

Teachers, staff honored at Crystal Apple Awards

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of each student.

In addition to her strong teaching, she has stepped up as a leader for FFA and advisor for National Honor Society and Yearbook. Cole also shares her knowledge and experience as a mentor, where her unwavering spirit and joy for her work shine through.

Elizabeth Graham

Elizabeth Graham is a special education/ life skills teacher at Sam Boardman Elementary School. She has worked for MCSD for five years. Always giving her best for students and families, she greets everyone with kindness and a smile. Graham diligently works to determine the best strategies and classroom tools to help each student reach their potential. She always puts her students first and has a wonderful ability to make them feel safe and loved.

Her nomination form said her students are “the very luckiest individuals to have Elizabeth as their teacher, supporter, cheerleader and advocate.”

Stephanie Simpson

Stephanie Simpson is a math teacher at Riverside Jr./Sr. High School and has worked for the district for seven years. She maintains excellence and academic rigor in her classes while cultivating positive interactions with students.

Simpson is described as very organized and fair, setting the bar high, which students recognize and work hard to reach. Her hard work and good ideas help students realize their potential even in some of the hard subjects she teaches.

In addition to teaching, Stephanie is a dedicated advisor to Key Club, supervising students at community events and helping them realize their leadership skills and importance of giving back.

Greg Grant

Greg Grant retired as the head teacher/physical education teacher at Heppner Jr./Sr. High School. He has worked for the district for 35 years. During his career, he enhanced the PE Department, fostering an inclusive environment and establishing a standard of excellence that promotes physical fitness and well-being.

As an academic counselor for students, he helped them effectively navigate their academic paths and meet graduation requirements. Grant has devoted many hours to improve connections between students and the community, including creating the annual Mustang Mop-Up Community Service Event.

“Greg embodies the spirit of the Mustang Way, demonstrating genuine dedication and loyalty to the school and its students,” said one nomination.

Susie Lemmon

Susie Lemmon is the secretary at Morrow Education Center (MEC) in MCSD, where she has worked for 20 years. Through multiple roles at the center, she has built

strong relationships with students and their families, advocating for them with a friendly and caring demeanor.

Those who work with her say Lemmon has, without hesitation, stepped into any role asked of her at MEC from driving buses and cleaning restrooms to tutoring students and holding a baby so a mother could take a test.

According to one nomination, “She is truly dedicated to the families of MEC and does anything she can to make it a warm and welcoming place for students and staff.”

A total of 46 Crystal Apples were presented in May to deserving education staff in Eastern Oregon. Winners from Morrow County and Umatilla County school districts were honored at the event at the Pendleton Convention Center on Tuesday, May 13. The events included receptions for winners’ families and friends and school district staff.

Each year, the IMESD partners with its school districts to recognize outstanding administrators, teachers, educational assistants and office and building staff for their dedication and commitment to students and for their willingness to go the extra mile for student success.

Nominations are submitted over a two-month period by administrators, coworkers, parents, students and community members. Winners are selected from these nominations by school district administration.

“Crystal Apple Awards season is something we look forward to every year. It’s a privilege each spring to recognize the many talented and dedicated employees who serve students at IMESD and in our districts across the region,” said Michele Madril, IMESD Director of Communication.

Dancers shine at spring recital



Pre-K dancers performing their routine on stage. -Photo by Rachel Sykes

By Rachel Sykes

On Thursday, May 22, the stage at the Gilliam-Bisbee lit up with energy and talent as Element Dance Co. held its annual Spring Recital. Hosted by dance teacher Paige Counsell, the evening showcased the hard work and passion of the dancers in a dynamic series of performances.

The recital featured 10 pieces, including group routines, duets, and solo performances from kids IN pre-school up to 8th grade. Audiences were treated to a diverse lineup of dance styles, ranging from expressive creative movement to high-energy jazz and

crowd-pleasing hip hop.

Each dancer brought their unique spirit and style to the stage, captivating the audience with every leap, spin, and beat. The variety of choreography highlighted both individual talent and the strength of teamwork across the different age groups and experience levels.

Ms. Counsell’s thoughtful direction and choreography were evident throughout the show, creating a memorable evening that celebrated not just dance, but dedication and joy. Summer session sign-ups are happening right now, call 541-561-0028.

Over the Tee Cup

Six ladies braved the cool and windy weather May 20 for the ladies play day at Willow Creek Country Club. Karen Thompson had low gross of the field, while Betty Carter had low net. Sharon Harrison had the least putts of the field.

For flight A, Pat Dougherty had low gross.

For flight B, Colleen Neubert had low gross and Karen Wolff had low net.

Karen Wolff had KP.

A sunny and warm Tuesday on May 27 made for greater numbers on the green, with 10 ladies out enjoying some golf and sunshine.

Karen Thompson had low gross of the field, while Betty Carter had low net. Shirley Martin had the least putts of the field.

For flight A, Tiffany Clement had low gross, while Pat Dougherty had

low net and long drive.

For flight B, Colleen Neubert took low gross, Kris Lindner had low net, and Karen Smith-Griffith had least putts and the long drive.

WCCC ladies’ golf Tuesdays begin with sign-ups at 8:30 a.m.; play begins at 9 a.m.

The Jo Pettyjohn Tournament is planned for June 20-22.

Softball seniors honored at final home game



Tuesday, May 20, was senior recognition night for the Lady Mustangs softball team. The Heppner/Ione Mustangs recognized and honored four seniors, Ava Gerry, Kadie Henrichs, Keeley Nairns and Katie Spivey. Pictured L-R are softball seniors and their parents: Ryan Gerry, Ava Gerry, Samantha Gerry, Josh Henrichs, Kadie Henrichs, Kim Henrichs, Cody High, Nicole High, Keeley Nairns, Kyle Nairns, Sarah Nairns, Stephanie Spivey, Katie Spivey and Brian Spivey. -Contributed photo

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Fishing Derby May 31 - Cutsforth Pond, Registration starts 8:30 am
Flag Day Ceremony June 14 - Come join the ceremony that tells the history of the flag
Father’s Day Picnic June 15 - CutsforthPark (members and their guests)

Lodge Hours:

Wed 4pm to close with dinner at 6pm
Thurs 4pm to close (Lodge at 8pm)
Fri & Sat 4pm to close with dinner from 5pm to 8pm off the menu



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