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Spokane girl, 7, enlightens peers about life, death, AIDS



SPOKANE (AP) — It's not the way AIDS has diminished her body, kept her out of school or prompted discussion of grief and death that students and teachers mention when talking about Kara Claypool.

It's her warm, sparkling approach to living.

"She's given me joy and memories I'll always have, that sense of awe and admiration that somebody so young can be so strong and tenacious," teacher Mary Haymond said.

Kara, now 7, was the first publicly known AIDS patient in the Spokane school system when she entered kindergarten in 1993. She was infected before or during birth. Her mother got the virus from her husband, a drug user who died of AIDS in 1990.

Joyce Claypool made her daughter's ailment known to other parents at Willard Elementary school from the start.

She hoped Kara's bubbly personality would help reduce some of the stigma surrounding AIDS — and apparently it has.

Haymond recently awarded her first- and second-graders certificates for nice smiles, reading efforts, being good

// There are many families dealing with AIDS in Spokane. A school setting this caring precedent helps all of us.

— **KATHY RAMSEY**
AIDS response coordinator

friends and other achievements.

When she picked up the certificate "for someone who always has lots of hugs for everyone," the children called out, "Kara! Kara!"

But just making it through the school day can be a struggle for the little girl.

Kara takes seven different medications daily. She missed 40 days of school in the past academic year and was hospitalized twice with shingles, a painful viral infection of the nerves.

"At one point this winter when she wasn't doing well, she said to me, 'Mrs. Haymond, the end's really close,'" her teacher said.

"All I could do was give her a hug. I couldn't say, 'Oh, it is not.' That wouldn't be an honest answer."

Principal Gene Wooley has

sought counseling help from the Hospice of Spokane, which helped smooth Kara's entry into school. He says he wanted to build a relationship with counselors instead of waiting for the end and having "some strangers come in and tell us how to grieve."

AIDS response coordinator Kathy Ramsey and private therapist Larry Cronin suggested books teachers could read with students, advised open communication and discussed how children view illness.

School staff "have created a beautiful example for Spokane," Ramsey said.

"There are many families dealing with AIDS in Spokane," she said. "A school setting this caring precedent helps all of us."

At a school assembly last week, Kara was given a quilt — each of its 40 squares decorated by a child, a teacher, or a secretary.

To Haymond's surprise, Kara asked to address the assembly. She thanked school aide Ronda Dahl for initiating the quilt project and "for always being so nice and helpful to all of us."

"That's the thing about Kara," Haymond said. "She never takes it all to herself. That's unusual for a child."

Library blocks access to Internet porn

SPOKANE (AP) — Library officials here are trying to ensure that new Internet terminals will be used for information, not titillation.

Besides installing software that seeks out and blocks computer files containing sexually explicit photos, videos or discussions, officials want to require users to take a course and remind them to avoid potentially offensive material when 10 new terminals are installed at the downtown library next month.

Library Executive Director Dan Walters said the safeguards may not catch all X-rated material, but library workers will not act as censors.

"None of our staff will walk around and view what's on people's computer screens," he said.

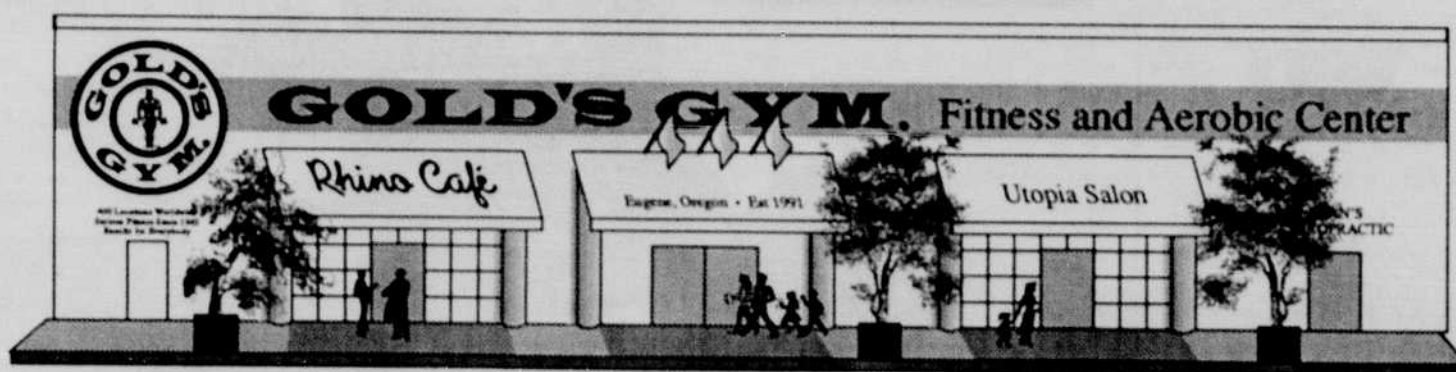
"That's a contradiction of what a library is all about."

Walters said the Internet, which connects computers throughout the world via phone lines, will give patrons access to a vast amount of information, including federal and state government documents and the archives of research universities and art galleries.

About \$40,000 is being spent on the computers. They will become part of the library's computer network, which was financed with \$1.5 million from a bond measure approved by voters.

The usage policies were scheduled for approval at the monthly meeting of the library board Tuesday night.

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New 24 hr. Gold's Gym to Open in Downtown Eugene

A new 20,000 square foot Gold's Gym is set to open by the Summer of 1995.

The new Gold's Gym at 3rd and Lawrence is part of the Whiteaker Neighborhood Refinement Plan, which is aimed to improve circulation and use of the area.

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