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Teachers learn about the Kids At Hope program

TEACHERS FROM SCHOOL districts around southwest Washington came to learn about the Kids At Hope program from a presenter during in-service hours at Union Ridge Elementary on February 25.

Wally Endicott, Executive Director for Kids At Hope, talked about the importance of changing from a "deficit-focused" culture to one that focuses on success. "When you label a kid, that label can stick with them throughout their entire life," said Endicott. Teachers were introduced to concepts and ideas of how to approach students and help them experience success.

The Kids At Hope program started in 1993 when a group of youth development practitioners became concerned about the use of the term "at-risk" to describe kids in less-than-favorable life circumstances.

"One of the primary focuses of the program is that every student can experience success," said Endicott. "And that means every single student. No exceptions."



Come register your incoming kindergartener starting now!

RIDGEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT began kindergarten registration on Monday, March 1st at both South Ridge Elementary and Union Ridge Elementary schools. To be enrolled in kindergarten, students must be age 5 on or before Aug. 31, 2010. Parents may come at any time during school hours to register and get information on the district's Kindergarten program.

Parents with children entering kindergarten in fall 2010 need to bring current immunization information and proof of date-of-birth in order to register their new student.

New kindergarten students and parents will have the opportunity to meet the teachers on May 11 at South Ridge 6:30-7:30pm and at Union Ridge 6-7pm. Please contact Tonia Rice, Secretary/Registrar for Union Ridge at 750-7601 tonia.rice@ridge.k12.wa.us or Jodi Rust, Secretary/Registrar for South Ridge at 619-1501 jodi.rust@ridge.k12.wa.us for more information.

SPRING 2010 | 2724 S HILLHURST ROAD, RIDGEFIELD, WA 98642
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RIDGEGRAM



Did you know?

Together, **South Ridge, Union Ridge** and **View Ridge** raised over \$2,300 through their fundraisers for Haiti.

Shelby Williams, a three-sport athlete (soccer, basketball, track) at Ridgefield High will attend the University of Washington on a track scholarship.

16 members of the Ridgefield High School **Speech and Debate Team** went on to the State competition.

Ridgefield High School wrestlers **Juan Valenica** and **Joseph Zadrozny** went to the state championship where Joseph won second place.

The Ridgefield High School **Girls Basketball Team** are the WIAA 2A Academic State Champions.

Ridgefield senior **Kenny Rea** won 2nd place in the Washington State Oratorical Contest. He was the only student from all of Clark County and won a \$1,500 scholarship.

You can receive ongoing updates about Ridgefield schools at:

- www.ridge.k12.wa.us
- www.facebook.com/ridgefieldschools
- www.twitter.com/ridgefieldsd



Math and Science are FAMILY MATTERS

Two Union Ridge teachers are bringing math and science to life for families with Math and Science Nights

IN THE SPRING of 2009, Kippi Barbouletos and Anja Felton won a \$5,000 grant from HP Fuller to develop math and science activity nights. "Kippi and I put our heads together over the summer to come up with ideas that would spark student interest in math and science," said Felton. "We decided to have highly engaging activities to encourage deeper thinking and hands-on exploration."

The two teachers put on a Mad Science Night in December and a Family Science Night in January. Both were big hits with students and families alike. "We couldn't fit any more people in the gym for Family Science Night," said Principal Connie Ford. "The families were having so much fun – the parents were getting just as excited as the students!"

Activities are diverse and challenging. At the Family Science Night in January, teams made of students and their families competed by building marble roller coasters and drinking straw bridges. "I think the parents really got into it when they realized they would be

creating things," said Barbouletos. "There were roller coasters everywhere in the gym – even attached to the basketball hoops!"

Barbouletos and Felton work extra-hard to make sure each night is different. In February, the two held a Math Olympics night on February 25. They set up 15 stations for families to move to during the evening. Events included Soaring Cylinders, High Jump, Straw Javelins, Slingshot Sedans and Paper Plate Discus. Some were designated as competition stations – students could turn in their results after performing the task and the students with the best results at the end of the night won a gold medal. "Everyone had a great time and enjoyed pizza, cookies and drinks," said Barbouletos.

"The last night on June 9 will showcase student work and feature an open house for parents and students to come talk to business owners who use science and math," said Felton. "We want kids to see how math and science is used in the 'real world.'"



Have a Heart for Haiti,
South Ridge Elementary

Students develop skills while earning course credit at the Clark County Skills Center

JUNIORS AND SENIORS at Ridgefield High School develop real-world skills and experience by taking advantage of the Clark County Skills Center.

The center started in 1983 as a cooperative venture between eight southwest Washington school districts whose vision was to create a school that would offer students the opportunity to receive training in technical career areas that would be too expensive to fund by a single district.

"The Skills Center is fantastic for kids to learn professionalism and marketability," said Monica DeShazer, guidance counselor at Ridgefield High School. "Even if they don't end up in their field of study, they know how to be professional."

Students can choose from a wide variety of different courses and programs. Agricultural Science and Environmental Education puts students out in the field, literally. Hands-on lab areas include two ponds created by previous students, wildlife habitats, greenhouses and an organic garden. Students in the two-year Construction Technology program learn how to build a house from the ground up from understanding blueprints to the physical construction of the house. In fact, the students actually build a house as part of the program.

Brooke Cushwa graduated last year after attending the Applied Medical Sciences program. She earned the WAVE scholarship, a highly competitive scholarship based on success stemming from a technical program. Sarah Miles, now a practicing aesthetician, participated in the Cosmetology Program.

"The skills center gives kids an opportunity to learn hands-on and the ability to study something they are interested in," said DeShazer. "Employers in the area really respect and appreciate their employees who come from the Skills Center."

Twenty-one elementary school teams discover that...

MATH IS COOL



TWENTY-ONE TEAMS FROM Ridgefield competed in the Math is Cool competition at Fort Vancouver High School on March 5. Nearly 500 people attended to cheer on their teams with only standing room available at the awards ceremony.

Students from Union Ridge and South Ridge took home awards in both the Individual and Team and also qualified to send a team to the state competition. "The competition really expanded this year," said Vernon Yoshioka, Principal of South Ridge Elementary. "When I attended last year, there were only 150 people in the audience!" Students from 18 different schools attended the competition with a total of about 300 participants for grades 4-6.

"It was very easy to get kids interested," said Margee Starr, a 4th-grade teacher at Union Ridge. "We have kids that are stepping up and the teams are all very supportive of each other."

Math is Cool competitions include both individual and team events. Individual events include completion of open-ended and multiple-choice problem sets while team events include: open-ended problem sets, relays, pressure rounds, mental math and college bowl rounds.

The training process can be intense. "We meet at lunch recess once a week to go through the competition format," said 5th-grade teacher Tammy Burggraff. "We practice the different sections that the kids will face so they will know what to expect."

Last year, South Ridge sent a single team to the Math is Cool competition made up of 17 students who won first place in the 5th and 6th grade individual categories as well as the team trophy for the 6th grade competition. This year, the two schools sent 21 teams totaling over 80 students.

In addition to several individual awards won by students from both schools, Union Ridge won second place in the 4th-grade team event and third place in 6th grade. South Ridge won first place in the 4th, 5th and 6th-grade team events.

"The most amazing part has been watching the kids work together in such a positive way toward a common goal," said Linda Wear, a 5th-grade teacher at South Ridge. "They recognize each others' common strengths and help each other out."

Math is Cool is a part of the Academics are Cool program started in the spring of 1996 when Gregg Sampson, a high school math teacher at Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane, organized a mathematics competition for sixth grade students in the Spokane area. In the next two years, the competition expanded to grades 4-12 with additional competitions held in Seattle.

"My students were very excited to go and compete," said Burggraff. "They happily gave up their lunch recess to prepare." Starr agreed. After winning first place, one of South Ridge's teams will attend the Master's Competition at Moses Lake in May. According to Wear, "Math just gets cooler and cooler."

8th graders make history come alive on National History Day

EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS presented projects for National History Day on January 22 covering a wide range of topics from the development of the atomic bomb to the scientific discovery of blood transfusion and donation.

Brian Gunn, a Social Studies teacher at View Ridge, wanted to introduce students to National History Day ever since he first encountered the program as an overseas teacher at another school. "Students in the school who were relatively disconnected to most of the traditional studies came alive and had such buy-in to the project," said Gunn. "I thought that I would like to offer that kind of excitement to my History students if I was given a chance." The opportunity presented itself this year when Gunn joined forces with his social studies colleagues Aaron Broeckel and Joe Michaud and Principal Chris Griffith to incorporate National History Day into the Social Studies curriculum.

National History Day started locally in Cleveland, Ohio in 1974 where 120 kids presented exhibits and papers. The founders wanted to do something about the devalued nature of history in the classroom. It became national in 1980 and now has over a half million participating students each year.

Each year, the National History Day organization selects a theme, and, this year, that theme is "Innovation in History: Impact and Change." Students choose a topic for their project related to that theme and begin to perform the research. They can select one of five different types of presentations: a traditional research paper, a museum-style exhibit, a documentary, a website or a live performance piece. Students keep track of the work they perform throughout the seven-week project from beginning to end. Also, students include an annotated bibliography with the primary and secondary research they performed.

The National History Day organization outlines the requirements for each specific project type. "It is actually a relief to have the standards established in a uniform manner," said Gunn. "Students knew exactly what was expected from them at every point as long as they referred to the materials from the NHD website."

View Ridge History Day was a school-wide project with teachers and staff joining forces to make the event possible. All of the teachers agreed to allow students to use the last two periods on January 22 as a time to display their work.

During the seven weeks, teacher Debbie Kunz opened her computer technology lab



"The social studies department and I are hoping this starts a tradition of student engagement with history for years to come."

~ Brian Gunn, Social Studies Teacher, View Ridge Middle School

to the over 180 students that needed to access it for their projects. "Since we only have one technology lab with 11 computers, she provided space and time in her room for students to work on their projects even while she taught her class," said Gunn.

Physical Education teacher, Brad Young, made the gym available for the museum-style exhibits while the documentaries and websites were displayed in the library. Chase Tornow, one of Ridgefield's district technology personnel, organized the behind-the-scenes digital support.

Librarian Belinda Ingman provided invaluable assistance to the students throughout the process of crafting their projects all the way through setting them up on the View

Ridge History Day. "I think she can teach History now just based on the exposure she had to so many types of projects and topics as the students ran into difficulties," said Gunn.

After students set up their projects in the morning, a panel of judges reviewed each project based on the criteria outlined in the National History Day rule book. The panel was selected to represent the diverse population of the Ridgefield community and included: school counselor, Melissa Gonzales; middle/high school art teacher, Bob Ford; Clark County Historical Society and Museum Director, Susan Tissot; School Board Director Wendi Morris; and Colby Siefert, a college student from Vancouver.

After the preliminary round of review, students discussed the key points of their projects with the judges and listened to suggestions for improvement. "The students were especially excited to meet with the judges," said Gunn. The seventh graders were invited to tour the exhibits to see what their older schoolmates had created. "The social studies department and I are hoping this starts a tradition of student engagement with history for years to come," said Gunn. "In fact, the department has already started planning improvements for next year to make View Ridge History Day an even better event."

Of the over 180 students who participated, 69 were selected by the judges to move on to the Southwest Washington Regional Competition on February 27 to be held at Washington State University in Vancouver. Ridgefield's students will compete with students from 15 other middle schools from around the region.

From there, winning students will continue to the state competition in Bellevue on May 1 followed by the national competition in mid-June at the University of Maryland. National winners at the Junior High Level receive \$1,000 as gold medalists, \$500 as silver medalists and \$250 as bronze with one of each selected in eight categories: Individual Exhibit, Group Exhibit, Individual Documentary, Group Documentary, Individual Performance, Group Performance, Paper and Web Site. "I'm confident that View Ridge will have students move on to the state level," said Gunn.