



Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

Veteran and Rocky Heights Elementary School Teacher, Melissa Doherty, shared her experiences in the U.S. Army with students at Sunset Elementary School on Tuesday afternoon.

Sunset Elementary School honors veterans

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

Students at Sunset Elementary School piled into the gym on Tuesday to learn more about Veterans Day.

"We're excited to spend some time today learning about Veterans Day, and why we have that day off from school every November 11," Principal Jerad Farley said to the students. "We have veterans here today in our audience."

English language development teacher, Jenny Miller, led fourth-graders to the front of the gymnasium for a presentation of colors, where they displayed flags and stood in salute while Elizabeth Doherty, of Hermiston, played "The Star Spangled Banner" on trumpet.

Elizabeth's mother, Melissa Doherty, who teaches at Rocky Heights Elementary School, gave a presentation about Veterans Day and her own experience serving in the military.

She told students about Sunset Elementary staff members who have or had friends and family in the military, and shared about her own journey, which started in elementary school, back when she dreamed of growing up to be a princess.

"And then in high school I wanted to be in corporate America," she said. "To break the glass ceiling."

She told the students



Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

Elizabeth Doherty played the "Star Spangled Banner" as fourth graders in Jenny Miller's class did the presentation of colors at Sunset Elementary during the Veterans Day assembly on Tuesday afternoon.

that the cost of college was a barrier, but that the military paid for her university-based officer training, and she went on to eventually work many jobs in the U.S. Army, including combat medic, before coming to teach at Rocky Heights Elementary School.

She also explained how Veterans Day came to be over time, following World War I, and why the holiday uses poppies as a symbol.

"On the bloody battlefield (after WWI), poppies were the only thing still growing," she said.

Several veterans were in

attendance and were honored as the U.S. Armed Forces Medley played out in the gym.

"Our veterans don't ask much," Melissa Doherty said. "Just that we don't forget. Talk to a veteran, and thank them for their service."

Wednesday, Rocky Heights will hold similar assemblies for students.

Editor's Note: *Sunset Elementary School is November's spotlight school for the Hermiston Herald. Look for mentions of the school in the paper throughout the month.*



Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

Michelle Sanguino, right, 17, and Susie Amzo, 16, helped organize Hermiston High School's first Day of the Dead event.

Hermiston High School celebrates Day of the Dead

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

The sound of music and laughter from dozens of families filled the main commons of Hermiston High School Friday night in celebration of Dia de los Muertos — Day of the Dead.

The event was put together by the high school's newly established club, Juntos — which translates to "together" in Spanish.

"It's important for people to come together and celebrate those that have passed," said Michelle Sanguino, 17, who is part of Juntos.

"And for families to feel comfortable," added Susie Amzo, 16, who is also a part of the club.

Sanguino said some people in the community may feel reluctant to come out to celebrate the holiday, which is celebrated from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2.

"This is a good way for parents in the Hispanic community to get involved," she added. "And many of them haven't seen (the holiday celebrated) in schools since they went to school."

Amzo and Sanguino are two of seven students that hold leadership positions in Juntos. The club aims to promote Latino student leadership, as well as cultural events.

Day of the Dead is an Aztec holiday celebrated across Latin America that highlights the lives of loved ones, both those who have passed and who are alive, according to club advisers Omar Medina and Cristina Cuevas.

The event provided live music throughout the night. Volunteers, some from the high school's Advanced Placement art classes, provided free skull face-painting. Many skull designs for Day of the Dead are modeled after the iconic La Catrina and feature bright colors.

Originally illustrated by Mexican engraver José Guadalupe Posada in the 1910s, La Catrina is a high-society skeleton woman. The point of the illustration, according to *New York Latin Culture Magazine*, is to show that in death, everyone — rich and poor — is equal.

Areahi Galvan, 8, chose blue accents for her face paint.

"That's my favorite color," she said.

She added that her favorite part of the celebration was the cookie decorating.

Blank sugar cookies acted as canvases for the array of colored frostings available to attendees, but Mexican cuisine and a variety of agua frescas were also available for purchase throughout the event.

Toward the end of the night, organizers hung a piñata from the banister of the school's second story.

The main floor of the high school transformed into a candy bonanza as each child got the chance to hit the piñata three times, until it exploded across the floor.

Sanguino said Juntos is already planning its next big event — a big Cinco de Mayo dance for students, which will take place around the same time as the Hermiston High School prom.



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**HAPPY 77TH BIRTHDAY
HERMISTON JUNIOR ACADEMY**

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Dawn Eddy	Kim Munar	Sanitary Transfer Station	
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We also want to express our thanks to all who participated in the event.