

First-grader Leah Reyes, with her mother Ellena Reyes, designs a handmade Valentine's Day card Thursday at Lyle Elementary School's "Celebration of Writing Night." The event was created to put student writing on display, as well as encourage parents to play writing games with their children at home. Writing night consisted of selected students reading their stories aloud and several stations with creative writing activities for students and their families to participate in.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Catching the writing bug

Lyle Elementary celebrates important skill, stresses making it fun

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Leah Reyes loves pumpkins.

The first-grader loves to draw and write about pumpkins, and her trip to a pumpkin patch in October.

"I love to carve pumpkins. It's really fun," she said. "You can make monsters, skeletons, a face — or anything."

Needless to say, pumpkins were the subject of her writing project that hung on the wall in Lyle Elementary School's gym Thursday as part of "Celebration of Writing Night."

All students at the school had samples of their writing posted on the walls — and some even read their stories aloud — at the event, which is supposed to encourage students and families to make writing at home fun.

"We are trying to show parents activities they can do at home, to continue to reinforce what students are learning in class," said Elaine Dunbar, Lyle Title I instructor.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Second-grader Taylor Garcia works on "popcorn writing." Selecting two words, written on crumpled-up paper to resemble popcorn, she created a story using them.

Writing night included several booths featuring writing games. One, popcorn writing, had students create stories based on random words they selected from a popcorn bag. Another gave youngsters a chance to write a Valentine's Day card.

Students were proud to show off their work to their parents.

Second-grader Sienna Pond — who read aloud her story about a recent, and "very short," haircut — bounded up to the wall where her class writing was on display. She read her story about how lions communicate to her mom, Jenn Pond, and little sister, Zoey.

Sienna said it was nerve-racking to read in front of an

audience, but found a clever way to get through it.

"I just acted like there was nobody there," she said, smiling.

Jenn Pond said Sienna was excited to be selected.

"You came home and practiced," she said.

When asked what she likes about writing, Sienna said: "I love it. I like that it helps you learn."

Dunbar said this is the third year Lyle has held the writing event.

"Our school is really focusing on writing, so we decided we need a night to celebrate it," Dunbar said.

Lyle Principal Todd Baughman said it's encouraging to see the progress students make, from focusing on forming complete sentences and correct punctuation in kindergarten to writing full and descriptive stories in the older grades.

"It's really meaningful for school staff and families to see that progression," Baughman said.

SCHOOL NOTES

FFA auction, dinner slated Saturday

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School FFA will host its 23rd annual alumni auction and dinner Saturday starting at 5 p.m. at the school, 1530 Monmouth St., Independence.

Money raised will provide scholarships for FFA students and help sponsor other FFA activities and projects. Donors of items for the auction valued at more than \$75 will receive two tickets to the dinner.

Tickets for dinner are \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 6 to 12, and children younger than 6 are free.

The auction is free to attend. Sign up for a bidder number — for those 18 and older — and a chance to win a weekend getaway at the coast. Participants must be present to win the weekend trip.

The silent auction will run from 5 to 7 p.m. Dinner will be served at 5:30, with the oral auction at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at Central High School.

For more information or to make a donation to the auction: Frances Buckovic, 503-838-2035.

Dallas High thespians earn honors

DALLAS — Four Dallas High School actors were named regional finalists or state qualifiers Feb. 7 during the Oregon Thespians Southern Regional acting competition at Redmond High School.

State qualifiers will compete at the 2015 Oregon Thespians State Festival in Salem April 9-11. Regional finalists are judged to be within the top 20 percent in the state in their performance categories, but do not advance to state competition.

Selena Harris and Rachel Tilgner qualified for state in the duo dramatic acting division.

Justen Noll was named a regional finalist in the solo acting novice division and Abby Garber was awarded regional finalist distinction in solo music.

Rotary Club scholarship available

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — A \$1,000 scholarship for a 2015 graduating senior at Central High School will be awarded by the Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club in June.

Applicants must meet certain academic requirements, maintain a minimum of a 3.00 grade-point average and have attendance planned to any public community college or four-year college or university in Oregon.

The application includes a 250- to 300-word essay.

Application forms are available in the CHS counseling office and are due by April 20. The winner will be announced at the Senior Award Ceremony on June 3.

For more information: Al Oppliger, 503-838-7353 or jcoppliger@aol.com.

ACADEMIC HONORS

DHS graduate receives recognition

LEXINGTON, Va. — Chauncey Baker of Dallas has earned recognition on the Washington and Lee University honor roll for the recently completed fall term 2014. Honor roll status at Washington and Lee represents a term grade-point average of at least 3.75 on a 4.0 scale. Baker, a 2011 graduate of Dallas High School, is a member of the Class of 2015 at Washington and Lee.

Dallas resident is named to society

SPOKANE, Wash. — Jerusha Dressel of Dallas has been named to the Whitworth University Laureate Society for fall semester 2014. Dressel qualified for the academic honor society by maintaining a grade-point average of at least 3.75 during the semester. Dressel is a 2013 home-schooled graduate.



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