

# KeizerCommunity

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## Forest Ridge students Kid Governor finalists

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Jasmine Miller, 11, Keizer, closed her campaign video saying, "The best people to help children is children. Let's do this together."

Helping children is why she decided to run for Oregon's first Kid Governor.

Miller and Cameron Vandecoevering, both fifth graders at Forest Ridge Elementary, were selected as two of eight finalists.

After an election, which included votes from more than 1,300 fifth graders from across the state, Dom Peters, of Willamette Valley Christian School in Brooks, was named the winner.

Miller and Vandecoevering attended his inauguration at the state capitol on Jan. 8, which included a invocation, live rendition of the national anthem and a presentation of the colors by a local Boy Scouts.

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, who spoke at the inauguration, said "the purpose of the Kid Governor program is to teach fifth graders across our state about their state government. What we've found is by having fifth graders participate in this whole process they learn much more than if they were just receiving a lecture."

Oregon is the second state to implement the program, which began in Connecticut in 2015.

In Oregon, 83 classrooms



Forest Ridge fifth grader Cameron Vandecoevering, left, poses for a picture with Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson. Vandecoevering and Jasmine Miller attended the Kid Governor inauguration on Jan. 9 in the senate chamber.



Submitted

representing 54 schools participated.

"It was fun. We were on the senate floor and we got to see the Secretary of State's office," Vandecoevering said. "I learned all about the three branches of government."

"It was pretty cool because we got to see how a real governor inauguration would work," Miller added. "We also learned about the process of the election and the process if you were to be elected governor."

The process began with five in-class civics lessons about Oregon's three branches of government, the role of the

governor and how and why elections are held.

Each candidate made a 1-3 minute video, introducing themselves and stating their platform. Twenty-one videos were submitted.

Jonathan Shay, video production instructor at the Career Technical Education Center in Salem, assisted the Forest Ridge students with their videos. Miller wanted to help kids in foster care.

"I feel like this is a very important topic that is not talked about enough," Miller said in her video. "When children go into foster care, all they have is a bag full of randomly packed

possessions if even that. In fact some children go with nothing but what they are wearing. Most of the time they don't even have as little as a tooth brush."

She then listed three simple steps to help with the issue: find support because nobody can tackle the problem alone; ask local foster homes what supplies they need and hold a supplies drive; and put together and deliver care packages.

"I wanted the opportunity to be able to help with issues that are in our community because kids don't get much of an opportunity to help with big problems," Miller said.

Vandecoevering, whose father is a firefighter in Hillsboro, chose emergency preparedness for his platform.

"If I am elected as your kid governor I will make it my mission that all homes and families are educated and prepared for any emergency," Vandecoevering said.

His three-point plan was having a smoke detector in every room, an escape plan in case of an emergency and at least one fire extinguisher in

the home.

Thomas Charboneau, principal at Forest Ridge, was proud of both Miller and Vandecoevering as well as all of his students that applied for the Kid Governor program.

"I think it was a great learning opportunity for the classes," he said. "It gave them some definite real world experience with what they were learning in school and a way to get involved and see how the process goes."

## McNary holds musical review



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley  
McNary senior Brian Gragg sings *If I were a rich man* from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

McNary High School held a musical theatre night on Tuesday, Jan. 23 in the Ken Collins Theater.

Students from *The Wizard of Oz* musical class finished the semester by preparing musical theatre songs for their final. About 15 of those were chosen to be performed for the musical review.

The night also included two full cast numbers.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley  
Ryan Wagner and Rose Nason sing and dance *Tango: Maureen* from *Rent* in the Ken Collins Theater.

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