

Meet the Exchange Students

Each year the Vernonia School District and the Vernonia community invite a group of foreign exchange students from all around the world to spend a school year living and learning in our small town. Families open their homes and become adopted parents; new, life-long friendships are started and our students and residents have a chance to learn about life and culture in a variety of places-some we may not have even heard of before. Over the last few years the groups of students has grown progressively larger; this year Vernonia is host to nineteen foreign students. Each fall *Vernonia's Voice* takes time in our pages to meet and introduce each of these students to the rest of our community. If you have the pleasure of meeting any of these visitors, please take time to say hello and help them feel welcome.

Silas Mansig is a senior from Gedved, a small town in Denmark. Silas is staying with Jon, Kinnell and Bridger Steward. He is playing football this fall and will play basketball and baseball this year as well. Silas says he has met a lot of nice people and says he likes that Vernonia is a small community where everyone knows each other. Silas says his favorite classes are Construction and Yearbook and his favorite food here in the United States is pizza. Silas says he will go to school in Denmark after he returns from Vernonia.

Sara Mayer-Villeneuve is from Quebec,

Canada near Montreal and is staying with Mark, Deanna and Kelsey Brown. A senior, Sara says she likes the personal feel of small town Vernonia. Sara says her favorite class is Spanish, which she is learning for the first time and she also



Left to right: Silas Mansig, Sara Mayer-Villeneuve, Sam Hout, Dominique Woods and Emma D'Onghia.

enjoys Algebra and Leadership. "I like all my classes," she says. Sara is playing volleyball and says maybe she would like to try cheerleading as well. She also hopes to run track in the spring. Sara says she will return for more schooling in Quebec and then University when her year in Vernonia is over.

Sam Hout is from Abitibi, in western Quebec, Canada. Sam is a senior and is living with the Rethwill family. Sam

says Vernonia is a lot like his small home town in Canada and thinks there are lots of activities for students to be involved in. He says he had a chance to try Clam Chowder for the first time and really likes it! Sam is playing football and

says he may try wrestling and baseball. Sam says his favorite class is Advanced Conditioning because he has a chance to do training for himself. Sam says he is spending this year in the United States because he doesn't know what he wants to study in the future. He says he will continue his schooling and go to University.

Emma D'Onghia is a junior and is living with the Landers family. Emma is

from Glen Iris, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia. Emma thinks Vernonia is a good place for Exchange Student because there are less people to get to know and everyone knows who they are. Emma says her favorite classes are Yoga and Teaching Assistant. Emma is running cross country this fall and will play basketball in the winter and run track in the spring. Emma says her favorite new food is Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Emma, who is just fifteen, has two more years of high school to complete when she returns to Australia, and says she would like to go on and study something sport related in college.

Dominique Woods is a junior from southern Germany near Stuttgart. Dominique is staying with Ron, Trish and Ronnie Maldonado. Dominique likes it in Vernonia because he says there is more going on here than in his small town in Germany. Dominique is playing football and says he will also play basketball and baseball for the Loggers. Dominique says he really enjoyed trying cornbread for the first time when he was at the Glass home for dinner. Dominique says his favorite class is Health because it is very interesting and also Advanced Conditioning. Dominique still has two years of high school to complete when he returns to Germany. After that he says he would like to return to the United States for college.

PTA PRESS EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!!

Playground Committee Making Progress-The Vernonia Playground Committee is a new group that has formed out of need by community members and parents who have the desire to work toward getting playground equipment at our new school. The money for the new school playground was cut from the budget due to rising costs. It has been over a year since we have moved in to the new building and still with no equipment for the kids to use at recess. After all, what is recess without a playground?

There is good news. The Vernonia Community PTA along with the Vernonia Education Foundation, Jacob Levenseller Fund raised enough money to purchase two bays of six swings for the playground that will be going in behind the school. The swings have been ordered and delivered and have just been awaiting the excavation of the land and volunteer support to install them. Hopefully by the time you are reading this they will be up and used by the kids! A big thank you to new resident, and parent of young children, Casey Hunter, for stepping in to help!

The playground committee is working with the Vernonia Community PTA and Vernonia Boosters on various fundraisers to help this cause. They are hopeful

that more groups will want to help as well. They are also looking into many different grants that are available as well as seeking business donations. They are still working out the budget for the playground. A playground account is set up through the Vernonia Booster Club. They expect to complete the playground project in phases.

The playground committee began meeting last May and has had a few small meetings over the summer. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, October 9th at 4:30 PM at the Vernonia School. They would love to have new interest in their group.

Race to Raise Funds-Cause + Event Portland 5K and 10K Run, 5K Walk is a fun community event designed to raise money for the charity of the runner's choice. A Vernonia team will be fundraising for the Vernonia Community PTA to help purchase playground equipment for the new school.

In 2009, Vernonia's citizens voted to tax themselves to build a new K-12 school high above the flood plain, and in September of 2012 that school opened.

Since that time, the Vernonia Education

Foundation, Vernonia School District, and the Vernonia community worked tirelessly to complete the funding needed to pay off the school. Unfortunately that funding does not include something vital in most elementary schools-a playground. A place we all took for granted as we grew up, and now our children are without. Children need a break time every day and studies show that play is important in a child's education.

We run this race to build a place where our children can climb, jump, slide, and play. We run to help them grow mentally and physically. Help us build this playground for the children of Vernonia.

All teams receive \$10/person for their cause, the largest team will receive \$20/person! This race will sell out so please sign up early to guarantee your spot!

To register join team "Race for the Playground" <https://raceregistration.uberthons.com/Register/groups/jointeam.aspx?event=20222>

For more info on the race: <http://www.causeandeventportland.com/index.html>

You can also donate directly to our cause through our fundraising page:

<https://raceregistration.uberthons.com/Fundraising/fundraise.aspx?event=20222&fundraiser=10898>

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DON WALLACE, PLS
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Vernonia, OR 97064
Phone: 503-429-6115
FAX: 1-866-297-1402
Email: DWallace_KLS@msn.com

