

CGHS grad comes back to her roots

Kyle Trullinger
The Lion's Roar

New staff members are joining Cottage Grove High School, and so far it's been great for the former student and new teacher Taylor Boxberger. Staff is a big part of what makes Cottage Grove High School so unique and why students always seem to find success here. Boxberger is a 24-year-old teacher at Cottage Grove High School. She teaches Language Arts for juniors and seniors and also teaches a freshman math lab class. Boxberger originally wanted to be a nurse, but once she got to help coach the track team here at Cottage Grove, she realized how much she loves being with high schoolers, and that gave her the inspiration to start teaching. Her experience here has been great. "It's been really rewarding and fun to teach at a school that I went to as a high schooler," said Boxberger. She's built good relationships with all the staff because she already knew most of them. It's a comfortable feeling for her going back to a place she was six years ago. Being a student here and being a staff member six years later

is a big jump, but she doesn't know which is better because she loved being a student and misses being one, but she loves teaching and building new relationships with staff and students. She's felt very welcomed and comfortable. She finds teaching here at Cottage Grove fun because she's getting a whole new perspective, and she finds it cool that she's working with people that used to teach her. Those teachers are now her friends and co-workers. It's different, but she's enjoying it. Her favorite high school memories were getting ready for homecoming week. She loved being involved with the skits, football games and just other fun homecoming activities. She finds Mr. Wells to be the most helpful and welcoming because she took over his classes at the start of the year. "He's helped me a lot and made my life here a lot easier," said Boxberger. Being a high school teacher gives her all the memories she missed, right back. For Boxberger it's about reliving the high school experience and helping young students succeed.

Battling chronic absenteeism

Georgia Hoffay
The Lion's Roar

Cottage Grove High School Dean of Students, Chris Wells is working to combat the statewide trend in rising chronic absenteeism rates. "I do a lot of stuff. Besides tracking the attendance and stuff like that, I meet with unexcused kids, I talk with parents about getting the kids to school more. I also do some online school stuff. I track activities, sports, clubs. I do a little bit of discipline, some supervision, a little bit of everything. Nothing is ever clean cut to one thing," said Wells who has been on the job for six months. Wells got involved because he wants good attendance to be a good habit in the student body. "I think it's easy to get behind, attendance wise, miss a couple of days here and there, and it really adds up to really impact education. I think helping kids improve their attendance is a good way to help them improve how they feel about themselves, how they feel about school, and stuff like that. It's a

good habit to have now. Good attendance is a good habit to have now, and for the future." With him in charge now attendance may improve, but that's not the only goal Wells is trying to achieve. "We've seen a little bit of an uptick, but I think it's more making kids aware. Everyday I walk around and have a conversation with every kid who had an unexcused absence from two days ago, so we're educating kids, 'Hey there is a system, there's somebody watching.' Most of the time I have things working out pretty well. We solve problems for kids. But you know there are about 750 kids, so it's a little bit of education you have to do." Getting in depth about attendance Wells explains what 'chronically absent' is. "Chronically absent is missing 10 percent of school..." Wells also researches how attendance can affect your education. "There's research that says anything over five days during the year dramatically impacts the ability to learn, to retain and to do well." Wells also explains

the consequences if you're chronically absent, "There's a variety of things. You can lose some privileges like prom, dances, even graduation if you're a senior. So if you don't meet that marker then we could say 'Well, it looks like you won't be attending one of these things.' As well as if it gets really bad, and we can't seem to solve it within here then we have the ability to ask the Cottage Grove court system to fine parents \$500." Wells does a lot in Cottage Grove High School. Attendance is very important for one's education, and managing it is a way of keeping it in track. Wells even enjoys his new role and how it is affecting students. "...I meet with every kid with an unexcused absence, so that's about 20-30 kids everyday... Sounds like a lot of work in the morning, and it is, but also I have some of the same kids come back 'Okay I want to do better, help me do better.' That's really been the positive aspect." Wells hopes that with him monitoring the attendance, that

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Students of the Month

LONDON SCHOOL



KAYONNA SHARP
London School would like to nominate Kayonna Sharp this

month. Kayonna is a 2nd grader in Ms. Henderson's 2nd/3rd Grade Class. Kayonna started at London School this year and has been a wonderful addition to her classroom and our London School Family. She's a hard worker and gets along with everyone. Kayonna is a good friend to her classmates and other students. She takes on classroom responsibilities like taking lunch count each morning. Kayonna is also a voracious reader. Congratulations on being nominated this month Kayonna!

DORENA ELEMENTARY



NICK NIELSON

Nick Nielson is Dorena's student of the month for January. Nick is a second grade student with a big heart for his friends and classmates. He is always kind and respectful to everyone. Nick likes to be helpful and kind to others. He shows tremendous grit and is always on task

HARRISON ELEMENTARY



ALBERT SAVIN

Albert Savin is a first grader at Harrison Elementary. He is a wonderful student, classmate, and friend. Albert is a strong reader and works hard in class every day. He is also a "Self-Manager" in his classroom! We enjoy having Albert as part of our Harrison Bobcat family.

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LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL



MADDY BANKS

Maddy Banks is the Lincoln Middle School Student of the Month. Maddy's upbeat personality, desire to learn more and more, willingness to help others and genuine goodness of heart make her a shining presence for those around her!

ELKTON HIGH SCHOOL



TRENTYN HALSTEAD

Trentyn is a caring, tolerant, responsible and committed student that wants to improve. He pays attention, asks questions and remains engaged in class. He is funny and quick-witted and also a hard worker. He works well with others, is very team oriented and has a great heart! He is a polite young man and very generous and thoughtful with his fellow students.

KENNEDY ALT. HIGH SCHOOL



BRAEDEN ALLEN

Braeden has been working extremely hard at reaching his goal to graduate this year. He supports his classmates to attend class and complete work.

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