

PRINCIPALS: Students may gain better knowledge of what it takes to be a leader

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The activity is the brainchild of first-year Sherwood Heights Principal Theresa Owens, who brought it over from her previous job as principal of Creekside Park Elementary School in Anchorage, Alaska.

Owens said she was inspired to start the activity when a student asked if he could help her with her duties. She decided to make it a formal event, extending the opportunity to all fifth graders regardless of their behavioral status.

Owens's intent is to give students a new-found awareness of the challenges teachers and administrators face on a daily basis.

"All it is is drama, drama, drama all day long," Owens recalled one student saying after his stint as assistant principal.

Even for students that enjoy the experience, Owens said there are tangible benefits.

She hopes some of children will have better knowledge of what it takes to be a leader.

"If you want to be in charge, you

have to do the work," Owens said.

On Tuesday, Reyburn is joined by fellow assistant principal Lexi Chandler.

Chandler said she was really excited for the chance to be assistant principal and was even worried she'd get sick and miss her day.

As part of their duties, Owens directs them from class to class for observations.

In Donna Bostwick's kindergarten class, Reyburn and Chandler help students with a St. Patrick's Day activity before typing a brief observation into an iPad.

Reyburn and Chandler will skip most of their class time to fulfill their duties as assistant principals, checking in with their teachers at the end of the day to collect homework.

While they'll just be regular students by the next day, two new employees are expected to join Sherwood Heights staff next week.

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CONFERENCE: County has third highest teen pregnancy rate in state

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but decided against it. Oregon Health Authority spokesman Jonathan Modie defended the conference, saying in a statement, "The conference aligns with our goals around youth using accurate information and well-developed skills to make thoughtful choices about relationships and sexual health." OHA co-sponsored the conference.

Despite that support, this week, a month before the 2015 event, organizers decided to cancel.

A news release from the Oregon Teen Pregnancy Task Force, the fiscal sponsor, reads, "While we remain steadfast in our vision, we feel current conditions have shifted the setting and our ability to offer open, safe and honest conversations about sexuality." Registrants will receive refunds.

No Umatilla County Health Department employees attended the 2014 session, though they did attend in past years. Southwick had registered for the 2015 conference, "Healthy Bodies, Minds and Communities." Grants and state scholarships pay the way.

Both DeBolt and Southwick said the conference serves youth by providing strategies for teachers, parents and peer counselors

to help teens avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and learn about healthy relationships. This isn't a simple matter of pushing abstinence and walking away, said DeBolt and Southwick. To do so, they said, would ignore the universe of temptation and incorrect information available in cyberspace.

"The access is just huge — what they can find, what they can see," Southwick said. "I want to come from a perspective of 'I know what they know and what they're talking about.' It's about meeting kids where they are."

That means frank discussions about protection, STDs and the smörgåsbord of disastrous advice available on the Internet. To teach good choices, they said, you must talk about the bad ones, too.

"Otherwise, they're going to guess," Southwick said. "They're going to have unsafe sex and have unwanted pregnancies."

Others, however, feel differently. Opposition revved up again as the 2015 conference approached.

"This conference has morphed into such a perversion from actual health and welfare that it is time to bring it to a stop and get back to some sanity," Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin told a *Daily*

Astorian reporter in December.

The cancellation saddens DeBolt, who said that educators will miss out on the quality information they would bring back to their counties.

"We want to make sure that the youth of Umatilla County and Oregon have the right education in terms of their bodies and health," she said.

Umatilla County, she said, has the third highest teen pregnancy rate in the state at 47.1 per 1,000 girls, aged 15 to 17. Southwick said the county recently partnered with the state and Baker and Malheur counties to replicate evidence-based programs proven successful elsewhere.

"These are programs they've implemented along the I-5 corridor," Southwick said. "We want to replicate that on the east side to bring our rates down."

Using peer counseling is one tool.

"Teens are going to listen to other teens," she said. "It's been proven time and time again. That's why teen peer educators attend the conference with chaperones."

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FERGUSON: Attack created more race-related mistrust

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ready fraught relationship between police and protesters just as the city seeks reforms in the wake of a withering Justice Department report on racial bias in its law-enforcement practices.

The attack also seemed to create another layer of race-related mistrust after a week in which an unarmed young black man was killed by a white officer in Madison, Wisconsin, and a University of Oklahoma fraternity chapter was thrown off campus after a video surfaced showing members singing a racist chant.

In Washington, President Barack Obama took to Twitter to relay his prayers to the officers and to denounce violence against police. "Path to justice is one all of us must travel together," Obama wrote, signing the tweet with his initials to indicate the president personally composed it.

Attorney General Eric Holder said the gunman was "a damn punk" who was "trying to sow discord in an area that was trying to get its act together, trying to bring together a community that had been fractured for too long."

The shots were fired early Thursday just as a small crowd of protesters began to break up after a late-night demonstration that unfolded hours after the resignation of Ferguson Police Chief Tom Jackson.

The shots were believed to come from a handgun across the street from the police department, which has been a national focal point since the fatal Aug. 9 shooting of Michael Brown, who was black and unarmed, by a white police officer.

The gunman may have fired from up to 120 yards away, a distance longer than a football field. But with a line of roughly 20 officers standing in front of the building, the shooter did not have to be particularly accurate to hit two of them, Belmar said.

"We're lucky by God's grace we didn't lose two officers last night," he said.

A 41-year-old St. Louis County officer was shot in the right shoulder, the bullet exiting through his back. A 32-year-old officer from Webster Groves was wearing a riot helmet with the face shield up. He was shot in the right cheek, just below the eye, and the bullet lodged behind his ear.

On Thursday night, about 50 people gathered at a public plaza in downtown Ferguson near the police station for a vigil. The group sang spirituals, prayed for peace and expressed sympathies for the injured officers.

Tensions have been high in Ferguson since August and escalated in November after a St. Louis County grand jury declined to prosecute Darren Wilson, the officer who shot Brown. Justice Department investigators concurred with that finding in a report released March 4.

But a separate Justice Department report released that same day found racial

profiling in the Ferguson police force, and a municipal court system driven by profit, largely on the backs of black and low-income residents.

In the week after the report, Ferguson's court clerk was fired and the municipal judge, two police officers and the city manager voluntarily stepped aside. Wilson resigned in November.

John Gaskin III, a St. Louis community activist, speculated that the shooting was conducted by outside agitators intent on hijacking attention from peaceful, re-

form-minded protesters.

Activists "cannot afford these kinds of incidents happening, because that gets us absolutely nowhere."

In a statement, Ferguson Mayor James Knowles III and the city council said although they respect the right to protest peacefully, "we cannot continue to move forward under threats of violence and destruction to our community. We ask our residents and clergy in this area to partner with us as we make our way through this process."

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