

Students seek to fashion a positive impact

Seniors host Couture For Change event to raise money for local chapter of the Assistance League

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

Five Seaside High School seniors wanted to make a difference in the community through their collective Pacifica Project, so they constructed a game plan to accomplish that goal by using fashion to provide local in-need children with clothing.

After months of planning, the students put on a fashion show and silent auction fundraiser, titled Couture For Change, at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center on April 16. The proceeds from the event went to the Assistance League of the Columbia Pacific, a chapter of the National Assistance League with programs that primarily benefit children in need.

Senior Whitney McQuilliams, the event coordinator, said they considered an array of nonprofits to be the recipient but settled on the Assistance League because it is slightly more obscure and shares the girls' passion for helping children.

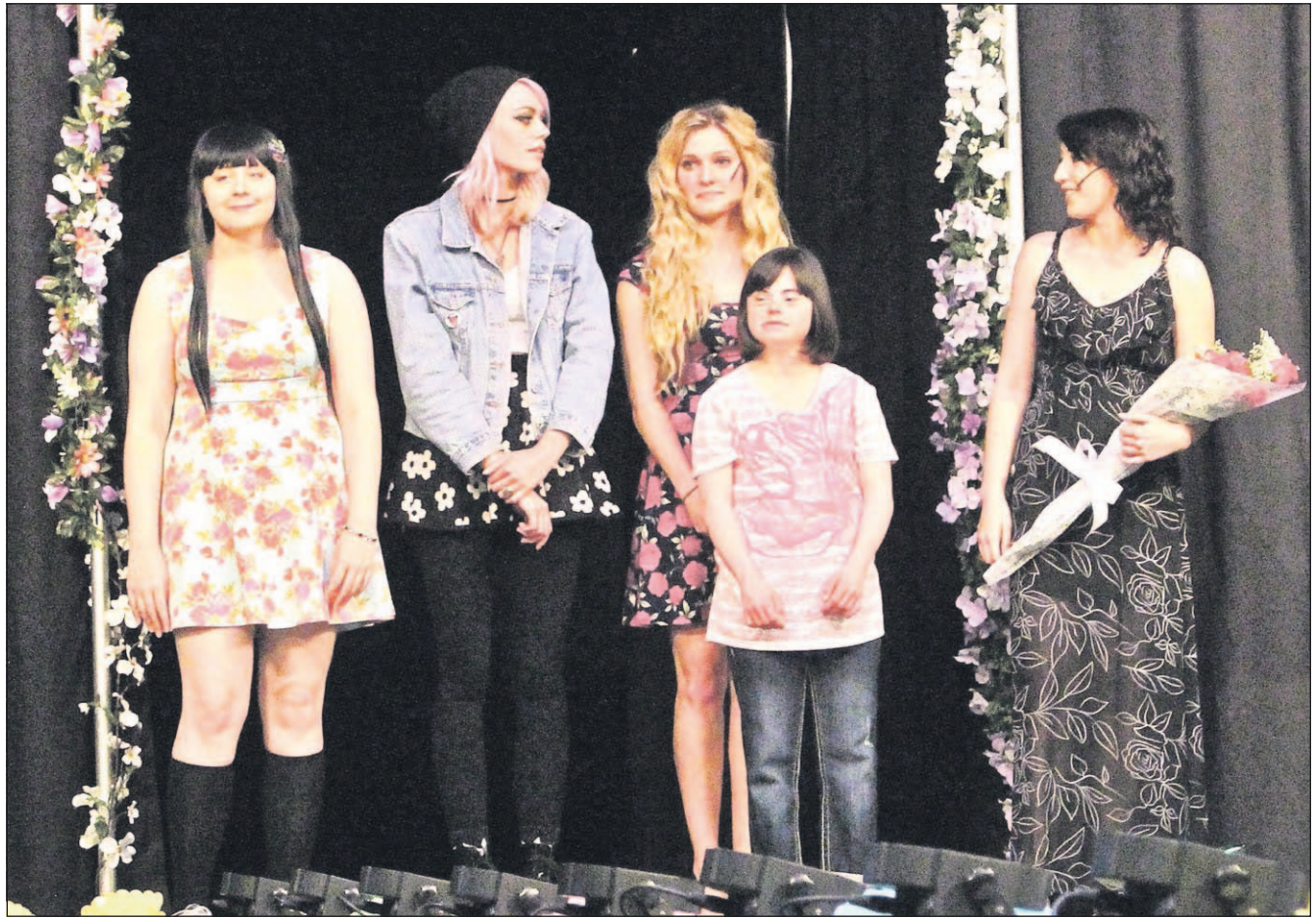
Thirteen students from the high school modeled clothes donated by Ter Har's, Eddie Bauer and other private and commercial sources. Some models also were adorned with tattoos from Seaside's Five Star Henna. Shear Pleasures

Salon and Spa provided a professional hairstyle for one model. The convention center gave the group a discount for renting the space, as the event was for a non-profit organization, and the cost was covered by private monetary donations.

Raffle prizes and silent auction items also were donated by the community. Overall, the event had about 60 sponsors. The raffle and auction, combined with the \$3 per person admission, raised about \$1,780. A majority of the clothes were donated to the Assistance League after the event, as well.

When trying to set a goal for the size of the event, they were told by their community mentor, professional photographer and designer Jaime Kae Hazen, "It will be as big as you think it will be," noted senior Madi Wirkkala, the entertainment coordinator. With that in mind, they thought big to pull off a successful event with nearly 100 people in attendance.

During the course of putting on the fundraiser, the students learned a lot about the responsibilities of creating and hosting a charity event, they said. Although it was a lot of work and quite stressful at times, they said, it was worth it.



KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

Seaside High School seniors Brooke Laws, Madi Wirkkala, Kaylea Roberson, Whitney Anderson and Whitney McQuilliams were the creative minds and driving force behind Couture For Change, a fashion show and silent auction fundraiser for the Assistance League of the Columbia Pacific. The girls put on the event for their senior Pacifica Project and raised about \$1,780.

"I had a good time with it, regardless," said Wirkkala, who listened to about 300 songs to make the appropriate play lists for each portion of the event.

"It was an amazing experience," McQuilliams agreed.

Whitney Anderson, the fundraising coordinator, also modeled for the fashion show. She watched several

videos online to get inspiration for her runway walk and practiced a lot. She said she enjoyed modeling, and it was evident in the personal flare she displayed on the catwalk.

Senior Brooke Laws served as the fashion show coordinator and Kaylea Roberson was the auction head.

When asked if social activism is a high priority for them, Wirkkala responded, "1000 percent." In addition to providing for those in need, she and the other girls also listed animal cruelty, oppressing or judging others, physical and mental disability awareness and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights

as some of the issues they individually care about.

"If I could do anything that would make everyone be to nice to others, that would be cool," Wirkkala said.

For more information about the Assistance League, visit www.assistanceleaguecp.org or contact the organization at PO Box 596, Astoria, OR, 97103.

School district mulls over proposed \$21.03 million budget for 2015-16 year

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

The Seaside School District has started its budget process for the 2015-16 school year and is looking to increase compensation for all employees by at least 2.25 percent, implement a full-time kindergarten program and add two special education positions if adequate funds are available.

The budget committee held its first meeting Tuesday before the Seaside School District Board of Directors meeting and elected Michelle Wunderlich and board member Brian Taylor as chair and vice-chair, respectively. The committee includes the other board of director members, as well as six other community members that were appointed by the board.

The district's overall budget for 2015-16 as proposed is \$21,031,919.

The proposed budget for the general fund includes an approximate 4.7 percent increase from the adopted 2014-15 general fund budget, or an increase of about \$17.58 million to \$18.406 million. The general fund covers all operating costs. A majority of the revenue for that fund comes from local sources, such as property taxes, and state sources, such as timber revenue. Federal sources are expected to provide only \$7,000.

About 49 percent of expenditures from the general fund are for salaries; 31 percent for associated payroll costs; 8 percent for purchased services; 5 percent for supplies and materials; 1 percent for capital outlay and 6 percent for other items and transfers. The district has budgeted a 2.25 percent wage increase for all employees with steps when applicable, said Justine Hill, the district's business manager.

As per usual, the district's goal is to maintain an ending fund balance of 10 percent. The starting fund balance for

2015-16 is projected to be about \$2.07 million.

The district also has proposed a budget of approximately \$2.384 million in special funds; about \$40,000 in debt service; and \$201,000 for capital improvement projects. These funds often carry restrictions on how they can be spent, Hill said.

Two projected offsets will allow the district to increase allocations in school year 2015-16 without making reductions, according to Superintendent Doug Dougherty.

First, the Greater Seaside Urban Renewal District is set to expire at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year, which will increase the property tax value calculation and translate into more revenue collections for the school district. The extra funds will be used to cover the district's new full-day kindergarten program. Second, the district's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) rates will decrease. The reduction, Hill said, will provide about \$300,000 in savings, which will cover salary increases and associated payroll costs.

If the budget allows, Dougherty said, the district wants to add a special education teacher and assistant to address the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students, particularly at the elementary level.

A curriculum change also is scheduled for the 2015-16 school year that is aligned

with Common Core Standards and maintains the mandated Oregon Department of Education adoption schedule. The district has budgeted about \$175,000 for English Language Arts and English Language Development. Additional staff training time also will be required as part of the implementation, Dougherty said.

Essential facility repairs and maintenance needs that are slated for this school year include: a roofing project for the Gearhart Elementary School gym, two roof packs at Broadway Middle School, addressing American with Disabilities Act compliance issues, engineering and construction of walls at Seaside Heights Elementary School and a restroom refresh project at Seaside High School. The district also plans to replace six regular school buses and five type 20 school buses that do not meet the mandated standards.

"We are optimistic that our economy is beginning to recover," Dougherty wrote in his budget message. "As it

does, the district will continue to invest in providing the highest quality education to our community."

The budget committee is scheduled to meet again May 19 and tentatively approve the budget. The board then will hold a public hearing on the budget as approved by the committee at its June 16 board meeting. At that meeting, the board may enact resolutions to adopt the budget, to make the appropriations and to declare the tax levy.

In other news: Director of Special Services Elizabeth Friedman tendered her notice of resignation; she will be leaving at the end of the school year, June 30. She will be replaced by Jeremy Catt, a special education high school teacher from the Neah-Kah-Nie School District.

The board voted unanimously on a phase-in plan for the full-time kindergarten program that will be implemented next school year. The phase-in plan includes a soft transition and staggered start for students. Both elementary schools will have the program.

SEASIDE Signal

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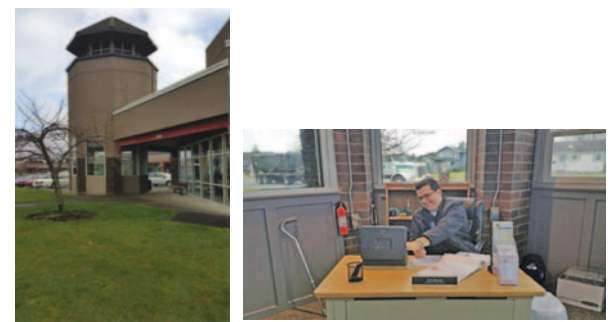
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