

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN LITERACY

# Ongoing Literacy Alliance group projects

By Trish Yerges

Over the past year, the La Grande Literacy Alliance group has achieved some exciting projects that will help promote literacy and bring books into the homes of families living throughout the school district.

The Literacy Alliance team, led by Dr. Carol Lauritzen, was organized about February 2018. Its mission statement is: “La Grande Literacy Alliance is committed to developing a community of readers in La Grande.” The ‘Read Together La Grande’ campaign, promoting 20 minutes of reading a day is one of this group’s projects.

Member Susie Mayes, Principal of Central Elementary School, joined the team in October 2019, and she meets with the team once a month at Central. Together they have set and achieved some positive project goals to promote literacy.

“The whole objective is to get literacy into the homes from an early age so that when the children come to school they already have a foundation of the importance of reading and love of reading,” she said.

“Reading is power and fulfilling dreams. It means reaching goals be-

cause you can’t get anywhere without learning to read.”

The Literacy Alliance team is always considering ways that they can get reading into the home and to all children. The team organized a Literacy in the Park event that ended up being held in the Willow gym because of the weather, but the attendance included over 200 participants and children of all ages.

“They sat on blankets in family groups and were given a book to read to their children,” said Mayes. “They rotated the books around to others in attendance and by the end of the event, each family group read four books to their children. They were allowed to take a book home with them.”

Another Literacy Alliance project was called “Little Libraries,” where the team got together to build small outdoor bookcases. The project was helped by with Edward D. Jones, who helped finance it, and several contractors who donated materials, their expertise and plans. The FFA members from local high schools came together and made the Little Libraries.

They were made and

placed at schools in Imbler and Union, as well as at Pioneer Park, and Island City Elementary School.

“So we’re continuing to make Little Libraries to put around the La Grande community,” said Mayes. “We’ve had overwhelmingly positive contributions to it.”

The Literacy Alliance team also has a project they will start in April, presenting books at the prenatal parenting classes at Grande Ronde Hospital. “They will make a 90-minute presentation about reading and how to instill the love of reading into their children,” she said.

These new parents will learn where to get resources and the importance of teaching their child the basics of reading before they start school at age five. Robert Kleng, Director of Eastern Oregon Head Start is involved in this project.

The team has put together little bags filled with books for babies, and they will be given out to parents at these classes. Dr. Carol Lauritzen has been writing grants to help fund books for the Literacy in the Park project and the birthing bags.

In addition to her hard efforts, there are many

others who support and assist the Literacy Alliance team and its projects.

Mayes is also responsible for the district’s Strategic Plan Goal (1-D) which is “increase pre-kindergarten learning experiences for all students entering the district,” so her team collaborates with the Literacy Alliance team so they

can utilize their services and support each other in their events.

Mayes said their recent efforts are making connections with young parents at these prenatal parenting classes and with daycare providers and private preschools.

“We are ecstatic and elated about how everything has been moving forward,” said Mayes.



## UNIFORMS

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Thereafter, the uniforms were numbered so that each student could quickly identify the uniform fitted for him or her.

The LHS band unveiled their new uniforms at the Soroptimist International June Breakfast on June 2, 2019, at 10:30 a.m. at the Riverside Park and Pavilion. The band gave a performance and people got to see the uniforms up close.

“I’m just blown away by the outpouring of support from our community,” Leavitt said. “We have a phenomenal, supportive community here, and that’s not true everywhere.”