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View Ridge Middle School offers redesigned SADD program

VIEW RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL is reintroducing the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) program. Students join SADD by pledging to avoid making destructive decisions in their lives.

The SADD program was originally founded as Students Against Driving Drunk in 1981. In 1997, SADD expanded its mission to highlight the prevention of all destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people including: underage drinking, substance abuse, impaired driving, violence and suicide.

"SADD teaches kids about the dangers of destructive behaviors and what to do in those kinds of situations," said View Ridge Counselor Cathy den Boer. "Student participation at View Ridge is very encouraging."

SADD holds several activities throughout

the year to help kids understand the risks of drugs and alcohol. At the end of October, National Red Ribbon Week symbolizes SADD members' commitment to leading healthy, drug-free lifestyles and to create awareness of the problems related to the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

In November, the Great American Smokeout Day helps students encourage smokers in their lives develop a plan to quit. View Ridge students will sign their names to a memory post if someone in their lives has been hurt by cigarette smoking. Next year, Kick Butts Day 2009 activities focus on helping smokers quit.

Cathy den Boer will be visiting View Ridge classes throughout the school year to invite students to participate in the SADD program.



RIDGEFIELD POSTAL PATRON

THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT 112 Regional Committee on School District Organization will hold the remand hearing regarding the La Center School District petition to transfer territory from the Ridgefield School District on Thursday, December 11, 2008. The Regional Committee meeting will begin at 6:30 pm and is being held in the Clark and Pacific Rooms at ESD 112 located at 2500 NE 65th Avenue, in Vancouver, WA 98661.

Ridgefield / La Center Territory Boundary Update

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RIDGEGRAM



South Ridge Elementary School's nature trail receives a makeover

THE GREAT OUTDOORS surrounding South Ridge Elementary School received a makeover when members of the community came together to refurbish the entire trail that winds around the North side of the school's property.

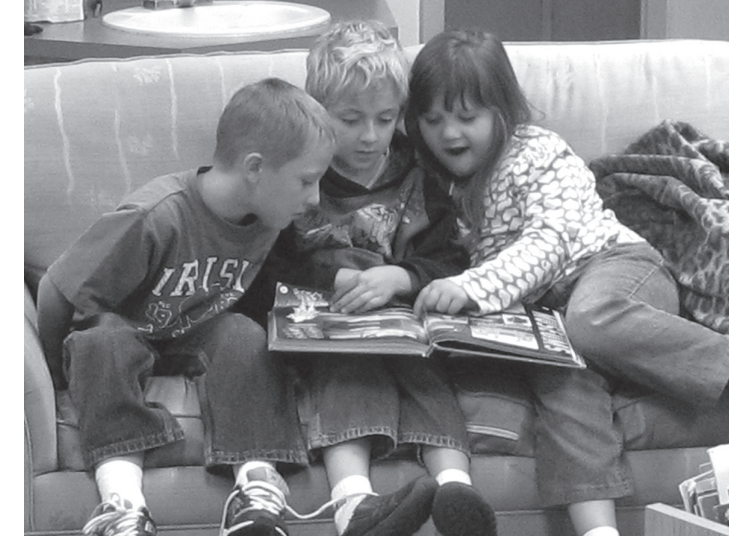
John Hunt organized the project as part of his Eagle Scout badge requirements. "I came up with the idea after one of my friends did some work near the site," said Hunt. "The trail is so scenic, serene, and calm; I felt like it could use a little fixing up." Jeanne Simon, a parent with two students at South Ridge, assisted Hunt by serving as the project coordinator and provided signage along the trail. A team of 35 people contributed a total of 167 hours of labor to the project.

The trail received new underlayment and fresh gravel to help with drainage and runoff. A brand-new outdoor seating area with a roof was built to allow teachers to hold outdoor classes in all weather.

"By revamping the nature trail, South Ridge students now have access to outdoor educational opportunities," said Principal Vernon Yoshioka. "Hands-on activities help enrich science classes and keep the kids engaged."



Jeanne Simon donated signs describing local wildlife.



The purpose of a Learning Walk is to improve practices by analyzing the instruction taking place in individual classrooms. Learning Walks permit observation of the different teaching styles to determine which methods are proving to be most effective.

Learning Walks help to improve student learning

IN AN EFFORT TO identify and develop effective teaching methods, Ridgefield administrators have started a program that fully engages them in classroom instruction throughout the district.

Called "Learning Walks," teams of two or more administrators visit a minimum of five classrooms in a single school. Approximately 32 walks are performed throughout the district every month.

The purpose of a Learning Walk is to analyze the practices taking place in individual classrooms. Learning Walks help identify different teaching styles to determine which methods are proving to be the most effective. Though unannounced, Learning Walks are not used to evaluate teacher performance. The purpose is for observation to help identify student learning reflecting teaching practices and strategies.

"We're able to see how students are learning which helps provide better support to the teachers," said Dr. Patricia Boles, Director of Institutional Services. "The main question we ask ourselves is: 'How can we help our teachers help our students?'"

Administrators determine if teachers have established a learning target for the lesson, if the students are aware of the learning target and its purpose, and if the students are engaged with the material. "The focus is to increase student participation through discourse," said Boles. "Students understand the material being presented by explaining it to each other and that student discourse enables the teachers to assess how well the material is being retained."

Following the Learning Walk, the participating members discuss the techniques to help improve their own practices. Categories reviewed include the level of difficulty of the questions asked by the teacher, how well teachers redirected the questions back to the target lesson, and were the students learning from the activities they were doing.

"Learning Walks enable us to model teaching strategies that support student learning," said Boles.

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"I'm incredibly proud of these graduates. Their dedication and hard work show what's possible if a student puts in the effort."

~ Principal Tony VanderMaas

Five graduates of Ridgefield High School earned AP Scholar Awards

FIVE GRADUATES OF Ridgefield High School have earned AP Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP Exams.

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school. These courses enable students to earn college credit, advanced placement or both. About 18 percent of the 1.6 million students worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to also earn an AP Scholar Award.

At Ridgefield High School, Emily Marso qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of the exams. Five graduates qualified for AP Scholar Awards by completing three or more AP Exams with grades of higher. The AP Scholars are: Cameron Conley, Samuel Padula, Brandon Pickett and Christine Woodward.

"I'm incredibly proud of these graduates," said Ridgefield High School Principal Tony VanderMaas. "Their dedication and hard work show what's possible if a student puts in the effort."

Each AP exam is developed by a committee of college and university faculty in conjunction with AP teachers to ensure that the exams are aligned with the standards expected by college faculty. AP is accepted by more than 3,600 colleges and universities worldwide, including more than 90 percent of four-year institutions in the U.S.



BACK AT RHS: Frosh Camp!

AFTER A THREE-YEAR HIATUS, the Ridgefield High School "Frosh Camp" returned! Designed to help incoming 9th graders make their transition to high school a fun and memorable experience, incoming RHS Freshmen participated in a variety of activities including leadership skills and group-building training, a keynote speaker address, a pep rally, BBQ, football game and school dance. Events took place on September 25th and 26th.

This year, Mike Miller from "Dare to Live" in Vancouver delivered the keynote address. Other activities included: a blindfolded walk through campus, a rope swing challenge, trust circles, trust falls, a scavenger hunt and more.

A pep rally followed the group-building activities at Abrams Park. Afterward, 9th Grade parents served up a BBQ picnic prepared by the school food services team. To culminate the day-long event, students attended a football game at the High School followed by a dance and open gym activities. The Food and Nutrition class prepared healthy snacks for the after-game social time.

"Frosh Camp helps create a tight-knit community among the Freshmen," said Tony VanderMaas, Principal of Ridgefield High School. "We believe this experience helps provide a smooth transition into high school."

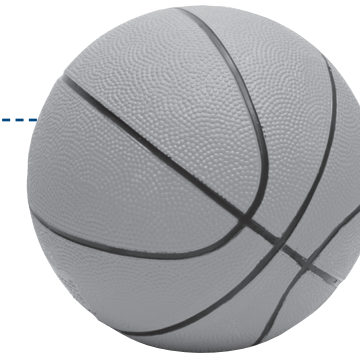
Activities are organized and managed by Frosh Camp counselors made up of older students. In the spring, students who previously

participated in the Frosh Camp are invited to sign up to be a Frosh Camp Counselor. Students are evaluated by their teachers based on leadership, responsibility, attitude, academic performance and attendance. More than 130 students apply every year to participate in Frosh Camp as a counselor to the new students.

"The camp helps Freshmen develop great friendships and get involved," said Michael Oman, a Junior and Frosh Camp counselor. "It's an event that they're going to remember for the rest of their lives." There was no Frosh Camp when Oman was a Freshman, but many Seniors he knows still speak fondly of the experience.

Local organizations and businesses supported Frosh Camp. This year, Farmers Insurance awarded a grant of \$500 to Ridgefield High School to help pay for some of the expenses of the camp. The local Lions Club paid the keynote speaker's fee, and the RHS Booster Club helped subsidize the BBQ at Abrams Park. The Associated Student Body and Ridgefield School District covered the rest of the cost.

"We would never be able to offer events like this without assistance from the community of Ridgefield," said VanderMaas. "Ridgefield High School is fortunate to have such an active support network to help us provide the best learning experiences for our students."



"Kids experience the value of teamwork, make new friends and, of course, learn how to play basketball."

~ Community Education Director Terri Cochran

Youth Basketball Program teaches middle-schoolers the value of teamwork

THE 2008 YOUTH BASKETBALL Program offered by Ridgefield's Community Education program begins in December. Boys and girls in grades 3-6 are eligible to participate.

The Youth Basketball Program is an official member of the Junior NBA/WNBA and receives assistance from the Portland Trailblazers. The Junior NBA/WNBA program entitles participants to special activities, teaching aides and a clinic on the Rose Garden basketball court.

Teams are formed using a blind draw based on gender and school grade. The combined age groups are 3rd and 4th graders and 5th and 6th graders. Teams are assigned two one-hour practices per week

with games played on Saturdays. Ridgefield Community Education provides trained referees at local game sites.

Coaches are volunteers from the community who must have a general knowledge of the game and a desire to work with children to instill basic skills, teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Jerry Moss is returning this year to teach one of two clinics to students participating in the program. Moss is a dynamic, motivational coach who has held popular clinics for the teams in the past.

"The Youth Basketball Program is one of our most popular programs," said Community Education Director Terri

Cochran. "Kids experience the value of teamwork, make new friends and, of course, learn how to play basketball."

Registration begins October 20 and ends November 21. The cost is \$55 per student (additional players in the same family are \$50). The registration fee includes a team shirt, one-hour practices twice a week, games weekly starting January 17, 2009, and access to 2 clinics.

For more information about the program including participating as a volunteer coach, please call Terri Cochran at 360-619-1303 or visit the Community Education section of the Ridgefield School District website at: <http://www.ridge.k12.wa.us/>.

"First Mike" comes to South Ridge to promote reading every day

GOVERNOR CHRIS GREGOIRE'S husband, Mike Gregoire, visited South Ridge Elementary on Tuesday, October 7 to thank the staff for helping students to become avid readers.

Mike Gregoire, or "First Mike" as he prefers to be called, made South Ridge his 103rd elementary school visit. He read *The True Story of the Three Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and engaged the students in a question-and-answer session about the State of Washington. Afterward, he posed for pictures with the two 4th-grade classes and one Kindergarten class that attended the reading in the school library.

Gregoire started visiting elementary schools in December 2005. His school visits demonstrate the fun of sharing a good book and the importance of reading at least 20 minutes a day.



Mike Gregoire, or "First Mike" as he prefers to be called, made South Ridge his 103rd elementary school visit.