

Stanfield grads urged to address world's woes

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

The 29 graduates of Stanfield's Class of 2018 were ready to head out into the world, but not without some final words of wisdom from their peers and parents.

At Stanfield Secondary School's graduation ceremony Saturday morning, students heard from Rev. John Hurty, who asked students to consider one question.

"What's wrong with the world?" he asked.

Citing quotes from philosophers and leaders throughout history, he told students that the idea that something is wrong in the world only makes sense if there is a standard of rightness.

He told students that the problem, and solution, is with everyone.

"You might never be famous, but all of you will exercise influence," he said. "I hope you will exercise that influence for good."

Students also heard from valedictorian Caleb Walker, and salutatorian Lydia



STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Stanfield seniors wait to receive their diplomas at graduation on Saturday.

Hurty. Walker asked students to keep their background in mind as they consider where they want to go.

"It's only by learning from the past that we can hope to improve the future,"

he said. Students enjoyed a slideshow, featuring each graduate's baby and senior photos. Each graduate was also given a rose, which they then presented to a family member or friend who had

supported and encouraged them.

After receiving their diplomas, graduates filed out of the gym, where eager families and friends received them on the school's front lawn.

Umatilla Seniors announce their post-high school plans

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
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STAFF WRITERS

Amid cheers and fanfare often reserved for student athletes, all Umatilla High School seniors who are pursuing post-secondary education signed letters of intent during the school's third annual Signing Day.

"This is a big step," Principal Bob Lorence said, congratulating the students. "As you sign your name, just make a commitment to further your education."

Umatilla High School Dean of Students April Dirksen said this year, 72 students will be signing to post-secondary education of some kind, whether a four-year college, a two-year college, the military or trade school. That's a jump of nearly 20 students from the previous year — something Superintendent Heidi Sipe noted when she challenged the underclassmen in the stands to "beat their record" when it was their turn to graduate.

Sipe said this year's senior class has 96 students, and 75 percent of them have committed to a college, trade school or the military.

She said the district's graduation rate last year was 82 percent, and she expects this year's class to hit at least 86 percent.

Before the ceremony, five students discussed their path to graduation and some of the obstacles they've encountered along the way.

Some students said their biggest obstacle was the lack of financial support they'll have, and having to navigate the world of higher education alone.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY
Trey Dorman, of Umatilla High School, announces his plans after graduation to the rest of the student body as part of signing day.

"They're really conquering things,"

Heidi Sipe,
superintendent, Umatilla School District

"I've always known I was going to go to college," said Maria Moreno, who will attend the University of Oregon to study biology. She said while she has always been self-motivated, it was a little difficult because her parents had no experience with the system.

"It would have been a little easier if they'd been to school, and understood how things work," she said.

For others, the challenges included the loss of a family member. Ayana Reyes, who will attend Blue Mountain Community College, lost

her mother when she was a freshman.

"That's been the biggest thing," she said. Reyes lives with her two siblings.

She said while it has been a challenge, she has received support from the community.

"My mom was a teacher in the district, so the whole district feels like family," she said. "I have McNary moms always on me about my grades. It's basically a second family for me."

Some students made their decision with the long-term picture in mind.

Trey Dohman, who is joining the Navy, said being raised in a military family informed his decision.

"I definitely figured it was something that would help me in my future," he said. "That job security made me feel more comfortable."

Mayra Ortiz will play soccer and study physical therapy at Columbia Basin College in Pasco. She said she picked CBC because she had the opportunity to keep playing a sport she loves, but has also keep the future in mind.

"I knew that after CBC I would transfer," she said. "If I don't keep playing soccer after CBC, I can still look for a place I like for education."

These students, and others, were honored at the schoolwide assembly Wednesday afternoon, which took place after a talent show.

A few student athletes were also recognized, including Nestor Chaves, who signed an official letter of intent to run track and field for Warner Pacific University.

For the big finale, each senior grabbed a handmade poster displaying the name and logo of their school and took a turn at the microphone, announcing their name and post-graduation plans. Those plans covered military service, private and public universities, community colleges and trade schools.

Afterward the students sat down at rows of tables and signed their own, unofficial "letters of intent" to further their education.

"They're really conquering things," Sipe said, congratulating the senior class.

Hermiston Head Start opens, another planned

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

As older students get ready to close their textbooks for the year, some of Hermiston's youngest learners have new a place to begin their education.

Umatilla-Morrow Head Start has two new locations, one that opened two weeks ago and one scheduled to open in the near future.

The Downtown Center, at 372 East Main St., opened in mid-May, and houses 40 preschool-age students for extended day classes. Those classes are 6.5 hours long.

Another classroom space is planned on Airport Road, but no date has been announced for the project.

Associate Operations Director Dan Daltoso said UMCHS had been working to find a place to expand for several months, and wanted to move two of the classes previously held

at the Victory Square office into a new location.

"Parents really wanted extended-day services," he said.

Daltoso said they got a great price on the building, which more recently housed the Gems and Gents preschool, but it needed a lot of work.

"We had to put in new bathrooms, and we had to work with the licensing and building offices," he said.

Daltoso said the building was originally an auto parts store, and they had to make significant remodels to the building. They also redid the kitchen and created office space.

Daltoso said renovating the Downtown Center cost a little over \$100,000.

He said the classes in Victory Square were part-day — morning or afternoon classes — and with the expansion to extended-day classes, they needed some more space and staff support.

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