

# Schools Update ~ The Vernonia Education Foundation

By Dr. Ken Cox

This week I felt it would be appropriate to share with you some information about the Vernonia Education Foundation (VEF). The VEF was formed as a 501c3 public charity in 2009 primarily as a vehicle for other foundations, corporations, and businesses to donate to our new schools project when their guidelines would not allow them to donate directly to a school district. The foundation has been growing and changing as we have gained new board members and the school has been completed, but our primary focus has been to provide additional funding for our new schools.

The VEF board is made up of volunteers who want to make a difference in our new schools. Since its inception the VEF has greatly benefited

from the efforts and hard work of a number of individuals and groups. You will probably recall some of these events: Vernonia's Biggest Reunion that was held in 2010 and sponsored by a large group of VHS alumni; the Last Chance Dance, which included a dinner and auction, that was held in 2012 commemorating the closing of WGS and was spearheaded by Bill Langmaid; and more recently the Give Back Bash which featured an Elvis tribute artist and manned by members of the VHS class of '73 this past August.

For over a year we have supported the Vernonia Sports Initiative, which is focusing on raising funds for the sports fields at the new school. This effort has been spearheaded by Jim and Kathy Eckland, who currently live in Keizer. Jim is a 1962 graduate of VHS and Kathy graduated in 1965. They have

been reaching out to fellow classmates and other alumni to make a difference for our sports fields. They have been very successful, and with the help of funds raised by the Give Back Bash and memorials for the Davis Family, there should be enough funds to complete the softball field just east of the gyms this summer (more to come on this topic in the spring).

To all of the alumni, groups, and countless individuals who have made such a huge success of each of these events, I give a heartfelt THANK YOU. You have really made a difference in our schools!

In addition to sharing my gratitude, I would like to make a plea to our community. Simply put, the VEF Board is seeking your help. We could use a few more enthusiastic individuals who want to make a difference in

our schools. If you are curious about becoming a board member, or have an idea for a fundraising project, please contact the school district office (503-429-5891). The VEF board generally meets once a month, either before or after the regularly scheduled school board meeting on the second Thursday of the month. We are actively seeking ways to address our remaining construction debt and establish a hallmark fundraising event that will bring people into our community to see what a great place this is.

I know everyone is busy, especially this time of year. But if you have an idea, or know someone who could help in our quest to make our schools the best they can be, please let me know. We have come a long way together, and we just need your help to cross the finish line.

## How to Get Information About School Weather Closures

The Vernonia School District uses FlashAlert to notify the TV stations about school closures. You can get the same information as soon as it is posted. Here's how:

You may self-register and manage up to three home or office email and/or cell phone text message addresses and receive emergency information just minutes after we post it, at no cost to you.

To get started, go to [www.FlashAlert.net](http://www.FlashAlert.net) and click on the Portland button on the map. Choose Columbia County Schools and then choose Vernonia School District. You may enter one or two more email or cell text addresses. After entering them, the system will launch a validation message to each address. Obtain the two-letter code in the message and post it back into your account to validate that address (or click on the provided link). This is done to make sure that your messages will reach you.

*Please be aware that with the proliferation of spam and the resulting spam filters, it is impossible to guarantee message delivery. And remember that message delivery is dependent on cell companies accepting in a timely fashion the messages we send to them to send to you. Messages not accepted by cell phone companies after one hour will be deleted from the system to avoid the confusion that may be created by a late-arriving message.*

An even better option than text messaging is a new, free iOS/Android app, **FlashAlert Messenger**, that lets you receive emergency messages through Push Notification. Text messages need to be accepted into your carrier's text message channel and screened for spam. During crunches, cell companies have taken an hour or longer to deliver some messages (and it seems to be getting worse). Push Notification, on the other hand, travels a non-stop path from FlashAlert to the app

on your phone. Plus, there are no per-message charges and PN also works on Wi-Fi only devices. And the app will allow you to see all of the recent news posted in your region.

The app process is simple. iOS and Android users download and open the free *FlashAlert Messenger* app. Enter the email address and password for your current FlashAlert account and the app will link to it. The app may ask permission to send you Push Notifications. That's it. You will continue to make changes to your account (i.e. adding schools or orgs you want to hear from or changing an email address) the way you always have, at [www.FlashAlertMessenger.net/login.html](http://www.FlashAlertMessenger.net/login.html)

All addresses registered on FlashAlert will remain confidential. Once a year, you will receive an email at your registered email address asking if you wish to continue your subscription.



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## Vernonia Students of the Month

### November 2013



**Kade Morrison** Grade 3

Kade is known for being responsible, respectful, safe, and kind. He is a student that his teacher can count on. "Kade is a great kid!" says Mrs. Gingerich. Kade says his favorite subject in school is art. He plays basketball and likes to draw in his free time. At home he helps take care of the family cat and three dogs.

**Whitley Tolonen** Grade 6

Whitley is a good, hard working student. She plays basketball and volunteers as a basketball coach with younger girls. In her spare time Whitley says she likes to read, hunt, fish, ride quads and help out at the hardware store. She also takes care of the family pets at home. Her favorite class is Technology and she also likes her Elective Class.



**Stephanie Castro** Grade 12



Stephanie is an excellent athlete and a good student. She was named First Team All League and was a captain for the Lady Loggers volleyball team this season. She was named First Team All League in basketball and softball last year. Stephanie was voted Homecoming Queen this year. She says her favorite subject is art. She is part of the School-to-Work program and works with young students at Head Start. She also helps in the High School office. Stephanie says she hopes to go into nursing and eventually Physical Therapy after graduation. In her free time she says she likes to watch movies.

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