

Features

Facing retirement, Noah reflects on career

■ CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

The big cheese, the head honcho, the big kahuna... Principal Kim Noah. Student stereotypes abound about the Noah and her often misunderstood role in leading the school.

Noah's tidy office is furnished with Asian art, a sort of feng shui. All seems to be in its proper place, but Noah admits she isn't naturally this tidy.

"It's taken a long time to get as organized as I am; it's always a struggle," Noah said. "I have a fairly flexible schedule, but things can come up that must be dealt with."

Although Noah always carries her Blackberry at her side, situations she encounters as a high school principal are anything but predictable.

Noah began her career as a middle and high school teacher in California before becoming principal at Athey Creek Middle School. However, she had dreamed of being an educator long before.

"I was the girl who set up my dolls and a chalkboard and played teacher in my room," Noah said. After attending college, Noah pursued administration at a time when it was considered a "man's job" and struggle to be accepted. "I had to work extra hard to prove myself to staff and parents at times," she said.

Noah became Principal at WLHS in 2000 shortly after her daughter Marissa, now 25, graduated from high school. The job includes long hours, stretching from around 10-12 hours a day.

"I think of myself as an 'umbrella' over the school. I work to keep it open and functioning, but I have lots of support from teachers, students and administrators," Noah said. She and other administrators have the task of overseeing certain departments, Noah's being

social studies and world language. Their job is to meet with teachers, set goals and try to improve the departments, which Noah has wanted ever since walking

also attend school events.

Paperwork can bury Noah, as she answers 50-100 emails a day, and signs on the dotted line for teacher absence forms, transfers,

being able to take a role in helping students get where they want to be," she said.

According to Noah, the hardest part of her job is dealing with conflict among students, parents or staff.

"I never want to do things like fire people or discipline students, but when I do it's in their and our school's best interest, and must be done," Noah said. Her favorite part of being principal, she says, is watching students "grow, learn and enjoy school," and attending after-school activities like sports games and plays.

Some students don't like school and they don't enjoy the work, the time and the effort it takes. "We want students to enjoy coming here, and work very hard to make this a good place," Noah said.

School may take up a large portion of her life, but Noah enjoys many hobbies and extra-curriculars. A health nut, Noah works out at home in the mornings and was having a lunch of sparkling water, veggies, wheat

crackers and spreads with Carlson upon my arrival. However, her favorite food is still a juicy hamburger and french fries. An avid reader, she also enjoys travelling, spending time with her family including her husband, Ken, who is Superintendent at Gresham Barlow School District.

Noah will be retiring at the end of this year, and she hopes to enjoy the freedom, relax and leave a positive legacy. "I hope our principal does well wherever life leads her," Courtney Hagerman, sophomore, said.

"I have a lot of respect for her. It'd be hard to be in her" shoes. She's very patient and nice, and I really like her," Ashley Bright, junior, said.

Noah has been the school's leader for eight years. As her final day draws near, applications are being filed and candidates are being interviewed to determine her successor. "I may be retiring, but would still like to help this school; it's like a part of me," she said.



Julie Kahle, secretary, works with Kim Noah, principal, on scheduling. Noah has been principal at WLHS since 2000 and is retiring at the end of the year. However, she hopes to still play a role at the school.

Photo by Calley Lathrop

through the school's doors for the first time.

"I had a vision for this school, I try to look at the past, present and future. I wanted, and still want, to strengthen relationships between everyone and build trust. My job is to serve our school and community," Noah said.

There are many meetings with staff, students and administrators, some weekly and others spur-of-the-moment. However, her door is almost always open. "I try to be accessible, and if there's an issue, you can usually get to me."

According to Noah, there are many misconceptions surrounding her job. The biggest, she says, is that the principal should know every student by name and develop relationships with them.

"There are 1600 students in this building. It's very hard to talk to everyone. I love when I meet students. Come up and say 'Hi' sometime."

All students do have the chance to chat with Noah during lunch, as she and Kim Carlson, Assistant Principal, frequent the library area and

verifications, curriculum and Plan II's. Certain times of the year also come with duties, for example, during forecasting time. Noah enjoys the challenge.

"I love participating in things like forecasting, and

Portland nightclub offers fun, safe "Escape"

■ HILLI CIAVARELLO

News Editor

Imagine this: you're bored and you have nowhere to go. For some of you this might be normal, for others it's the occasional realization of being stuck in suburbia with nothing but reminders of your mundane existence. But the newest fad to escape from that fate is spending a Friday or Saturday night out on the town, specifically at the Escape Nightclub.

The Escape Nightclub prides itself on being a haven for all—no matter what sexual orientation one may be. The club, which opened in 1979, is a gay nightclub located in downtown Portland. Students at West Linn, as well as around the Portland metro area, have not only found The Escape Nightclub to be an exciting way to spend a Saturday night, but also see it as a safe place where they can be themselves.

A typical night at The Escape includes hours of dancing on the Saturday Night Fever inspired floor, as well as a drag show in which the songs performed range from Dolly Parton to liamshow.com's internet craze, "Shoes."

"I love the drag shows and that queens/bois/the transgendered community is embraced [by them].

Everyone's uniqueness becomes a common theme at The Escape. It is awesome that The Escape offers this type of open, accepting community to young people. Plus, drag shows are fun," Angela Oliverio, senior, said.

The Escape also holds many theme nights, from blacklight lit only dances to masquerade balls. One the most interesting aspects the club has to offer are its pageants. Club attendees have the ability to enter into the annual Rosebud and Thorn Pageant, in which participants take part in a show to earn their title.

Another aspect that The Escape offers students is the fact that it doesn't sugarcoat the "hard to talk about" subjects. The Escape promotes safe sex by passing out free condoms, as well as being host to a free HIV testing clinic. Rules of the club are set to let students feel just the right level of open-mindedness, according to club owners, which helps the night not only be fun, but also a learning experience about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQ).

"I think it's cool that sex is an open and comfortable subject at the Escape. It's a refreshing change from the hyper-conservative, overtly pro-abstinence environment in

which we live and 'learn.' Sex is human. We should be able to talk about it," one senior student who frequents The Escape, said.

Recently, students in the CORE class were assigned a project to spend a day in someone else's shoes. Student projects ranged from discovering the hardships of homelessness to understanding the pulls of drug addiction. Seniors Eli Groman, Alexandra Namhie, Breonna Winfield, Erin Butts and Malia Chong tried to gain perspective on the lives of the LGBTQ community by visiting the Escape Nightclub.

"I was really excited about presenting our CORE project because I felt like The Escape wasn't something everyone really knew about. I think it was important to talk about The Escape because it is a gay, straight, and bisexual friendly place that is really involved in the community," Butts said. "I think The Escape is a safe place where I can go and have fun and just be myself; I don't have to worry about anything and I can just be free and enjoy myself without being judged."

The Escape is open Friday's 10:30 p.m. to 4 a.m., with admission \$7, as well on Saturday's 10:30 p.m. to 4 a.m., with admission \$10. It is located at 333 SW Park Ave.

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