

Applegater

Photo by Linda Kappen

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Celebrating
~24~
Years

The arts put steam in Applegate Valley schools

BY LISA BALDWIN

It's full steam ahead for arts education in our schools. The efforts of parents, volunteers, guest artists, committed administrators, and resourceful teachers are keeping arts programs alive in an increasingly tight curriculum.

"Having arts in school helps kids with other academics," says Jennifer Parsons, art teacher for Lincoln Savage Middle School, and for many students "it's the reason they come to school."

Research supports Jennifer's assessment. According to Americans for the Arts, a student involved in the arts is four times more likely to have high academic achievement, five times more likely to stay in school and graduate, and twice as likely to complete a college degree, compared to peers without arts education (americansforthearts.org/by-topic/arts-education).

At Lincoln Savage, art is included as one nine-week course on the year-long "elective wheel" for sixth graders. Seventh and eighth graders are offered art as a year-long elective. Jennifer teaches all the basics as she helps students explore different genres and mediums. Her classroom is full of students' artwork, from Zentangles and fan-fiction art to pointillism and abstract design.

To further build the school's art culture, Jennifer started an after-school



Lincoln Savage students worked with muralist Valarie Sloan to create this new mascot mural.

art club in November. The club meets twice a month on Thursdays. To support the successful launch of this new club, donations to cover supplies can be made through the school office at Lincoln Savage, earmarked for the "Art Club."

Linda Kappen teaches daily art classes for the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders at Applegate School. Students learn the

See **ARTS IN SCHOOLS**, page 3.

Holiday traditions light up Applegate homes with love and laughter

BY DIANA COOGLE



Grace DeVore (right), with brother Arthur, favors mashed potatoes and gravy at her family's holiday party.

Lights, music, gift-giving—so traditional! But individual Applegaters, as elsewhere, give holiday traditions their own spins.

Susie Beckham, an associate librarian at Applegate Library, sings carols at Ruch Community Church and attends church on Christmas day. She also displays her collection of more than 50 nativity scenes and participates in giving trees. "I love

doing gifts for kids during the holiday season," she says.

Five-year-old Grace DeVore from Williams says, "Sometimes there's a big party with my family," mentioning particularly the mashed potatoes and gravy. She and her brother (Arthur, 10) decorate a tree cut from the forest. Grace leaves cookies and milk for Santa Claus. She and Arthur have an Advent Calendar. She likes playing with the dogs.

Sylva Koppitz, a Murphy resident, is originally from the Czech Republic, but Czech traditions don't influence her Applegate holidays. "Our Murphy Christmas is 100 percent American," she says. "Even the dog has a stocking" (though I'm not sure a dog stocking is traditionally American).

Dennis Franklin, who works in the Applegate, enjoys a family holiday gathering of ten to forty people, from a two-year-old to a 67-year-old. "We like to spend time together," he says. "We eat, laugh, joke, play board games." The meal is potluck, and the atmosphere, Dennis says, is "happy, nice, safe."

Juliet Dunn of Williams celebrates with up to 25 people at her grandmother's house in the Applegate. "We hang out

See **HOLIDAY TRADITIONS**, page 12.

A present with paws is a gift of health

BY LAURA AHEARN

Friends of the Animal Shelter (FOTAS) has an idea for your holiday shopping: Would a dog or cat be a good gift for a friend or family member? Your recipient can enjoy better health on top of the other many benefits of being a good pet owner. Better yet, if you give a gift certificate to adopt a dog or cat or bunny from the Jackson County shelter, you can help improve the circumstances of animals throughout our community.

Researchers are finding more and more evidence that owning and caring for an animal can lead to a healthier life.

A long-term study of 3.4 million people found that dog ownership is linked to a longer life.

Pet ownership—particularly dog ownership—appears to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. People with pets have lower blood pressure and heart rates, whether at rest or under stress. Simply petting a dog can reduce blood pressure and heart rate (while having a positive effect on the dog as well). The source of this news? Harvard Medical School!

Pet owners have lower triglycerides and cholesterol. Dog owners who walk

their dogs get more physical activity and in turn are less prone to obesity and health problems. And people who *do* have heart or circulatory problems survive longer if they own a pet. Studies of people who have suffered heart attacks find that pet owners are significantly more likely to survive through the following year (94 versus 72 percent).

Pet ownership holds special benefits for children. Kids raised with furry friends are less likely to suffer from allergies. An infant is less likely to be afflicted with eczema if there is a dog in the home. A cat or dog (or bunny or hamster) is a trusted friend, a source of comfort that teaches a child to care for others.

Kids who have pets are more active, secure, and responsible. Caring for a pet

See **PRESENT WITH PAWS**, page 21.



Lucky Ebony with her new Mom.

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