

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox.

I recently read an article in which the author talked about a different set of ABCs that would help us have a better start to the New Year. He indicated that our ability to change our Attitude is important. Among the animal kingdom I believe that we are unique in our ability to determine how we react to, or accept our circumstances. In essence, no matter what our circumstances, we can choose to be happy or we can choose to be miserable, but the choice is ours. We may not be able to change the wind, but we can learn to adjust our sails.

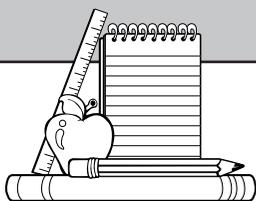
The next word in this set of ABCs is to Believe in yourself. We must believe in our own ability to be better and to do better. Each of us had the ability to influence the world around us for better. Do we make positive comments to our children, or negative ones? Do we 'do our best' or is 'good enough' more often our perspective? We need to have confidence not only in who we are and in what we can do, but also know that we can change the future, one day at a time, by changing what we plan on doing today. And believe it or not, that also changes the past be-

cause in just 24 hours from now, what you are doing will be in the past.

Courage represents the final letter in this triplet. There are two types of courage, that courage that comes from adrenaline, that could also be called bravery, and the more common type: the courage to make the right choice day after day after day.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide on, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them."

It is my hope that each of you who reads this will recognize that we have within us the power to change our Attitude. To do this we must have the Courage to make correct choices and to always Believe in ourselves and those around us, especially our children. As parents we are the first and best teachers and they learn more from our examples than from our words.



Free children's chewable vitamins with enrollment at Pharmacy

Vernonia Pharmacy is offering a free children's vitamin program. There are no strings attached. Parents just need to stop in at the pharmacy and enroll their child or children up to age 12. Each child will receive a 30-day supply of chil-

dren's chewable vitamins each month.

The program goal is simple – Healthy, happy kids!

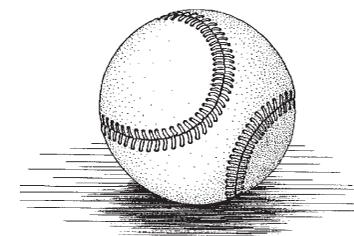
Sign your kids up today at Vernonia Pharmacy, 622 Bridge St, or call 503-429-0591 for more information.

There's still time to sign up for spring ball teams on February 23

It's last call for spring ball team sign-ups. The final registration session is February 23 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Washington Grade School library. Sign-ups will be taken for t-ball, baseball and softball.

For more information, contact Maria Lemay (t-ball) at 503-429-1067, Brooke Morrison (baseball) at 503-728-

8427, or Katie Poetter (softball) at 503-429-0700.



More information on the financial journey to the new schools

by Dr. Ken Cox, Superintendent

In a previous article I discussed some of the financial history of our new schools project. As you know, it all started with \$13.6 million bond that the patrons of the Vernonia School District passed in November of 2009. I have had many discussions with the school board and with everyone involved in our fundraising effort, and I want to ensure you that we are not interested in placing any more

taxes on the members of our community, and none of the bridge financing that we are in the process of procuring to finish construction will result in additional property taxes.

Our current project budget stands at \$40 million and can be broken down as follows:

- Construction – \$30 m.
- Design/Permits – \$4.2 m.
- Project management – \$0.8 m.
- Environmental: Testing/Mitigation – \$2.6 m.
- Property acquisition –

\$2.6 m.

- Fundraising/Financing costs – \$1.0 m.
- Miscellaneous costs – \$0.3 m.
- Contingency – \$0.5 m.
- TOTAL – \$40 million

Steve Effros, our project manager, and I have worked closely with BOORA, our architectural firm, and P&C Construction to ensure that we have the best building we can for what we can afford.

If you have been following this project closely, you know we initially designed the Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center (VRSC) as a separate building to house university partners, high school science, art, shop and the district office, including meeting rooms. As we progressed through the design of the rest of the school we set aside a \$1.5 million placeholder

for that building. However, as we got further into the design it was apparent that that building would cost \$3.3 million. Because of this and other factors that were increasing the cost of the project, we determined that we would postpone the construction of this building and move the classes into the new school. This would have saved us over \$3 million, but the changes required in the new building to incorporate the science classrooms has cost about \$230,000.

Some of the other cost increases have been the result of making sure that we have a building that will last for a very long time. We decided that we would use a standard multi-ply asphalt roof rather than a single ply rubberized (TPO) roof (\$70,000), and use long wearing linoleum flooring, rather than vinyl composition tile (\$90,000), because it would save us thousands in annual maintenance costs.

As you can see from these three examples, costs on the site can add up quickly, and there are many, many more items like this in the \$3,000 - \$10,000 range. In spite of these necessary price increases, we continue to look for ways to save. Each week we meet to discuss the issues that have come up, and their solu-

tions. I have some samples in my office from the company that is doing the cabinets for the new school. They recently showed us a white maple veneer product that will be used for all of the Library shelving and woodwork. By changing to this product, they not only were able to save us \$5,000 but gave us a much more durable and long lasting surface. By working with them we have been able to save over \$100,000 by using the shelving that we already have, much of which was obtained just a few years ago right after the flood and is in excellent condition. We also met late last year to discuss the kitchen equipment and what could be used at the new school and, once again, were able to save nearly \$50,000.

As you can see, the final price for our schools is a moving target. It constantly changes, sometimes to our advantage because of a cost-saving idea that a sub-contractor suggests, and sometimes in the other direction because of unforeseen circumstances that typically come up during construction. If you are interested in more of these details please feel free to call my office (503-429-5891) and set up an appointment; I would be happy to share them with you.

Free Children's Vitamin Program

No strings attached.

The only requirement is for a parent to stop into the pharmacy and enroll their children.

You receive a free 30 day supply of children's chewable vitamins every month!

For children up through age 12

Our Goal: Healthy, Happy kids!

Why? Because we care!



Vernonia Pharmacy

622 Bridge St., Vernonia

503-429-0591

Mon - Fri 9am to 6pm Saturday 9am -1pm

Action Ads

INEXPENSIVE – EFFECTIVE

503-429-9410

\$5.50 for the first 10 words, then just 10¢ for each additional word