

# SCHOOL ZONE

A Monthly Newsletter for the Siuslaw and Mapleton School Districts and Community Groups

## ALL FUN & GAMES

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY CHANTELLE MEYER  
Siuslaw News

**“W**e’re doing this for the kids,” Kiwanis President Jean Murphey said at the opening of Kiwanis Club of Florence’s Reality Experience for Siuslaw and Mapleton eighth-graders on Oct. 19: The Game of Life.

Kiwanis’ goal is to serve the children of the world, and it does this through programs and fundraisers throughout the year. The Florence club found the idea for a walk-through version of The Game of Life in the Kiwanis International magazine after the Kiwanis Club of Greencastle, Ind., submitted a story about its experiences.

“For our version, we called it ‘The Game of Life, A Reality Check for Eighth-Graders,’” Murphey said.

Nine Mapleton students and approximately 120 Siuslaw students attended the event at the Siuslaw Middle School gym.

Impressively, 50 volunteers planned for, set up and led the students through the event. This included 18 Kiwanians, representatives from the two school districts and people from Oregon Pacific Bank, Coldwell Banker Coast Real Estate, Johnston Motors, Banner Bank, Coast Insurance Services, State Farm Insurance, Banner Bank, City of Florence, Central Lincoln PUD, Tony’s Garage, State Employment Department, Children’s Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW), Oregon State Police, Florence Police Department, Western Lane Ambulance District, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, Oceanside Veterinary Clinic, Florence Dental Clinic and other community partners. Florence Mayor Joe Henry dawned his “every day” hat to help with the mortgage station.

In addition, members of the Siuslaw High School Key Club and two Mapleton High School students also volunteered.

Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O’Mara said, “This is an amazing opportunity for kids to actually have a real-life experience before it really counts. It’s like a trial run for ‘the game of life.’ And it really is like a game — sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. How you deal with that is important.”

Students came into the simulation knowing certain details about their “futures”: whether they were married, their number of children and their chosen career, including a market-rate for their salary.

“Our concept is to dwindle their wages to nothing,” Murphey said.

Students had to fill out a check register with every expense as they went around to booths around the gym. These included stations for transportation, banks, utilities, taxes, realtors,



On Oct. 19, 130 Mapleton and Siuslaw eighth-graders learn “Game of Life.”

insurance, mortgages, technology, career counseling, clothing, community involvement, entertainment, food, medical/dental, legal services and pets. State Farm provided backpacks for all the students to store their paperwork and other items they picked up at the stations.

Many of the stations represented expenses as students first bought a vehicle, applied for an auto loan, maintained and then insured the car. Students faced reality with the cost of a new car versus a used, or looked at the housing they could afford on their budget.

Students with bigger salaries saw their money stretch further than their peers. They were able to buy second homes and multiple cars while some students considered buying a van to both drive and live in.

“We expect that the ‘Wheel of Life’ is going to get hit time after time, because it’s fun,” Murphey said early in the day.

And it was.

Functioning much like the spinning wheel on the actual board game, students had to spin the wheel before drawing a corresponding card. Some of the cards led to unexpected expenses, and some to bonuses. The cards even had life experiences, such as the cost of a divorce.

“The ‘Wheel of Life’ is great,” O’Mara said. “It’s exciting to see what the kids all get.”

Florence-area emergency services volunteers led the station and interacted with the students. Organizers joked that the eighth-graders behaved so well since the uniformed volunteers were so

prominently placed in the center of the gym.

Siuslaw Middle School Principal Andy Marohl said, “The kids are engaged. They were a little squirrely in the Commons before it began, but they’re excited. ... What will be important is the follow-up activity that we do with the kids in the classroom.”

Each school met with the students to go over lessons, and Kiwanis plans to send out a follow up survey to get additional feedback.

“The game works really well with our ASPIRE program, the career and college readiness program where we try to get kids to think about their future and what they need to do be prepared for it,” Marohl said.

Murphey said the event was both fun and educational, and that the schools asked Kiwanis to bring the program back in the spring for high school juniors.

“Our Mapleton kids are so excited to be a part of this,” O’Mara said. “It’s a great opportunity not just for them to come here and participate with more eighth-graders, but to just see all the different aspects. It gives them a lot to consider.”



## WEIRD SCIENCE

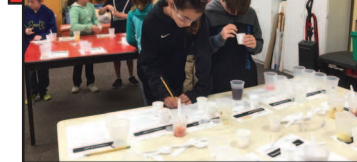
Siuslaw fifth-graders conduct science experiment

Miss B. and Mrs. Riggs’ fifth-grade classes at Siuslaw Elementary School conducted an experiment to determine if three different mystery liquids were weak acids.

They first learned that some really common liquids are actually weak acids — lemon juice and vinegar — and then learned that water is not an acid.

To be able to determine if their mystery liquids were acids, students had to observe what a known acid does when mixed with some common agents. First they tested water and vinegar each with salt, baking soda and “bean water” by watching what happened when they were combined. Their observations led them to understand that acids always react in some way with these common agents.

The teachers recommended



combining baking soda and vinegar to see the reaction.

Students learned that if their mystery liquids reacted in any way with the same agents, they would be acids.

It turns out that the mystery

liquids of orange juice, ketchup and mustard are, in fact, acids.

While learning this, the classes practiced their best scientific procedures: they wore eye protection, made a plan to prevent cross-contamination and made careful and thorough notes about their observations.

— Story and photos submitted by Diane McCalmont for Siuslaw Elementary School

## Pottery students donate to benefit

Siuslaw High School Pottery students have donated more than 200 bisque-fired bowls for Florence Food Share’s 22nd annual Empty Bowls fundraiser. Every year, local artisans create beautiful glass, wooden and ceramic bowls which they donate to this event. All proceeds from the event go to benefit Florence Food Share.

Siuslaw High School Art Teacher Kim Pickell encourages her students to participate each year, reminding them that they can use their artistic talents to benefit those in need in lieu of donating money.

The students do the creating and the bisque fire and local artists glaze and fire the bowls again. Most of the bowls sell for \$10 each.

The event takes place this year from Dec. 1 to 3 at the Florence Events Center and is the perfect place to buy holiday gifts. Go to [www.florencefoodshare.org](http://www.florencefoodshare.org) for more information about the event.

Pickell also gave a shout out to Kathy Shamey and The Backstreet Gallery Artists for their generous donations to the Siuslaw High School Art and Pottery programs.

— Photo and story submitted by Kim Pickell



Siuslaw Pottery Student Alyssa Lydick

## The value of a college degree

BY RUSS PIERSON  
Dean of Lane Community College  
Florence Center

The American college is under intense scrutiny these days, with detractors on every side. Certainly, some of the criticism stems from the for-profit college sector, with high profile examples like the ITT Technical Institute chain that over-promised and under-delivered on training for thousands of students hoping for a new start and a better future before it closed in 2016.

According to Time, in one recent year, “for-profits spent 17 percent of their budgets on instruction and 42 percent on marketing or investor payouts,” and an older study found that “from 2010 to 2012 they took more than a quarter of federal aid subsidies and represented nearly half of all defaults.”

Much of the recent attention also swirls around “student progression and completion” — tying aid to requirements that colleges ensure their students finish their programs of study.

This is certainly of critical importance to those of us in higher education, but especially at a community college, it can be very interesting to try to determine student intent. Not every student who enrolls at Lane Community College (LCC) intends to graduate with an Associate’s degree. Indeed, they may simply wish to upgrade their skillset in one area or another, or simply take a couple of courses in subjects that always interested them.

At LCC, we’re working hard to understand our student’s goals and to ensure their success in meeting whatever their goals may be.

College also gets hit from a small but vocal element of voices in the entrepreneurial community who have found you don’t necessarily need a structured, formal education to be a success.

Again at LCC, we recognize that the best educational approach can vary from person to person and industry to industry. That’s why we partner with RAIN (the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network) and the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) to support their innovative approaches to grow the small business and entrepreneurial communities in our midst.

But there’s yet another surprising force in society that seems to be watering down the value of a college degree. In many ways, a college degree has become the new high school diploma in America. Too many businesses and industries now require a college degree for entry level jobs that never had such a requirement in the past.

According to the Washington Post: “(A) wide range of jobs — in management, administration, sales and other fields — are undergoing ‘upcredentialing,’ or degree inflation. As examples, just 25 percent of people employed as insurance clerks have a BA, but twice that percentage of insurance clerk job ads require one. Among executive secretaries and executive assistants, 19 percent of job-holders have degrees, but 65 percent of job postings mandate them.”

A college degree really is truly valuable, but if you are in a position to hire employees, please carefully consider whether that job you are posting ought to require the extra expertise, experience and skill that a college degree affords. If it does, then that is great news for the college graduate who brings that extra degree of skill to the workplace (and ought to be paid accordingly). But let’s market our employment opportunities appropriately and continue to both make a way for the students who aren’t able or don’t wish to attend college and the students who bring that something extra to your workplace.