

HRV teacher awarded Oregon's Regional Educator of Year award

By Stephanie Hoppe
For Hood River County School District

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in partnership with the Oregon Lottery, has named Jim Donnelly, Hood River Valley High School teacher, a Regional Educator of the Year. The award celebrates knowledge, dedication, innovation, and leadership.

According to the Oregon's Teacher of the Year website, the program was created to recognize exemplary public school educators, including Oregon teachers who inspire students and make a positive impact in the communities in which they live. For 2022, Donnelly is one of 16 educators across the state who received the recognition and \$500 reward. The top three finalists will be named in the fall and receive an additional \$2,000 reward.

Donnelly graduated from HRVHS in 1995. He earned an undergraduate degree from Oregon State University in English.

He earned a master's degree in creative writing from University of Iowa. After completing his graduate degree, Donnelly spent 10 years working for Dartmouth College and Oregon Health and Sciences University in public relations and internal communications. In 2008, he started coaching wrestling at HRVHS with the athletics director, Trent Kroll, and realized he enjoyed mentoring young people. Donnelly earned his teaching degree online and taught English for three years at Dufur High School before joining HRVHS five years ago. In 2019, Donnelly became the HRVHS success teacher, working with ninth grade students to support them as they transition into high school.

Fellow HRVHS teacher Kevin Haspela said Donnelly's work with the ninth grade success program reminded him of his mother untying his fishing line or shoelace knots for him when he was a child. Haspela said he would pass these crazy knots to his mom and she would always take a ridiculous amount of



HRVHS success teacher Jim Donnelly

time to untie them for him.

"Untying difficult knots takes patience, skill, perseverance and love," said Haspela. "Jim has given all of these things to our school community, and especially our ninth grade students."

Donnelly is supervising the summer program at HRVHS this July. Hood River County School District plans to double the size of the summer program and is offering 14 new experiential classes, ranging from glider piloting, to cooking, to woodworking, to creative writing.

Donnelly said, "I'm excited for kids and teachers to have fun at school again — we've missed that."

In addition to supervising the summer program, Donnelly is involved in several initiatives around creating greater equity in schools and helping students to develop the social and emotional skills they need to be successful human beings.

Donnelly said he admires his students. Some of his students have experienced trauma and difficulties that would overwhelm the most resilient of adults, according to Donnelly. "These students still show up at school willing to give it their best shot. I think of that every time I walk into the building," he



HRVHS teacher Jim Donnelly has been named Regional Educator of the Year. He is pictured above with high school colleagues. Contributed photo

said. "It's all about creating greater equity in our schools so that all students have a clear shot at success on their own terms. There are a lot of students who look at the amazing opportunities we have at HRV and feel like those programs are for the 'other kids,' and by 'other,' they mean wealthy and/or white. As a teacher, I see my role as challenging my students to meet high standards while simultaneously doing everything I can to kick down barriers that get in their way."

HRVHS Principal Columba Jones said, "(Donnelly) is dedicated, reflective, and a strong advocate for equity. He has had a tremendous impact on our students, staff, and administrative team. Jim is a difference maker not just for our most vulnerable population of students but for our entire staff at HRVHS."

She added, "In the leadership role as the Ninth Grade Success Coordinator, (Jim) has been instrumental in closing the opportunity gap for all of our student subgroups. Students receive support via a class created and taught by him that emphasizes the development of skills under Social-Emotional Learning, Opportunity, and Academic Readiness, (S.O.A.R.)"

Donnelly said he wants people to remember him as someone who was kind and helpful along the way. As an author who

has written fiction, Donnelly said he has put himself into the heads of his characters to see the world as they do. He said this writing process is good practice for developing empathy. With students and colleagues, he said he likes to think he can see things from their point of view. Also, wrestling teaches you to work through the grind.

"The years go fast in education, but the days can be long," he said. "You need to be able to keep grinding away when the goal seems very far out ahead."

In addition to his teaching role, Donnelly coaches middle school girls wrestling and advises the HRVHS eSports club.

Outside of work, he plays online chess, walks his dogs, and occasionally writes fiction. He is also focused on being a father and getting his 13- and 15-year-old kids ready for launch.

Donnelly's personal motto is, "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good enough."

HRCSD congratulates Donnelly for his Regional Educator of the Year award. Donnelly will be leading summer school for HRVHS this year. More information may be found at bit.ly/2S2Y11W.

For more information on Oregon's Teacher of the Year program, visit oregonteacheroftheyear.org.

GLENWOOD NEWS

Glenwood High honors 2021 graduating seniors

By Mary Pierce

Our three Glenwood high school and junior high school rodeo cowgirls did very well at the State Finals in Okanogan. In the high school rodeo, Joslyn Arnold finished in fourth place for the year in breakaway roping, which qualified her for the National High School Rodeo Finals in Lincoln, Nebraska July 18-24. She finished sixth for the year in goat tying, qualifying her for the Silver State International Rodeo in Winnemucca, Nev., June 30 through July 7. She finished her freshman year of high school rodeo as Reserve Champion Rookie of the Year. Congratulations, Joslyn. We wish you great success in your two upcoming rodeos.

In junior high school rodeo, Peyton Sanchez finished ninth for the year in pole bending and ninth for the year in barrel racing, also qualifying for the Silver State Rodeo. Emma Patterson finished sixth in barrels for the year and 19th in pole bending, and she, too, qualified for the Silver State Rodeo. These three Glenwood cowgirls have really represented their Goldendale High School/Junior High School Rodeo team and their Glenwood community well. We are so proud of all three of you and will look forward to following your competition at upcoming rodeos.

As you read this, the 86th

Glenwood Ketchum Kalf Rodeo is just over a few days away. I hope you have all marked your calendars for June 19-20, Father's Day weekend, to come enjoy a really good show. The rodeo also features food and souvenir vendors, a western beer garden, and, on Saturday evening, live music by Countryside Ride. Sunday begins with Cowboy Church in the dance hall, the traditional Cowboy Breakfast at the school, and the rodeo parade through downtown Glenwood, ending up at the rodeo arena. The grand entry starts at 12:30 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, followed by the exciting rodeo action.

Ten eighth graders were promoted to high school in a very nice program on the evening of June 4. Guests were seated at tables decorated by the students and their parents. Mrs. Bridget McLaughlin gave a great address to the students, and Isabella Bensel, Glenwood High School freshman, gave a moving speech welcoming these eighth graders to high school. Refreshments were served by the Glenwood Women's Club. This bright, dynamic group of young people will be a great addition to the high school



Mary Pierce

student body this fall.

The following day, June 5, the five members of the senior class of 2021 were honored at their graduation in the school gym. Each student's guests had their own section of chairs, allowing for 40 guests per student, still socially distancing the groups while allowing for a good-sized audience. Jake Eldred was chosen by the class to give the commencement address. Jake knows all five students well, including his daughter Nahaleigh Schuster, so addressed each senior personally with great advice for their futures beyond high school. It was a very moving address and many of us had tears in our eyes when the address was over. Jake also represented the Glenwood School Board of Directors to hand out the diplomas as Superintendent Heather Gimlin called each senior up.

Nahaleigh will attend Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, taking a course of study to become a veterinary technician. Those of us who know Nahaleigh are not surprised that she would choose a career focused on animals. She has a great love for horses, dogs, and nearly every other type of animal. Emma Odom will attend Central Washington University, majoring in education, with a focus on early childhood education.



Glenwood High graduating class of 2021: Preston Bartek, Emma Odom, Duly Morris, Nahaleigh Schuster, and Derek Gimlin. Bo Arnold photo

Preston Bartek and Duly Morris both will attend Northwestern Lineman College in Meridian, Idaho, in the fall. Derek Gimlin will attend Perry Technical Institute in Yakima, focusing on becoming an electrician. We wish all five young Glenwood graduates much success in their future endeavors.

I'm sorry I did not write down all the scholarships that were presented and will report it when I get that information. I am happy to report that two outstanding students were presented

with the Good Joe and Good Jill awards. These awards are for students who demonstrate strong character traits that the late Donald Hoodenpyl was known for when he attended Glenwood School. Donald died in an accident at age 20 while he was in the U.S. Navy, and the Glenwood Women's Club started this award program in 1957 in his memory. This year the two students chosen by the high school student body and all the staff were sophomore Landon Sanchez and freshman Isabella Bensel. Congratulations to

both Landon and Isabella. We are also happy to report that Forrest Putnam, son of Nate and Betsy Putnam, was named to the Dean's Honor List at Cedarville College in Ohio for spring 2021. In order to make this list, the student has to obtain a 3.75 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hour. Forrest is majoring in mechanical engineering. Congratulations, Forrest.

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