

KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Sustaining school spirit when there's no school

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

When Gov. Kate Brown announced last month the cancellation of all in-person classes for the remainder of the school year, teachers and faculty around the Salem-Keizer School District were challenged with the task of trying to teach virtually.

One of the big aspects of virtual learning is making sure that the school community remains in connection with each other. Ashley Gruber, Lexxy Johnson and Todd Layton have played big roles in fostering those connections at McNary for the last two months.

"The work of these three has been instrumental in helping our school have meaningful connections," McNary principal Erik Jespersen said.

Gruber, Johnson and Layton are all teachers at McNary and have been heavily involved in informing kids and parents as to what's happening with the school — and it goes much deeper than making sure kids are turning in their assignments on time.

"We have been trying to put together more of a cohesive connection for the entire school body," Layton said. "The idea is that we're trying to reach out to every kid and make sure that they understand that McNary is here for them."

One of the biggest points-of-emphasis has been the graduating seniors. Johnson, who is the activities director at the school and runs student government, has her senior officers meet with a graduation committee twice per week — the committee is made up of teachers and administrators.

"We have a lot of people that interact, then we have a better feel for what's coming up," Johnson said.

"The biggest goal of the seniors is to still feel like there is stuff to look forward to for their senior year and it's not just finished in the spring. So we are all trying to create that school spirit atmosphere



Submitted

McNary teachers and administrators pulled out as many stops as possible to create a celebratory atmosphere when students picked up their caps and gowns last week. It's just one way schools have had to adapt traditional school activities to the pandemic.

even within distance learning community," Johnson said.

Johnson and the senior officers also created student bios for seniors on the McNary 2020 Instagram page — which is run by Gruber — highlighting where kids will be attending college and what they plan to study.

"They wanted to celebrate their next steps, which is why they have done those student bios," Johnson said.

Johnson also had her students make a video for Teacher Appreciation Week earlier this month to show their support for the teachers at the school that have worked so hard to maintain balance in the midst of chaos.

"Many of our teachers have done a tremendous job reaching out to kids," Layton said. "It's been good to engage and support all our teachers here."

Along with running McNary's multiple social media pages, Gruber is in charge of putting content on the recently revamped McNary website — which features parent resources, a news and updates section and a feature that allows students to speak with a virtual counselor.

"It's about figuring out what stuff should go on what platforms. Parents are on Facebook probably more than Instagram. We want to make sure that we get the information out to all the different places," Gruber said.

Gruber is in her first year as the media production teacher at McNary, while Layton teaches graphic design and Johnson teaches social studies.

Virtually teaching classes like media production and graphic design has turned out to be twice as hard according to Gruber and Layton, partially due to kids not having access to certain software that was needed.

But that doesn't stop them from working hard to provide engaging and interactive assignments for their kids.

"I want to make the projects fun so when they look back on this time, they will remember the class being fun and engaging and something that helped them through this tough time," Layton said.

When Gruber's students meet over Zoom, they are required to introduce their pets and are given extra credit if they are wearing an animal onesie.

"It's a whole new world of teaching but it's fun to connect with the kids and see what they are creating and

coming up with," Gruber said. "I just want to engage with them and make things feel more normal."

Through this process, Layton has been reminded, thanks to multiple messages from his students, how important the job of a teacher is, not just for giving instruction, but also for the way teachers foster and facilitate meaningful relationships with their students.

"You don't know how much you're missed. The messages that the kids have sent about missing school, it helps me realize how important our jobs are," Layton said.

dish BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!

Blazing Fast Internet! 40 TO 100 Mbps (Download) for \$19.99/mo

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE

\$59.99/mo. America's Top 120 Package. 190 CHANNELS Including Local Channels!

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card. 1-866-373-9175. Offer ends 7/15/20.

YOUR PERFECT BUNDLE

BUNDLE NOW. SAVE ALL YEAR. Now save \$30/mo. for a whole year on a bundle with DIRECTV and AT&T Internet.

\$79.98/mo.

CALL YOUR AT&T Dealer Today! 1-877-441-1933

Imagine The Difference You Can Make

DONATE YOUR CAR

1-844-533-9173

FREE TOWING TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Help Prevent Blindness. Get A Vision Screening Annually.

Heritage for the Blind. Ask About A FREE 3 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!!

Tax Problems: RESOLVED

There are many ways we can tackle IRS or State tax relief together:

- ✓ Tax Levies & Liens Release
- ✓ Wage Garnishment Release
- ✓ Stop Penalties and Interest
- ✓ Tax Debt Negotiation & Settlement
- ✓ Resolve Back Taxes
- ✓ Payroll Tax Negotiation
- ✓ Tax Preparation & Bookkeeping Services

Call us now for your FREE tax consultation & evaluation: 844-945-2056

WANT CHANGE? YOU'VE GOT TWO CHOICES: VOTE OR VOTE

A REMINDER FROM YOUR OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION ORSTUDENTS.ORG/VOTE

CROWN MEMORIAL CENTERS • CREMATION & BURIAL

Simplicity - Convenience - Low Cost

SIMPLE CREMATION ♦ \$795

SIMPLE DIRECT BURIAL ♦ \$995

CHURCH FUNERAL ♦ \$2965

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| SALEM 275 Lancaster Dr. SE Salem, OR 97317 (503) 581-6265 | PORTLAND 832 NE Broadway Portland, OR 97232 (503) 783-3393 | EASTSIDE 1433 SE 122nd Ave. Portland, OR 97233 (503) 783-6865 |
| TUALATIN 8970 SW Tualatin Sherwood Rd. Tualatin, OR 97062 (503) 885-7800 | TIGARD 12995 SW Pacific Hwy Tigard, OR 97223 (503) 783-6869 | MILWAUKIE 16475 SE McLoughlin Blvd. Milwaukie, OR 97267 (503) 653-7076 |

"Easy Online Arrangements"
CROWNMEMORIALBURIAL.COM

Privately Owned Cremation Facility
Family Owned - Family Focused

ASK MR. TRASH

Q. I heard about China's ban on recycling. What IS recyclable now?

A. Be very careful to only recycle the things on your hauler's approved list. **PLASTIC BAGS, STYROFOAM, AND WAXY CARTONS WERE NEVER RECYCLABLE!**

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING GOOD RECYCLABLES EMPTY, CLEAN AND DRY:

- Cardboard and uncoated greyboard boxes (Shipping & cereal type). No frozen food boxes!
- Print-quality paper - newspaper, junk & office paper, and magazines;
- Tin & Aluminum Cans Only - NO foil, trays, or scrap metal;
- Plastic Bottles and Jugs Only - NO bags, tubs, clamshells, bubble Pak, or other plastics.

Serving Keizer for Nearly 50 years!

LOREN'S SANITATION & RECYCLING SERVICE, INC. 503.393.2262

VALLEY RECYCLING & DISPOSAL, INC. 503.585.4300

OUR STORY

Meet the people that make your community newspaper

Since 1987, the Keizertimes has been proud to be honored with more than 60 first place journalism awards bestowed by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, as judged by members of press associations from states around the country.

The current staff is dedicated to publishing the best newspaper for the people of Keizer — they deserve nothing less.

LET'S MEET Andrew Jackson

Graphic Designer & Production Manager (Born & Resides: Salem)

EDUCATION: Graduate of McNary High School, and holds degrees from Chemeketa Community College (AAS) and Oregon State University (BFA)

MY ROLE: I pride myself on being a jack-of-all-trades. My main role is to create effective advertising for every publication — from concept to final design — for all our clients. I also design the special section covers and the newspaper's front page each week.

WHY THE KEIZERTIMES? Graphic design, my first love — led me to our community newspaper one romantic February day, many moons ago. Every day, I'm blessed to use my abilities to help local businesses promote their goods and services. I love what I do.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: Social media is good for rumors — small town newspapers are great for truth.

MY PASSION: Trying to make everyone laugh at all times — except funerals.

3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

CALL: 503.390.1051
CLICK: keizertimes.com/store
COME BY: 142 Chemawa Rd N

47 FIRST PLACE ONPA AWARDS
37 FOR ADVERTISING
10 FOR NEWS