditorium on January 12, 2016 to present American Folk Favorites. Hayes Early Bird, Stevenson Early Bird, 6th and 7th Grade, 8th Grade, Bel Canto and Concert Choirs all performed to a packed house before combining for one big closing number, "Bile 'Em Cabbage Down."

The choir concert was provided free of charge to the Fridley community.



FHS WE ACT CLUB BUILDS SUPPORT WITH “GIRL RISING” AND “HE NAMED ME MALALA”

The Fridley High School We Act Club hosted a movie night January 22, showing “Girl Rising” and “He Named Me Malala.”

We Act is a group of students passionate about social justice and global issues. They meet monthly at Fridley High School to discuss international concerns and plan community service projects to raise awareness of these issues. Their film project showcased the plights of girls around the world on their quests to pursue higher education and a life free from poverty. All donations collected were given to an organization, Girl Up, which supports these efforts.

“Girl Rising” is a 2013 film featuring the stories of Amina, Yasmin, Senna, Suma, Ruksana, Mariama, Wadley,

Azmera, and Sokha as they battle great challenges in their quest for education, acceptance and, above all, freedom. Featuring the vocal talents of Anne Hathaway, Cate Blanchett, Alicia Keys and many more, “Girl Rising” is an inspirational film that empowers people everywhere to speak out for human rights.

“He Named Me Malala” is a documentary portraying the story of Malala Yousafzai, a girls’ rights activist, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner and survivor of a Taliban attack. Malala made headlines following her attempted assassination in 2012, and the world took notice of her efforts to speak up for education rights. Now an internationally recognized activist, Malala shares her passion through this moving story of her life.

Girl Up is a United Nations campaign to raise awareness and funds to support girls all over the world who struggle with their circumstances. Built on the belief that “girls are powerful,” Girl Up utilizes an international coalition to reach out to girls “in places where it is hardest to be a girl.”

The movie night was the brainchild of Fridley High School 11th grader Sumaya Alfath.



HOPEKIDS RECEIVE HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM HIGH SCHOOLERS

Students in Alexa Bailey’s Language Arts class at Fridley High School addressed personal holiday notes on December 22, 2015 to kids and families for HopeKids, an organization that helps children with terminal and chronic conditions.

HopeKids recognizes not only the ill child, but the rest of the family as well. In 2015, the Minnesota chapter served over 1,050 families with programs designed to meet its five criteria: Hope, Family Focus, Community, Safety and Economic Support.

The cards from Ms. Bailey’s class were delivered that day for the foundation’s holiday program in the evening.



NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENT

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS PRESENT THEIR EXTENDED ESSAYS

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Fridley High School held its 6th annual Extended Essay Silver Platter Celebration on December 21. Included in the event was the awarding of IB Diplomas to those from the graduating class of 2015.

In her speech, Jessica Baker, Diploma Programme Coordinator, acknowledged that committing to the curriculum is strenuous.

“The IB journey is a challenging one. I have yet to meet a Fridley student who goes through the Diploma Programme without facing challenges, but the learning and character building will serve you well for a lifetime,” she said.

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic, chosen within a subject group, intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intel-

lectual discovery and creativity. The product is a piece of formally presented, structured writing in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, appropriate to the subject chosen. The 4,000-word essay encourages students to develop the independent research skills expected at colleges and universities.

“I go to Boston University, which is a large, private research institution,” said Drew Bergman, keynote speaker from the Class of 2013 and a junior at Boston University. “Most of my classmates went to really expensive, prestigious and private high schools. The other ones are international, coming from all over the world. Naturally, as a freshman, I was intimidated by this. I thought, ‘How could my education from Fridley compare?’”

“It was meeting the international students that gave me confidence, because 80% of them came from IB schools.

And not only did it give me some common ground, it gave me the confidence and reassurance the education I received at Fridley – though I was coming from Minnesota and wasn’t paying \$60,000 a year to go to high school – put me on a level playing field with my classmates,” he shared.

Bergman congratulated this year’s seniors on their work, and urged juniors to work hard and trust in their advisors. This year’s candidate pool, consisting of 14 students, then introduced their respective subjects and discussed their essays with attendees.



Drew Bergman, 2013 graduate and IB Diploma recipient



Praise Hall introduces her subject, *To What Extent Does Racial Propaganda Impact the Development of Black Women in The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison?*



2016 IB Diploma candidates, from left to right: Amy Walus, Amanda Marquardt, Katherine Stevenson, Annika Paulson, Erin Larson, Katherine Barrett, Praise Hall, Margaret Bergman, Sara Johnson, Joseph Herder, Parker Brady and Keanan Allen.

STUDENT ARTISTS WIN TOP STATE SCHOLASTIC HONORS

Fridley High School Diploma Programme Visual Art and Photography 2 students were awarded an impressive 16 Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards (1 Silver Key Portfolio, 4 Gold Key, 6 Silver Key, and 5 Honorable Mentions). All Gold Key works will continue on to the National Scholastic Art Competition in New York City with a reception at Carnegie Hall on June 2, 2016. National winners will be announced in May.

The Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards is the highest art recognition for students in grades 7-12. This year the contest received nearly 3,327 individual artworks and portfolios, with judges viewing a total of 4,293 works of art. Only 311 works of art and portfolios were awarded a Gold Key, making 2016 one of the most competitive years.

Students who received a Gold Key award will have their winning pieces exhibited at the Regis Center for the

Arts West Gallery at the University of Minnesota. Awards Ceremonies will be held February 20 at the University's Weisman Art Museum.

Gold Key Awards winners: Amy Walus (Digital Art), "Over the River"; Julia Swendsrud (Photography), "Recharge"; Christen Doe (Photography), "Solitude"; Sanela Karic (Photography), "Ask Yourself."

Silver Key Awards winners: Olivia Rossi (Photography Portfolio), "Banal is beautiful"; Olivia Rossi (Photography), "Stairway to Heaven"; Olivia Rossi (Photography), "Plants in Window"; Emily Bircherm (Photography), "A Love Story"; Nut Puy (Digital Art), "Offering"; Amy Walus (Digital Art), "Lightning Ride"; Julia Swendsrud (Photography), "Submerged."

Honorable Mentions: Amir Khadar (Digital Art), "As Human As You"; Amir Khadar (Digital Art), "You don't



Student artists in photo, from left to right: (back row): Christen Doe, Amir Khadar, Amy Walus, Olivia Rossi, Emily Bircherm; **(front row):** Julia Swendsrud, Nut Puy, Sanela Karic

know Me"; Olivia Rossi (Photography), "First and Central"; Olivia Rossi (Photography), "Me First"; Olivia Rossi (Photography), "Car Troubles."

JANUARY 2016 FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Fridley Public Schools January 2016 Employee of the Month is Ronnie Solz, a paraprofessional at Hayes Elementary School. Ronnie is an asset to Hayes and the Fridley School District. She is very knowledgeable in the media center and is always willing to help both staff and students as they are looking for books or accessing software in the media center.

"She does an excellent job staying current when it comes to teacher's expectations for students in the media center," said John Piotraschke, principal of Hayes Elementary School. "She also keeps up with what they are learning in the classroom, so she can better help

teachers and students find materials that are associated with the topic they are learning."

Solz works closely with teacher Amy Rouzer. "She compliments Amy's teaching style by communicating with Amy on lesson plans so that she is able to help students as Amy is teaching," said Piotraschke. Since Solz also helps in the lab, she has learned things as Amy is teaching so she can help students as they proceed through their lessons.

Solz colleagues describe her as kind and caring to staff and students. She is willing to learn anything that might

help in her job and she performs her duties with a smile and a happy disposition.

