



From left, Jack Sparks, Dean Burwash, Isaiah Johnson, Madison Johnson and Lauren Burwash, all children of Dallas Community School board members, experiment with science projects and other activities last week. The new "home-school charter school" will open in the fall if at least 125 students enroll by April 30.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

A fresh approach to learning

Dallas Community School hopes to open if 125 students enroll

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The typical school day at Dallas Community School, a first-through eighth-grade charter school looking to open in the fall, won't look like a school day at all.

No full days in a classroom, no teacher responsible for teaching the three "Rs." Instead, students will attend "class" at home under the supervision of their "educational coach" — typically a family member — and "educational guide," a licensed teacher assigned to oversee progress on individual learning plans.

Wendy Sparks, a Dallas Community School (DCS) board member, describes the school as "home schooling for busy working parents."

Her own family could be described as such, which is in part how the idea behind the school got its start. Sparks and her husband, Casey, were trying to find the right schooling environment for their son, Jack.

"It's hard when you are a parent and you are trying to figure out how to meet your



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Isaiah Johnson and Madison Johnson attempt to examine a specimen under a microscope last week at the home of Dallas Community School board member Wendy Sparks.

educational expectations that we all have for our children, how to work within the public education system to do that," Sparks said. "Our public education system is a vital part of our community. The parents who developed this school didn't want to just leave that behind."

Sparks, fellow founding board member Erin Miller and other families with similar objectives tossed around the idea of forming an educational co-op. In the meantime, they found two public charter schools in Oregon that provided the "individual learning plan" model similar

to what they wanted.

The idea of "home-school charter school" — a way to engage the home-school community in public schools — emerged during discussions with the Dallas School District, the school's charter sponsor.

"Just when we were thinking about enrolling our kids in one of those other schools, that's when the phone rang and it was the district calling saying, 'How do you guys want to work together?'" Sparks recalled.

The district approved DCS's charter in August 2014. The plan is to open if the school can enroll 125 students by April 30, a goal that seems to be within reach, especially if the school is approved to offer kindergarten this fall.

In addition to providing curriculum materials and an educational guide, the school would offer optional morning classroom sessions with a teacher and afternoon enrichment activities. Educational guides would work with families to create an individual learning plan for each student.

See APPROACH, Page 17A

SCHOOL NOTES

Students sought for garden project

DALLAS — Applications are being accepted from Dallas-area students who are interested in participating in the Dallas Youth Garden project.

The program has eight openings for Dallas High or home-school students just completing ninth, 10th or 11th grade. You must live within the Dallas School District boundaries. A stipend of \$550 is available to learn and apply skills to build and maintain a market garden using sustainable garden practices to provide fresh produce for the Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program.

Applications are available at www.dallasyouthgarden.org or at the Polk County Extension Office at 289 E. Ellendale Ave., Suite 301, Dallas. Applications can be turned in to the Dallas High School Guidance Office or the Extension office. Applications are due by April 10 at 1 p.m. First day of work is May 2.

For more information: 503-623-8395; online at www.dallasyouthgarden.org.

Medical scholarships are available

POLK COUNTY — Applications are now available for the 2015 Salem Hospital Foundation Scholarship for half-time or full-time students enrolled in medically related fields of study.

Applicants must live in Polk or Marion counties or be an employee or immediate family member of an employee at Salem Hospital, applied to a college in their field of health care study, and completed all prerequisite classes before applying for this scholarship.

Last year, a total of \$191,000 was awarded to 103 students. More information is available online by visiting www.salemhealth.org/scholarships and clicking on the Salem Hospital Foundation Scholarship link. Applications must be postmarked by May 1 to be considered. Final selections will be announced by June 29.

For more information: Greta Mauze, Salem Hospital Foundation office, 503-561-5576; email to greta.mauze@salemhealth.org.

ACADEMIC HONORS

Dallas woman among 'Who's Who'

NEWBERG — Victoria Wilson of Dallas is among 18 students from George Fox University who will be included in the 2015 edition of "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges."

George Fox faculty and staff chose the honorees by ballot, and the editors of the directory have endorsed the selections. The students were chosen based on their academic achievements, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities, and continued potential success.

Wilson is a business management major who participated in concert choir, served as a resident assistant and as president of the university's Lambda Pi Eta chapter, a national communications association. She is a four-time dean's list recipient and volunteered with the school's Little Bruins and Fox and Friends programs.

Rickreall resident receives degree

FOREST GROVE — Kimberly Knaupp of Rickreall recently graduated from Pacific University in Forest Grove with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene.

Monmouth youth qualifies for NHS

FRONT ROYAL, Va. — Lucas Costa of Monmouth was recently inducted into Randolph-Macon Academy's chapter of the National Honor Society. A student must maintain a cumulative grade-point average above 3.7, perform community service and display evidence of achievement in knowledge, leadership, character and service to be inducted into the honor society. Costa is a sophomore at Randolph-Macon Academy.

Tires

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TIRE SALE

WOU: Candidates slated for visits

Continued from Page 1A
Working in a small community is important to Ames. "A small college can play a really big role in a small community," he said. "The university is an engine for economic development," he added. "There needs to be that kind of coordination between the business and government of town."

Madden, 62, is the provost and vice president for academic

affairs at State University New York Potsdam, which has about the same size campus as Western, she said.

"I like being on a campus where the students' learning comes first," Madden said. "Senior administrators, like the president, can be engaged with the campus community in ways which are fun and exciting."

She also is excited about continuing WOU's mission

of educating underserved students.

"Working with those kinds of students allows you to be part of an enterprise that really changes the prospects of students' lives," Madden said.

Sustaining enrollment and meeting the needs of the new workforce are some roles of the president, she said.

Fuller, 62, an economist and professor of public administration, has served as provost and vice president for the division of academic affairs at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Wash. He appreciates the school's history as a normal school, adding that the commitment to student learning is still evident in everything WOU does.

"The size of the campus is an attraction," Fuller noted. "It presents opportunities that a larger school loses."

The small community gives an opportunity for the campus and town to have a close partnership, Fuller said.

"In smaller settings, it's vital to have a working relationship," he said. "The university

Meet the Candidates

Open forums are scheduled for each finalist, followed by a community reception.

• Fernando Delgado: Open forum — Wednesday (today), 3:30-5 p.m., at Rice Auditorium; community reception — 5-6:30 p.m. in the foyer.

• Christopher Ames: Open forum — Thursday, 3:30-5 p.m., in the Pacific Room of Werner University Center; community reception — 5-6:30 p.m.

• Margaret Madden: Open forum — Monday, 3:30-5 p.m., at Rice Auditorium; community reception — 5-6:30 p.m. in the foyer.

• Rex Fuller: Open forum — Tuesday, 3:30-5 p.m., at Rice Auditorium; community reception — 5-6:30 p.m. in the foyer.

can be a source of vibrancy to not only the community itself, but also to the entire region."

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