

Class of 2013: “Getting Ready to Graduate”

By Savannah Brown

At this point in the year, seniors flock to the high school library. Whether it is to begin working on local scholarships, finish homework assignments, or just to find a corner for peace and quiet, we are all working hard... or in some cases, hardly working. For most seniors, our days are spent teasing teachers and counting down the days until graduation. When we reflect on four very short years, it's amazing how far we've all grown. From awkward freshmen trying to fit in and find our way between temporary buildings and new friends, to making the first stamp on a new school and our last imprint on high school life before being set loose on the outside world.

In these busy, remaining handful of school days, the hallways are abuzz with spring fever, activities and excitement. Between scholarships, sports, and planning for prom, I've had little time

to even think about graduation. This year's track season is jam-packed full of meets, as is softball, baseball, golf, and OHSET (equestrian team) are humming along also. However, all of this busyness will crescendo with graduation day. And then.... the day after: we'll all wake up and no longer be comfortably in high school. Once the dust settles, we're left with “the big question mark”...what now?

The class of 2013 is stepping into an economy nearly rivaling the great depression of the 1930's. However, we have no New Deal Era entry-level job opportunities. As if waking from a bad dream, our Social Studies and Economics lectures, once just abstract ideas are becoming personal reality. The ongoing recession impacts our future plans, like whether some of us choose to take out \$50,000-\$100,000+ in student loan debt gambling on careers that may or may not ever pay back the educational investment. For others, it

may be considering a different path. On a recent NPR program, a guest author discussed the idea that young people today must carefully consider whether or not a traditional education path is economically feasible. He went on to mention that we must consider what alternative education paths are available such as internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training.

High school graduates of past generations knew they could make a decent living with a blue-collar job, buy a house and feed a family. Those who decided to go on to college and obtain a degree could go start undecided, pursue a liberal arts degree and choose a major at a later time. This is not the case today. Skyrocketing tuitions, increased competition from those displaced from layoffs, and out-of-state applications for the state schools makes college entrance more difficult every day. All of which makes us seniors very

stressed out. Sometimes we just need to step back and take a deep breath.

Education is an investment in oneself. An education doesn't stop at a high school or college degree. It should be a lifelong exploration of inquiry. A yearning to better yourself and development of a curious, engaged mind to a changing and complex world.

As I walk through the doors of Vernonia Schools, I am grateful for the education and preparation for life I've been given by the faculty here as a foundation to write (and live) the next chapter...

In the meantime--We're all in this together.

Savannah Brown is a senior at Vernonia High School and an intern with Vernonia's Voice. She plans to attend Portland Community College next fall.

Homeless Youth Eligible for Assistance

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Title X: homeless children and youth are minors who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youth who:

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Are abandoned in hospitals; or
- Are awaiting foster care

placement;

- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Are living in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migrant children and youth (as defined under NCLB Title IC-Migrant Education) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in the circumstance

described above.

Youth who qualify may be eligible for assistance. If you feel you qualify or if you know of a family/student that may, please contact Nate Underwood, District Homeless Liaison at 503-429-1333.

Assistance may include:

- School supplies and school clothes
- Hygiene supplies
- Fees (SAT, ACT, college applications, credit recovery, etc.)
- Emergency assistance to attend school
- Transportation
- One time emergency expenses that will result in student being able to attend and participate in school (immunizations, glasses, etc.), and/or other urgent matters
- Other

Kid's Bike Safety Fair at Vernonia Schools

On Saturday, May 4th at the Vernonia Schools parking area there will be a Kid's Bike Safety Fair, from 10 - 1. The NW Bicycle Safety Council is helping Vernonia Grade School, the Vernonia Police Department and the Lions Club put the fair on.

The NW Bicycle Safety Council is an all-volunteer charity who work to help educate youth and adults in local communities about general topics on cycling, with emphasis on bicycle safety. Every child who attends the Safety Fair and needs a new helmet will receive one FREE of charge.

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Some sites have limited capacity, so please call ahead to check with your local drop-off site if you have more than 5 gallons.



VERNONIA ALUMNI

Vernonia's new K-12 school is now open and is quite impressive, however the athletic fields and facilities are not yet complete. As Vernonia Alumni, we need to step up to the plate and help finish the job. We ask you to join your fellow Alumni by contributing to this important cause.

A “SPORTS INITIATIVE” fund through the Vernonia Education Foundation (VEF) has been established. At the October 19 Homecoming football game a check was presented to the VEF for \$3500 which we have collected so far. Please join us and show your support for the students and staff of the Vernonia School District and the entire Vernonia community.

**You may send your tax deductible donation to:
The Vernonia Education Foundation
1201 Texas Avenue
Vernonia, OR 97064**

**Be sure to designate your check
“Sports Initiative” or “Alumni”**

**Or you can donate on line at:
www.vernoniak12.or.us
Click on the “Sports Initiative” Donate Button**