

UHS Robotics give back to community

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff writer

The Umatilla High School robotics team received their assignment for the First Robotics Competition last weekend — but that's not the only thing that's been keeping them busy.

The students have been offering their skills to school staff and local businesses to help build websites and Facebook pages, and in turn receiving support from community organizations.

"We help local businesses and organizations with their business," said Cameron Sipe, project manager of the school's robotics team. "We created our city council's website, and the Chamber of Commerce website."

Students are required to contribute 50 hours of community service in order to travel with the team. Their projects have included developing websites and social media for local businesses and community organizations, including the Umatilla Booster Club and the Umatilla Museum.

They also help citizens, setting up computer systems and repairing devices for them.

"We have people that bring in small items — a man brought in a remote control car that wasn't working, and the students fixed it up," said Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe.

Sipe said students have enjoyed getting more involved in the community, and observing machines outside the shop. They visited a local dairy farm,



Umatilla robotics students Arrik Russell and Alvin Jaime work on "Dewey," the robot they plan to enter in upcoming competitions.



Members of the Umatilla High School robotics team prepare to test out "Dewey," the robot the team is building for an upcoming competition.

which uses robotic milking machines for its cows.

"It's good for them to see robotics in the real world," Sipe said.

This Saturday, the stu-

dents honored someone who's developed a strong working relationship with the team. Dewey Tegland, owner of the Clean Spot Car Wash in Umatilla, has

donated a portion of the funds from his business to the team each year. As a thank-you, the team invited Tegland to the shop and presented him with an official team T-shirt — and a more permanent honor.

"Meet 'Dewey,'" Cameron Sipe told a surprised Tegland, who had stopped by the class so students could help him develop his company's Facebook page. The students revealed the robot, named in honor of Tegland, and showed him some of the features they'd been working on. Students are trying to program the robot to shoot Wiffle balls at a target, and then clean them up. They've built a prototype of the robot, and will soon start working on the final project.

"We built it in the off-season to test code, sensors — in past years we haven't had that, and we wanted to change that so we can do better," said Alvin Jaime, a senior and the build team leader. "We're trying to see how many we can shoot, and how high we can shoot them."

The machine has a few issues — that's why the students build a prototype first — such as shooting the Wiffle balls too high. As the students stood around to test the machine, plastic balls shot out of a cannon and ricocheted off the shop classroom's 15-foot high ceiling.

Students will travel to two competitions in March, in Spokane and Ellensburg, Washington. If they qualify, they may be able to attend a regional competition in Spokane, and world championships in Houston.

Students sell popcorn to help Humane Society



Beau Putnam of Humane Society of Eastern Oregon accepts a \$250 check from Highland Hills Elementary School 5th graders Megan Joyce and Sam Martin. Students raised the money through a school-wide fundraiser selling popcorn.

Teen reading program includes prizes

The Hermiston Public Library is providing an incentive for teens who read — a chance to win prizes.

Teenagers who read books and write three reviews during the Winter Reading Program will receive an entry into a drawing. The books must be read between Dec. 1 and March 20.

In addition, there's a

Teen Book Club meeting Monday, Jan. 23 at 5 p.m. at the library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. New York Times Best-seller "Between Shades of Gray" by Ruta Sepetys will be discussed.

All teen activities are open to those in grades 6-12. For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Bryce Brock of Sandstone Middle School and Nicole Torres of Armand Larive Middle School joined Mayor Dave Drotzmann for the Jan. 12 Hermiston Rotary Club lunch.

Rotary rewards contest winners with lunch

Hermiston Herald

A pair of middle school students enjoyed a front and center table during the recent Hermiston Rotary Club meeting.

After bringing in the most food donations for the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express, eighth graders Bryce Brock of Sandstone Middle School and Nicole Torres of Armand Larive Middle School were the guests of honor. Accompanied by their principals, the two students sat at the table with Mayor Dave Drotzmann.

Sandstone principal Lori Mills called Brock "a rock star" for his winning effort, saying he donated more than a pallet of food. Torres brought 288 items, many of which scored extra points for nutritional value, said Armand Larive principal Stacie Roberts.

Ric Sherman, who coordinates the food drive competition, said the total donations by Hermiston schools was 15,854 items. Sandstone, he said, won the middle school contest with a total of 4,025 items to Armand Larive's 2,144.

A retired educator, Sherman got students at Armand Larive involved in the food drive effort in 1979. When Sandstone opened, he helped develop the competition between the schools to help bring in more food for the program.

Christmas Express started 47 years ago when Ken Hodge, then manager of the Hermiston Sears, had some

extra toys and called Bob Shannon, who was the Hermiston police chief, asking if he knew of some needy families they could be distributed to.

This year's effort, which also provided toys for kids, helped 500 area families have a brighter holiday season.

HHS alumnus is new math teacher

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff writer

Andy Hall is no stranger to the halls of Hermiston High School, but this year, he's seeing them from a new perspective.

The HHS graduate is a new math teacher at his alma mater, and is implementing some new teaching strategies he picked up from his prior experiences.

"I did all my schooling at Oregon State," he said. "And I spent six years teaching in Denver."

Hall recently came back to Hermiston and bought a house, and is glad to be back in his old stomping grounds. He is impressed with the students he's encountered so far.

"The student energy and attitude is way higher than what I saw in Denver," he said. "The instructional strategies I try here actually work."

One of those strategies Hall has introduced is Math



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Andy Hall, a new math teacher at Hermiston High School, looks on as a student works out a problem.

360, an instructional concept where whiteboards are placed all around the room, and students are up and moving around to solve problems.

"It gets them up moving, and allows me to see the work being done," Hall said. The district recently installed several white-

boards in Hall's class, and is starting to do so in other rooms.

"This is the first class to have that done," he said.

Hall has enjoyed collaborating with other teachers, and getting involved with the school outside of class — he's a coach for the football and wrestling

teams.

As a new teacher at the school, Hall says the biggest challenge is balancing time in the classroom with other requirements.

"The district does a lot of professional development for new teachers, which is good," he said. "It's an opportunity to share ideas and pick up new ideas. But we're out of the classroom for a lot of training, so some of the challenges we face as new teachers are not being able to spend as much time as we'd like with students."

He added that as a coach, his work with athletes after school can limit the number of hours he has to support students outside of class.

Hall is excited to be teaching at Hermiston High School.

"I hope to be here for a long time," he said. "Maybe one day work my way up to administration and make changes that way."



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