

Kindergarten teacher Kristina Fournier receives Excellence in Education Award

Bohemia Elementary kindergarten teacher Kristina Fournier received the Excellence in Education Award last week from New Country 93.3 and Northwest Community Credit Union. The monthly award is given to an individual making a difference in education.

"It was a complete shock. I

had no idea that I was nominated. People heard my name announced on the radio and started to text me," said Fournier, who is in her fourth year of teaching at Bohemia.

New Country 93.3 radio hosts Barrett and Fox delivered the award to her classroom and made a presen-

tation in front of Fournier's students.

"They talked about the great things happening at our school and I love that they addressed the kids and made them a part of the presentation. I was excited I got to share it with my kids because they are what makes what I do great," said

Fournier.

Bohemia Elementary Principal Heather Bridgens wasn't surprised when she heard Fournier had been given the award.

"Mrs. Fournier is absolutely deserving of this award. She is a leader at Bohemia and has made the first year of public education a joyful

and positive experience for many students," said Bridgens.

Fournier, who gives a brand new book to every student in her classroom each month so they can build a home library, says she just wants to be the best she can be for her students.

"I strive to be great for my

group of kids," said Fournier.

Fournier received a copy of her nomination form, a certificate, and \$100.

Because she received the award, Bohemia Elementary School will go into an end of the year drawing for \$1,000.

—Submitted by by
Garrett Bridgens

HATE from A1

Bookmine owner Gail Hoelzle said, "A girl said, 'You grown-ups need to pay attention.'"

It was the first meeting of Cottage Grove United that would eventually spearhead the effort to place signs in the windows of Main Street businesses that read "United

Against Hate."

Since then, it's hosted classes centering on literature meant to find common ground and that illustrate white privilege. The group has also hosted panels that feature local religious leaders and community members, bringing different groups together for open, honest conversations.

Conversations, the group

says hopes will help foster a community atmosphere that not only accepts and promotes diversity but discourages racism and violence.

According to the annual report documenting hate crimes around the county and released by the FBI, crimes related to gender, gender identity, race, religion and ethnicity have increased.

In Oregon, the number jumped by about 100 to 146 and half of those incidents were reported in Eugene beating out Portland and Salem, the state's capital.

Oregon's history is tinged in racism. In 1844, African-Americans were ordered out of the territory that would become the state

and in 1859 Oregon joined the union as the only state that included exclusionary laws in its state constitution.

The 1920s saw one of the largest Ku Klux Klan populations west of the Mississippi in Oregon and Walter Pierce, a KKK member was elected as governor in 1922.

"The group is really focused on, 'What can we do to make South Lane, the community, less attractive to that kind of recruitment and divisiveness?'" Hodgkinson said of Cottage Grove United's mission.

However, the group keeps a low profile, especially its members of color, when speaking publicly about its efforts.

"It's not specific to Cottage

Grove," Hodgkinson said. "It's the times. This time in history is just so polarizing."

Cottage Grove United has held a class based around the book "So You Want to Talk About Race" by Ijeoma Oluo which included chapter-by-chapter discussions, group exercises and a viewing of the documentary, "13th" which focuses on the 13 Amendment and chronicles the effects of racial inequality in America and how it relates to the county's prison system.

It's also discussed the upstander/bystander practice which guides individuals through becoming an ally for individuals facing racism or bigotry in public without escalating the incidents.

The group plans on holding a follow-up to the class at the start of the year and additional public events

through 2019.

According to Cottage Grove Police Chief Scott Shepherd, there were no cases in the city that qualified as hate crimes. If there had been, they would have been reported to ONIBRS — Oregon, National Incidents-Based Reporting System. Since the last FBI report documenting hate crimes was released, the state has gained approximately 40 new reporting agencies.

In June of this year, Laura Rose broke the front window of Wolfclan Armor with an American flag. She was arrested and faced criminal charges. Rose accepted a plea deal earlier this year, avoiding trial.

For more information on Cottage Grove United, visit the group's Facebook page facebook.com/cgcommunityunited/.



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