

Cadet *from C1*

student who's really interested in becoming a child psychologist."

In this sense, the course is highly exploratory and allowing for individualized pathways.

When the teacher cadet course begins in fall, students self-evaluate their own learning styles, defining themselves as learners. The course then moves into child development, which includes learning about cognitive, social/emotional and physical development. Next, students cover theories of development and educational psychology.

They then explore barriers to learning such as disabilities and special education needs.

Finally, the teacher cadets learn about classroom management and lesson planning.

Field work is no small part of the process, either. Stu-



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Teacher cadets gather on Feb. 10 to debrief each other on their experiences in the field the previous week.

dents' direct observations of a full range of grades provide a window into real-world scenarios and set them up to declare where their interest lies by spring term.

"It's a lot. It's a whole meta-world of thinking that

you're doing," said Walker.

Early this month, teacher cadets got the chance to experience a unique day of the year in education.

Global School Play Day, an event which encourages unstructured play time for

schoolchildren, was celebrated in Cottage Grove on Feb. 5.

Teacher cadets were dispersed across the school district to help facilitate the event and observe educators and learners in action.

Returning to class, cadets debriefed each other as a group, describing what they saw and learned. One by one, students depicted scenarios of children engaging in various forms of freeplay, conflict resolution and even a little bit of chaos.

CGHS junior Delaney Abraham recalled her experience with kindergarteners.

"I don't think I've ever had so many children climb on me," she laughed.

The teacher cadets also observed how different staff members dealt with particular challenges, such as children who may have experienced trauma.

On reflection, the high school students cited leadership skills, professionalism, team-building, increased confidence and deeper trauma-informed sensitivities as the most salient takeaways of the program in general.

"I feel like in this class we learned what traumas people can go through," said junior Raina Herzog. "People know

that everyone has their own background and you have to be sensitive to that, but I feel like we've learned the signs ... you can kind of gather information and be able to treat that situation sensitively, geared toward whatever they've experienced."

In addition to other skills, junior Megan Browning felt that the program had helped establish her higher education trajectory.

"When I started this class, I had a general idea of what I wanted to be," she said. "But after taking this class, I've definitely changed course. So I feel like I'm more prepared for after high school and my college education."

Sentiments such as these are good tidings for Walker who, after 31 years as an educator, hopes to leave the industry to a new generation of educators.

"I'm invested in making sure that we have wonderful, capable people that can follow when I decide that I'm done," she said.

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Great reasons to visit your local library

Many people have a wonderful resource at their disposal just minutes from their homes. This resource can transport them to distant lands, teach their children valuable lessons and serve as a great place to meet new friends.

So what is this magical place? The local library.

Libraries are filled with books for adults and children. But libraries have even more than books to offer, making them an invaluable resource for the entire community. The following are just a handful of the many great reasons to visit your local library.

• **Reading may help improve long-term mental health.** A 2001 study from researchers at Case Western Reserve University found that patients with Alzheimer's disease were less active in early and middle adulthood in regard to intellectual, passive and physical activities than people who did not have AD. Young adults and middle-aged men and women who visit their local libraries and check out a good book might decrease their risk for cognitive decline later in life.

• **Reading can improve your vocabulary, even as you get older.** Reading for pleasure as a child has long been linked to helping young people age 16 and under develop strong reading and math skills. But a recent study from researchers

at the University of London that examined how the vocabularies of more than 9,400 people developed between the ages of 16 and 42 found that vocabulary continued to improve long after teenage years. By continuing to read books from their local libraries into adulthood, adults can further develop their vocabularies.

• **Libraries provide lots of free entertainment.** Libraries are home to thousands of books, but that's not all you can find at your local branch. Newspapers, magazines, CDs, and DVDs are some examples of the forms of entertainment available at local libraries. Better yet, such entertainment is free to card holders.

• **Libraries offer age-appropriate programs for kids.** Some parents may lament the lack of programs available for their youngsters. Such parents are urged to visit their local libraries, which are often home to many programs that can inspire kids to read and foster their creativity. The scope of kid-friendly programs at your local library is wide and may range from sing-a-long sessions for toddlers to group art programs for preschool-aged children to STEM-based programs for elementary and secondary school students.

The local library is an invaluable resource than can benefit people of all ages.

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