

# Did You Know?

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

## **SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT NEWS**

### **FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVE FUNDING FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Fridley Public Schools was one of 74 school districts in the state to receive a portion of \$25 million set aside for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs. An estimated 68 four-year olds in the district are expected to take part in the program, with anticipated funding this year in the amount of \$522,991.

Renee Sorgenfrie, the new Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Coordinator in the district, explained the benefit to Fridley families who typically would pay \$225 per month for the program. "It's no longer a financial burden on families to have preschool," Sorgenfrie said. "This is wanted and this is needed, and we are so happy to be able to provide it."

Governor Mark Dayton had originally requested \$350 million from state legislators for pre-kindergarten. A total of 183 districts applied for the funding.

"Access to preschool is a proven strategy for closing our state's opportunity gap," Lt. Governor Tina Smith said in a statement August 8. "We need to build on this investment to ensure every child gets a great start in Minnesota." Fridley has already filled the slots and has a waiting list for the program.

Children taking part in Fridley's program will have the opportunity to participate in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP). Its philosophy is a commitment to structured inquiry as an ideal vehicle for learning, especially for young children. Through the engaging IB framework, the district seeks to enable children to view their world with understanding, sensitivity, and fairness.

The award also provides transportation to school for the young learners.



*Pre-Kindergarten students during their first week of school at Stevenson Elementary.*

### FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE PUTS FINISHING TOUCHES ON NEW GYM FLOOR

When sophomore Olivia LeDuc-Fimmano steps onto the new Fridley High School gym floor this fall to play volleyball, she will have a greater bond to the actual playing surface than the rest of her teammates.

Olivia painted the Fridley Tiger logo center court.

Her father, Mike LeDuc, is the person responsible for building the new playing surface, including staining and painting the lines.

"I've been doing wood floors for 16 years and gym floors for seven. I would say I've done anywhere between 50 to 100," LeDuc said.

Fridley High School's gym floor is the third project Olivia has helped Mike

with. "She helps me out so I don't have to come home at 10 p.m. I can spend more time with the family. But in this case, this is her having pride in her school," Mike said.

Olivia agreed, saying, "I'm proud of myself that I did the logo. It's a good feeling. Even gym class, playing on it and knowing I helped with this will be very cool. From playing volleyball last year, the floor was really old."

A resident of Brooklyn Center, LeDuc-Fimmano is part of the one-third of district students who are open enrolled. "I've been here for a year and it's been a good experience. The teachers help you with everything. It's a very good school," she said,

Her dad added, "We looked around and wanted Fridley for our daughter. We felt it was the best fit. She seems to love it here better than the school she was at before."

Olivia acknowledges the unique opportunity of applying the gym floor's finishing touches and working side-by-side with her dad.

"It's more bonding. I've always been a daddy's girl so it's fun to hang around and do the things he does," she said.

And dad enjoyed the experience as well. "Incorporating her into it, I know she's thrilled to be the one painting the center logo. How many other kids get to do that? And being on the volleyball team... it's a chance most other kids don't get," Mike said.



### Rebuilding a gym floor

The process of tearing apart the old gym floor and bleachers, then building a new one requires more time and effort than is visible from the surface. After removing the old planks, workers discovered the original drain tiling system was blocked by silt accumulated over the years. After accrued water had been drained, several trenches were dug into the concrete and fitted with a modern drain tiling system. The floor was "tilted" to allow for redirecting of moisture, covered in plastic and re-leveled with Ardex underlayment.

Then came Mike LeDuc's turn.

Approximately 312 sheets of plywood were laid on the floor, each with 32 rubber pads stapled to the bottom. Another layer of plywood was added, and those layers were stapled together before the hard wood planks were installed.

The planking process, on its own, is like a massive jig saw puzzle being fitted together; it was not merely putting just any two pieces together. Each piece

was carefully chosen for how it fit with the others. This portion of the project alone took several days to complete.

An expansion gap every five feet is faintly visible. It allows the wood to swell and contract depending on temperature and humidity. From there, the floor was sanded three times and coated twice with a sealer before it was ready for staining and painting the various game lines and logo. The floor was then sealed two more times.



### RESOURCE FAIR EVENT PACKS A LOT FOR STUDENTS

Fridley Schools hosted its third annual Back to School Resource Fair August 27 at Fridley Middle School. During the event, participating students received school supplies, clothing and haircuts. In addition, 500 backpacks were handed out to students. Other resources represented included Anoka County Community Action Program, Blaine Human Services, Child & Teen Checkup, Know the Truth Teen Challenge, Lee Carlson, Anoka County Libraries and a Fridley school information desk.

The event was coordinated by Aloda Sims, Fridley Middle School's Outreach Liaison. "Families express the appreciation for our outreach services," she said. "The kids are so excited to receive their own backpacks full of supplies. I was told by a parent each year the resource information tables are different and they like having nearby opportunities they can use to support their family."

Asked what her takeaway thoughts are regarding this year's event, Sims said, "Our goal is to continue to collaborate with community organizations to ensure resources and partnerships with families will contribute to academic success. We look forward to doing this every year. It's worth getting out into the community and hearing from the families on how we can help build a better school community."





### GIFT CARDS FROM FRIDLEY LIONS START OFF SCHOOL YEAR ON GREAT NOTE

Elementary school teachers at both Hayes and Stevenson welcomed representatives of the Fridley Lions on Monday, August 29, who were on hand to present each teacher with a Target gift card in the amount of \$100. The money helps teachers purchase basic supplies for their classrooms.

This year, Lions' President Tom Bourque, Chris Lauer, Sue Toews and Don Holum visited the buildings.

Teachers displayed their appreciation to the Lions with applause and heartfelt gratitude.



*(L) Don Holum, former Fridley High School teacher and current Fridley Lion, shares from very personal experience how much the efforts of each teacher means to the students, parents, district and community.*



### WELCOME, NEW TEACHERS AT FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*New teachers by building, left to right: (top row) Fridley High School, Fridley Middle School, Stevenson Elementary (bottom row) Hayes Elementary, and Early Childhood Family Education.*

### FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW RESOURCE OFFICER

As she makes her initial rounds, familiarizing herself with Fridley High School, Randi Oman reflects that she didn't grow up with aspirations of being a police officer.

"I went to St. Cloud State at 16 through the Post Secondary Education Option (PSEO) for accounting. I still love accounting, but at the end of two to three years of accounting classes decided 'I don't like this!' she said. "My friends were all in law enforcement and sociology classes. I didn't have a direction at that time, so I decided, 'I'll start taking classes with these guys.' Next thing I know I'm becoming a cop."

After 11 years with the Fridley Police Department, the last three of which have been in special investigations, Officer Oman now finds herself in the most unique role yet of her career.

"It was really just happenstance; I was coming over from investigations and this position opened and it was one I hadn't done before. When I started with the Fridley Police Department, I never considered becoming an SRO (School Resource Officer). It just didn't seem like something that was in my wheelhouse. But after 11 years, I thought 'I could really handle this.'"



Fridley High School Resource Officer Randi Oman

In a coincidence, Officer Oman's husband, Jason, just began his first year as an SRO at Roosevelt Middle School in Blaine. The couple actually met while on the same burglary case. Together, they have four children ranging in age from 8 to 19.

Asked if there are specific classes an officer takes for working in a school environment, Oman said, "There's a school resource office class you can attend. Depending on who you sign up through, it can be a two-day to a week-long class. It goes over the trends happenings in the schools, how to integrate from patrol into the school, and covers a lot of emergency management."

Recognizing the importance of her new post, Officer Oman is excited about working with a younger generation than she may otherwise not have interacted with.

"There are so many different facets to what I'm doing; I'm social working, I'm being a cop, I'm doing security," she said. "I'm really more in the kids' environment. It's fun meeting them and making an impact in a different way. I'm like the new kid!"



## NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENT

### FRIDLEY'S FIRST ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME IS IN THE RECORD BOOKS

Majestic Oaks Golf Club banquet hall was filled on August 1, 2016 with Fridley Public Schools athletes and their families who came to see nine alum take their place as part of the inaugural class of the Fridley High School Athletics Hall of Fame. Organized by the district's activities director Dan Roff and his assistant Sue Hanson, the evening provided an opportunity for the district's sports legends to once again share the spotlight and hear the cheers of Fridley Tiger pride.



Members of the inaugural Fridley Athletics Hall of Fame are (from left to right): Don Meyers (Coach, 1958-1992); Steve Carlson (Class of 1968); Chris Dahlquist (Class of 1981); Nicole Johnson Kamp (Class of 1990); Bob Barnette (Contributor, 1958-present); the late Bob O'Neill (Coach, 1961-1987, represented by son Kevin); Lisa Hansen Boxwell (Class of 1977); Richard Peterson (Class of 1964). Also honored, but not pictured, was Jon Melander (Class of 1985).



The family of Bob O'Neill was present to receive his Hall of Fame Award. The Fridley High School football field is named after the longtime coach.

### MCKAY RECEIVES TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATOR AWARD

The Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) named Cindy McKay the Transportation Administrator of the Year for 2016. McKay, who has been with the district for four years, works with each building to ensure students and buses are on time and families served in the best way possible.

"I've had the honor of working with Cindy for fourteen years now. Three years ago, we decided to take another leap with our poster contest and take the winners to a Twins game," Derrick Agate, president of MAPT, said. "I can't tell you the enormity of kids and parents who have benefitted from it. Just to get recognized by the Twins organization itself; their posters get put up on the Jumbotron."

In his nomination letter to MAPT, Dennis Craft, Director of Buildings, Grounds and Transportation for the district said of McKay, "Safety is always Cindy's priority. She went from bus safety to making certain that our student walkers were getting to school safely under the guidance of trained crossing guards."



Cindy McKay is informed of the award by representatives of MAPT

Agate made the formal presentation of the award at the July 19, 2016 school board meeting.

"It's a huge honor for me," McKay said at the podium. "My kids tell me if I bleed, I bleed bus. I am so fortunate and blessed to work with Fridley Public Schools and carry my passion on."



McKay with supervisor Dennis Craft (left) and MAPT President Derrick Agate (right)

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY POSTER WINNERS TAKE IN TWINS GAME

Winners in the district's bus safety poster contest were treated to a trip to a Twins game on August 11, 2016. Fridley students, representing Hayes Elementary, Stevenson Elementary and Fridley Middle School, had the opportunity to step out onto the field and were introduced to the crowd.





### RAUTIO NAMED FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2015-2016 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



The 2015-2016 Fridley Public Schools' Employee of the Year is Kirby Rautio at Fridley Middle School. Kirby is an educator whose contributions to students who have not traditionally experienced success in school is unmatched. She works tirelessly to create and support classroom environments that make success possible for students; she sees their strengths and gifts when others may see challenges.

"Kirby fosters a sense of belonging in the classrooms she works in and throughout the school. She is the most trusted adult in some student's lives, serving as their academic and interpersonal coach and cheerleader," said Principal Matthew Boucher.

Kirby works to reshape how students see themselves, as well as how others see them. She has contributed greatly to making Fridley Middle School a more inclusive and student-centered environment.

We are grateful and honored to work alongside Kirby Rautio, the 2015-2016 Fridley Public Schools' Employee of the Year. Thank you, Kirby, for your dedicated and exemplary service to the students, staff and families of the Fridley Public Schools!

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### FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2015-2016 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

#### FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL 2015-2016 TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE - CARRIE WRONA



The 2015-2016 Fridley High School Teacher of Excellence is Carrie Wrona. Carrie is committed to the success of every student and to making Fridley High School a great place for every member of our community. She is a leader in the school and professional community. An educator who works tirelessly to help students feel not only success but cared about on a daily basis, students flock to her infectious personality, smile and 'get 'er done' attitude. She goes above and beyond expectations and is a mainstay, supporting students at both arts and sports events.

Carrie is also a trusted and sought after chaperone for overnight trips, whether to Minneapolis, New York, Disneyworld or Germany. She is the high school's morale booster and gets staff to participate in her many ideas, including the Retropay party with her famous 'retropaypertizers,' the chili cook-offs and multiple bake offs and her fun ACT day every April.

Not only is Carrie invested in making the students and staff at FHS great, she is involved in the community; Carrie is on the board of the Fridley School's Foundation and a member of the Lion's Club, and is always looking for ways to help the school. Congratulations, Carrie, and thank you!



## FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2015-2016 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

### AREA LEARNING CENTER 2015-2016 TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE - JENNIFER DEMARS



The 2015-2016 Area Learning Center Teacher of Excellence is Jennifer Demars. Jennifer is a master at developing relationships with students. She is always willing to go above and beyond, doing whatever it takes to help kids be successful. Students know they can count on her; her calm demeanor never goes unnoticed in or out of the classroom. Jennifer is creative in how to get students to love to read and will always find material they enjoy.

"She's a rock star. Just super, super positive all the time," said Amy Cochran, principal of the ALC. "She has a 'Whatever I need to do for kids to make them succeed, I'll do it' attitude."

Jennifer has served the district since 2002 in multiple roles, including teaching at the middle school. Gentle and soft spoken, Jennifer brings out the best from students at the ALC and is a loved and treasured role model. Congratulations, Jennifer, and thank you!

### FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL 2015-2016 TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE - JOEL WEINGART



The 2015-2016 Fridley Middle School Teacher of Excellence is Joel Weingart. Joel is an educator who is compassionate, creative and committed to meeting the needs of each and every student in his classes. He models the approach of teaching the whole child, while pushing each student to new academic heights. His classroom is a cognitively busy environment and students are not allowed to opt out of the learning. Joel is creative and resourceful in his instructional design and assessment, resulting in consistently impressive academic growth by his students. His classroom is a place where all levels of learners experience success.

Joel doubles his effort to develop a supportive relationship with students who are struggling and seeks out ideas from others to help each child succeed. He embodies the attributes we work to develop in Fridley Public Schools: a highly reflective, caring, knowledgeable and thoughtful educator who takes a principled and balanced approach to his craft.

"We are honored to work alongside Joel on a daily basis because he is truly a teacher of excellence and this award simply affirms what we have known for some time," said Fridley Middle School Principal Matthew Boucher.

Congratulations, Joel Weingart, and thank you!

## FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2015-2016 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

### HAYES ELEMENTARY 2015-2016 TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE - TINA UTLEY



The 2015-2016 Hayes Elementary School Teacher of Excellence is Tina Utley.

“Tina is the cornerstone of Hayes,” said Principal John Piotraschke. “For the past nine years, she has inspired others to be not only better teachers, but also better people. She is a leader in terms of planning and implementing cutting edge technology and instruction. Tina’s students are not only successful academically, but also grow and develop into better people. She encourages her students to take pride in their work and to get involved in action projects in the school and the community.”

“A few things that make her such an outstanding educator and person: her skill set and toolbox for working with kids is incredibly vast. She always knows what to say, how to say it and when to say it. It’s magical. Tina also has an incredible sense of humor, a quality her peers enjoy and appreciate as she uses it to help kids, people and meetings,” said Piotraschke.

Tina is a leader, friend, colleague and someone who demonstrates the IB learner profile in everything she does. Congratulations, Tina, and thank you!

### STEVENSON ELEMENTARY 2015-2016 TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE - ANDREW DAUER



The 2015-2016 Stevenson Elementary School Teacher of Excellence is Andrew “Andy” Dauer. Andy is beginning his tenth year teaching first grade at Stevenson. Visitors to ‘Team Dauer’ will quickly realize one of his strengths is building a strong classroom community.

“Many times I have heard from parents how appreciative they are of how Andy has helped their child because of some difficulty going on in the family,” said Principal Daryl Vossler. “His actions in the classroom continually show how much he cares for his students. Andy connects with them in the summer through phone calls or a visit if they are going through a tough time. He really gets to know his students and their families on an individual basis.”

Andy’s classroom has a strong identity that students enjoy, including the use of balance balls rather than chairs to sit on and the incorporation of Minecraft into his curriculum. He feels it helps students learn cooperation, problem solving and multi-tasking strategies. Andy has given all Stevenson students the opportunity to learn and play the game by forming an afterschool Minecraft Club.

His peers describe him as a wonderful person with an incredibly positive attitude, who helps others to maintain such an attitude as well. Andy said he loves teaching first graders because he gets such satisfaction watching the extreme growth and change that occurs in the nine months he spends with them.

Congratulations, Andy, and thank you!



### FRIDLEY EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Four Fridley Public Schools employees were recognized for their respective 25 years of service to the school district. During the back to school opening workshop for staff on August 29, 2016, Superintendent Peggy Flathmann recognized and thanked each employee for her service to the district. Congratulations to the following employees!



#### **SUE CULBERTSON - Fridley High School**

Sue Culbertson is the heart of Fridley High School. She not only makes everything run, she makes everything run well and with ease. She is the epitome of a team player and daily does things over and above her assigned duties to help others as the go-to-person whenever we need something done well and efficiently. "Sue's extraordinary organization brings a level of confidence to the main office which flows over to teachers, students and families. Because of her skill, our school has a friendly, helpful and caring reputation. In her role at the high school, Sue is always supportive, patient, helpful and wise. She is always willing to lend an ear to listen to concerns and help out wherever she can. Sue is amazing and embodies what it means to be a FHS staff member, a part of the Fridley community and a graduate of FHS (Class of 1975)," said Principal Patty Awsumb. Congratulations, Sue Culbertson, on 25 years of service!



#### **KAREN BRISBOIS – Area Learning Center**

Karen Brisbois is awesome in so many ways! She goes above and beyond in everything she does, especially when it comes to students. Karen is always respectful and patient with them and will go out of her way to find resources and help in any way she can. She is highly organized and pays attention to detail. "She always has her eye on the big picture, and yet knows budgeting and programming needs inside and out. There is never a fine detail that is missed. She will take on any role with a smile and is always up for the challenge. The ALC is so lucky to have Karen," said Principal Amy Cochran. Congratulations, Karen Brisbois, on 25 years of service!



#### **LINDA WOLF – Hayes Elementary School**

Linda Wolf provides the face and voice of welcome to all who enter Hayes Elementary. She treats every student, parent, visitor and staff member with genuine kindness and caring. Linda is very dedicated to her job, always busy and striving to do her best. Linda is a tough negotiator who is able to use her friendly and resourceful nature to get the great deals for the school on any purchases or services, making sure we get the very best price and service. "As a Fridley graduate and longtime resident, her pride and commitment to the district and community shines through. We are lucky to have her," said Principal John Piotraschke. Congratulations, Linda Wolf, on 25 years of service!



#### **CINDY RICHMOND – Stevenson Elementary School**

Cindy Richmond's first experience at Stevenson Elementary was as the PTO president. Jerry Reiter, the principal at the time, noticed her exceptional people skills and wanted Cindy to be part of his school. It is obvious to see why. "Her positive attitude and compassion for families and the students we serve is something families at Stevenson quickly recognize. She has an incredible work ethic and goes above and beyond her job description in so many ways," said Principal Daryl Vossler. Along with her secretary duties, she has been known to cook meals for staff, perform child care during conferences and even perform landscaping duties on the school grounds. Congratulations, Cindy Richmond, on 25 years of service!

### FMS PRINCIPAL BOUCHER HONORED FOR MILITARY LEGACY

The Minnesota Humanities Center presented its annual Veterans' Voice Awards on September 11, 2016. Congratulations to Fridley Middle School Principal Matthew Boucher who was among twelve veterans that were honored with the Legacy Award for their work beyond their years of service.

Boucher is a veteran of the Army National Guard, having served for twelve years. He was deployed after the terror attacks of 9/11.

As principal, he has continued the tradition stated by Scott Wilson of a Veter-

ans Day program to teach students the value of the sacrifices members of the military and their families have made.

"Matthew's respect for the military and his fellow veterans is a large part of what inspire him in his current position," Minnesota Congressman Tom Emmer said from the floor of Congress.

"He works to promote the belief within every one of his student that anything that they set their minds to is possible. He is especially dedicated to helping his students achieve further education after high school."



Congressman Tom Emmer and Fridley Middle School Principal Matthew Boucher.



Boucher with former middle school principal Margaret Leibfried (left) and Superintendent Peggy Flathmann (right).



WCCO's Reg Chapman introduces Boucher, who is congratulated by House Representative Jerry Newton as Representative Bob Dettmer looks on.



Daughter Thea (left) and wife Alisa (right) attended to help celebrate Boucher's award.