

SCHOOL ZONE

A Monthly Newsletter for the Siuslaw and Mapleton Schools and Florence Community PTA

Everyone belongs at Siuslaw Middle School



PHOTOS BY HEATHER WIGGINS

Siuslaw Middle School is “Where Everyone Belongs” as student leaders (in yellow) help sixth-graders adjust to their new school. Besides helping students find their lockers, WEB Leaders also guide the sixth-graders through the school and other orientation activities. The older students will continue to meet with sixth-graders throughout the school year.

School is back in session, and for the new sixth graders of Siuslaw Middle School (SMS), the first day started with a bang.

The day began with the usual nervous goodbyes and subdued clumps of students waiting to find out about their new school, teachers and schedules.

At 8:30 a.m., the doors to the gym flew open, music came pumping out and the sixth graders flooded in.

They participated in a 90 minute assembly led by the WEB program, to help welcome them to Siuslaw Middle School and to let them know that SMS is Where Everyone Belongs (WEB).

From the gym, the sixth-graders broke into small groups and spent an hour working with their eighth grade WEB leaders.

These eighth-graders went through a rigorous application process last year, and then gave up part of their summer to help make the first day of school as spectacular as possible for the sixth-graders.

The WEB leaders worked in small groups, running several “get to know you” activities.

From there, they took the new students on a guided tour of the building and helped them open their lockers.

Lockers are one of the biggest concerns for the average incoming sixth-grader, as most have never used a combination lock before.

Divided into two classrooms, with staff and their WEB leaders for support, the sixth-graders watched a video on how to open a locker, discussed the process and even practiced with individual

locks, before tackling their actual locker.

By the end of the day all the sixth-graders had successfully opened their lockers!

By the end of the first week, a positive attitude in the sixth-graders was apparent. They felt confident on their second day of school, and got to class on time even with the addition of seventh- and eighth-graders running around the building.

Spirits were still high at the end of the week, and most sixth-graders said they had a good week and were excited to come back on Monday.

The WEB leaders will continue working with the sixth-graders throughout the year.

They were ready for their next meet up on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

The WEB leaders checked in with the sixth-graders to see how they felt about their classes and also invite them to the first social, held that Friday.

Now, the WEB leaders will attempt to do a mini-lesson or a fun seasonal activity for the sixth-graders once



a month throughout the year.

The lessons will focus on topics such as success strategies for school, avoiding gossip and good sportsmanship.

The fun activities will range from scavenger hunts to dance parties and video game tournaments.

The WEB leaders will also work on projects to promote school spirit and a positive environment for the entire student body. They will plan spirit weeks and help with socials and assemblies to increase student involvement, to give the students a voice in their school and to model how powerful student leadership can be.

—Submitted by Heather Wiggins



Mapleton 4-H picks events for a good summer

Apple picking, swimming and crafts provided opportunities for fun, learning

The Mapleton 4-H Community Club held two planned activities this summer and one spontaneous one.

In August, students Billy, Ariana, Abbi, Katelyn, Jaid, Alhana and Scott went for a picnic and swimming day at SPLASH! at Lively Park in Springfield.

Fun was had by all in the wave pool, on the inner tubes, down the slides and even swimming laps in the exercise pool.

Ariana and Alhana surprised leader Lauren Hesse with their deep water swimming skills, newly-gained during the summer.

Parents Stephanie McNutt and

Bill Grable helped with transportation and supervision.

In September, Mapleton residents Carol and John Burns invited Hesse to bring her 4-H youth to glean the surplus of apples from their gorgeous riverside orchard.

Ariana, Abbi, Katelyn, Jaid, Alhana, Angelia and Faith all came with buckets and eager eyes to pick enough for a month of apple-eating.

“We thank the Burns for their generous spirit in sharing their fall harvest,” Hesse said.

Katelyn, Ariana, and Abbi were able also to spend some extra time with Hesse this summer and con-

tributed their newfound skills at Zentangle arts.

The 4-H group had been introduced to Zentangle designs by Susie Voth last spring as an activity to do when waiting for their turn at the sewing machines during Art Quilt Project Club time.

Hesse also said, “The Mapleton 4-H thanks Ladies of the Elks for funds provided in 2014 that enabled the group to do projects, learn about organic cooking and contribute pies for a pie auction fundraiser.”

Want to join Mapleton 4-H Community Club? Read more about the club inside!

—Submitted by Lauren Hesse



COURTESY PHOTOS

Mapleton 4-H Community Club students Abbi, Alhana, Angelia, Ariana, Billy, Faith, Jaid, Katelyn and Scott participated in summer activities with their leader, Lauren Hesse.



Siuslaw receives national PTA honors

Siuslaw Elementary one of two schools recognized in Oregon

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has recognized Siuslaw Elementary School and Florence community PTA as a 2015-17 National PTA School of Excellence for their achievement in building effective family-school partnerships.

The award was presented to only 125 PTA associations nationwide. The only other Oregon PTA to be recognized was Creston PTA in Portland.

“Our PTA is proud to have been named a School of Excellence by the national PTA,” said Diane McCalmont, president of Florence community PTA. “We took seriously our role in supporting school and family partnerships at Siuslaw Elementary School.”

Otha Thornton, president of National PTA said it launched the School of Excellence program to help strengthen family-school partnerships across the country and to make measurable progress in the areas of education, health and safety, and arts and cultural exploration. “Siuslaw Elementary School and Florence community PTA have put strong practices into place that involve families in the life of the school, and we are pleased to recognize them as a National PTA School of Excellence,” Thornton said.

Florence Community PTA began the School of Excellence process in fall 2014.

According to McCalmont, the objective was to increase family engagement and support student success in literacy, math and science.

“The PTA focused on providing information to parents and students making the transition into elementary and middle schools,” McCalmont said. “PTA volunteers worked with school principal Mike Harklerode to come up with appropriate written information to give parents of these grade level students.”

“As our School of Excellence team researched and worked through this project, we found that there are many positive things going on in our elementary school. We also became aware that many of the weak areas were driven by the lack of consistent and far-reaching communication. We are pleased with the strengthened relationship we gained with our school administration,” Thornton added.