

# Did You Know?

*A rundown of news and events from Fridley Public Schools*

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## SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT NEWS

### **FRIDLEY STUDENTS TO RECEIVE IN-SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Beginning January 4, 2016, as part of an agreement with the Lee Carlson Center, Fridley Public Schools students who need mental health services while at school will receive care at school.

Giving an update to school board

members during their December 15 meeting the district's director of special education, Laura Seifert-Hertling, said the collaboration with the Lee Carlson Center will provide the district with the equivalent of a one and a half staff position at no cost to the district. The additional

staff will provide support for students at school as needed.

The Lee Carlson Center has provided services for district students for many years.

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### **LOCAL CHURCHES DONATE HOLIDAY BASKETS TO FAMILIES**

Community churches supported students and families with donations of Thanksgiving baskets in November. A total of ten baskets filled with non-perishable food items, turkey and enough food for a weekend were donated by Pastor Jason DeShaw of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fridley and Ray Brock of Servetus Union Church, also in Fridley.

The district's family and outreach liaisons, Aloda Sims and Yusuf Mohamud, received the donations and distributed to families. This effort was supported by Children's Ministry youth group at Redeemer

Lutheran Church who hosted a food drive to sponsor families during the Thanksgiving season. Lynnae Fitzgerald, director of the Children's Ministry was also there to present the food donation.



### BISCHKE PARTICIPATES IN HIS LAST SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

The Fridley School Board December 15 meeting was the last one for board member Fred Bischke. Bischke, who has served on the Board for 16 years, will retire at the end of this year. School Board chair Mary Kay Delvo read a proclamation honoring Bischke and his contribution to the board and hard work on behalf of students and their families.

“We all have different strengths that we bring to the work of the board,” said Delvo. “Fred is the slow steady hand and his approach has always been thoughtful and consistent. Whenever he speaks, everyone pays attention as his

comments are thoughtful and timely.”

Bischke, in turn, thanked the Fridley community and voters for their support during his tenure on the school board. He also thanked the superintendents and administrators of the last 16 years for their hard work in accomplishing many of the positive changes that have taken place in the school district.

School board members thanked Bischke and wished him well on his retirement. Donna Prewedo who ran successfully for Bischke’s seat, will begin her term on the school board on January 1, 2016.



### HOURLY OF CODE SWEEPS INTO STEVENSON

A whirlwind of digital activity was brewing December 10, as Stevenson Elementary students were introduced to an Hour of Code, the computer programming movement flourishing across the country.

Hosted by Code.org, the program is ‘dedicated to expanding access to computer science, and increasing participation by women and underrepresented students of color. Our vision is that every student in every school should have the opportunity to learn computer science.’

Principal Daryl Vossler began the implementation of Hour of Code this summer based on a conversation with a parent. “The parent said, ‘I’m a coder; I do computer programming. There are no African Americans in coding. I went to the University of Minnesota and was the only

one in my class, and I am also the only African American at the company where I work.’”

Vossler signed up for a coding class but had a scheduling change. He enlisted Dianne Rae to take his spot. Rae shared, “At the training I learned about code.org and decided to use their curriculum for my after school coding class, which is for 2nd graders and is called Code Camp.”

Realizing the opportunity was bigger than just one grade level, Rae submitted a plan and application to bring Hour of Code to Stevenson in mid-November. Then, during an all-school assembly coinciding with Computer Science Education Week, the entire student body was introduced to the plan.

Of Rae’s enthusiasm for the project,

Vossler said, “She is carrying the pack. It’s not me anymore, it’s her. She has taken this thing and ran with it.”

To assist in training students, professional programmers and high school students volunteered their time. Among the programmers was Kirt Anderson, a senior MES project manager for Stone Technologies based in St. Louis, Missouri.

“I was reading an article, and it was amazing how many kids in American schools were introduced to computer science by the time they graduate, versus China where the same number of kids have been introduced to computer science by the end of first grade,” Anderson said.

He added, “What our kids know today is apps; they know Facebook,





*Kirt Anderson works with 4th graders on an Hour of Code*

they know Instagram. For me, if we're going to continue American manufacturing, it's not about electrical engineering anymore – it's all software driven now. For every ten kids at this age that start to learn code, we just have to hope that half of them trend toward manufacturing. It's estimated we'll be 90% short of the necessary jobs by 2025. There are enough electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, civil engineers out there. Software engineering? We are so hopelessly short of what

we need going forward," he said.

Many of the children, exposed to coding for the first time, enjoyed the activities.

"One of our young girls told her mentor that Hour of Code was her favorite part of her day and when asked what was the most difficult part of her day, she stopped to think and then answered, "Hour of Code." Students really had to think, but they liked it!"

Colton Ranstrom, a high school junior who sees computer security or video game programming in his future, was excited to volunteer and help the younger students learn.

"I already knew what the Hour of Code was and it's a really cool thing. I thought it would be enjoyable to help kids with learning to program. It's something I always wanted to do and thought I could help them know how to do it," he said.

Since its inception in 2013, Code.org has introduced coding to over 8 million students nationwide. The non-profit also has an incentive program, whereby it chooses one school in each state per year to receive \$10,000 worth of computers for taking part in Hour of Code.

For Rae, the outcome will be easy to monitor. "I am totally convinced that our district needs to have computer science as part of our daily curriculum. Computer Science nurtures problem solving, logic and creativity. By starting students early, they will have a foundation for success in any 21st century career they choose."



### FRIDLEY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS TAKE PART IN “SHOP WITH A COP”

For the tenth year, select students from Hayes and Stevenson elementary schools took part in the Fridley Police Department's *Shop with a Cop* program at the Fridley Walmart on December 15, 2015. This occasion was extra special as two of the officers assisting the Stevenson students are also former students of the school.

Patrick Faber and Joe Magana, 2011 and 2006 graduates of the district, were warmly greeted by staff before teaming up with their assigned kids for the afternoon. Faber was elated to be taking part in his first year of the program. “I grew up in this town, and I want to give back to the town that gave to me,” he said.

Prior to departing for Walmart, the kids were put into teams with assigned officers with whom they worked on their lists. Each child had a budget of \$75 donated by the retailer. Family members were listed and a targeted gift noted next to each name. Gift ideas ranged from the dazzling (“I want to get my mom a really pretty ring”) to the simple (“I just want my family to be together”).

When it was time to leave, students had the opportunity to ride in an actual police vehicle, complete with demonstrations of how the lights and sirens worked. Inside the store, the children were greeted by Santa, and then began the task of shopping with some advice from the officers.

For one particular team, it was discovered the students didn't have trees to put their gifts under at home. No worry; their assigned officers picked out trees and decorations, paying for them out of pocket.

Jeanette Grant, health assistant at Fridley High School, has participated in the program from the since it started.

“It's personally rewarding for me to see these kids get to do something for their families – especially the group this year, very little thought about themselves and so concerned about the people on their lists,” Grant said.

The students also enjoyed a meal courtesy of Subway restaurant located within the store. Elves (aka, staff members from both schools) worked with them on wrapping and labeling the gifts with supplies courtesy of Walmart before their packages were loaded into the squad cars for home delivery.

The children involved in the program are chosen by school staff based on criteria that include finan-



cial need and/or the benefit of establishing a relationship with a law enforcement officer. Each building tries to select students who have not participated in previous years.

For Officer Faber, the experience was heartfelt, explaining, “It shows the police officers aren't robots; we're real people.”

*Left picture:* Police Officers from Fridley Police Department pose with students from Stevenson Elementary School.  
*Top row l-r:* Kadie Chlebeck, Zak Chlebeck, Krista Kyzer, Patrick Faber, Joe Magana, and Nico Wallat.





## NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENT

### FRIDLEY STUDENTS WIN 3RD PLACE AT STATE COMPETITION



*Top row l-r:* Anthony Zarr, Courtney Woodison, David Garcia, Desiree Morse and Jasmine Jackson.  
*Bottom row l-r:* Luis Delgado, Markus Goff, Rajonta Jackson, Rico Richards and Alaynna Gruebele.  
*Not pictured:* Dakota Gronert and Dylan Mackenthun.

A team of 12 Fridley ALC students won 3<sup>rd</sup> place at the State E-lympics competition held December 8.

E-lympics is an online academic trivia team competition in which students answer subject related questions in math, logic, geography, music, art, English, science, history, politics and current events. This was the first time that Fridley participated in the competition and they pitted their knowledge and cognitive skills against 42 other teams across the state.

The Fridley ALC team consisted of ten students who participated in the entire competition and two additional students who took part in select categories. Students had been preparing since the beginning of the school year.

“We have never done this before,” said ALC principal Dr. Robert Smith. “Students worked throughout the competition with a partner and then would compare with other groups to come to a consensus before we sent an answer in,” said Smith.

Smith added that Jenny DeMars and Bob Carrigan took the initiative and organized the students’ participation in the event.

“The students and staff did a marvelous job of organizing and participating,” said Smith. “And their hard work was rewarded with a win on their first attempt at the competition.”

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY POSTER WINNER RECOGNIZED AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Fridley Middle School student Akshay Rai received a special recognition at the School Board meeting on December 15.

Rai won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Division 2 of the National School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest. The contest is a component of National School Bus Safety Week, an active and evolving public education program designed to promote school bus safety. The annual event is co-sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services and the National School Transportation Association.

For his 1<sup>st</sup> place national win, Rai received a \$250 check and was also recognized during a Minnesota Twins

home game in October 2015. This is the second time Rai has participated in this competition. Last year, he placed first in Minnesota and advanced to the national competition.

When asked by a school board member what he planned to do with his award money, Rai replied, "put it in a savings account."



### FRIDLEY TEACHERS WIN TIES 2015 EXCEPTIONAL TEACHER HONOR



*Brittany McNab*



*Emily Latzka*

Congratulations to Brittany McNab and Emily Latzka, Fridley Public Schools teachers who were recognized on December 15, 2015 as TIES 2015 Exceptional Teachers.

For 11 years, TIES has been honoring educators who have had a positive impact on student learning through technology. Honorees have been teachers, technology integrationists, media specialists, and many others

who have inspired teaching and learning with technology. Honorees are selected by TIES member superintendents.

**Brittany McNab**  
*2nd Grade Teacher*  
*Stevenson Elementary School*

Brittany has been at Fridley only two years and has already become a leader in differentiated math and Chromebook management. Through the use of group work, Front Row and Khan Academy, her second graders are utilizing their math skills and tutorials at school and at home, even on snow days. Brittany has led the charge with the first 1-to-1 Chromebook classroom at Stevenson and has been enthusiastic about teaching others how to teach and how to manage a truly blended classroom.

**Emily Latzka**  
*Spanish Teacher*  
*Fridley High School*

Emily provides 24/7 learning for her students by integrating online tutorials, resources and opportunities for speaking. She created a comprehensive multi-level Spanish classroom website in order to give her students a richer experience to engage with the cultures of Spanish speaking countries as well as the opportunity to individualize their learning. Through Google Classroom, Emily continues to integrate opportunities for her students to engage with the content both in and out of the physical classroom. She is the embodiment of reflective teaching and continually suggests ideas to help improve ways to deliver curriculum at Fridley High School.