

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by James Brookins, Special Education Director.

I am pleased to share with you some of the developments in the special services programs in the Vernonia School District. Special services are those programs for which students, patrons and employees qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). When students have a handicapping condition they may be served with a 504 plan (ADA) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEA). In our district around 18% of the students are served in one of these two ways.

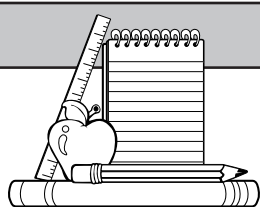
As always, if you have any concerns about your child, or know of someone in the community who might need our services, please use the school offices as resources. Feel free to contact me or my Compliance Officer, Cherise Harbour, at 429-0487. We are interested in identifying and serving all eligible children, even before they are of kindergarten age. We are also happy to talk to you about volunteering in the district if you have extra time and want to spend it helping kids.

Washington Grade School continues to be a busy place. The special education teachers and specialists such as Speech and Language Pathologist & School Psychologist, serve students in a variety of ways. From special mobility devices to language service and mathematics

instruction, they are hopping every day. They would be excited to talk to you about their new work with assistive technology. The teachers have written grants, and partnered with the ESD to acquire technology that helps some students read, write and communicate. We are only beginning to roll out our efforts with iPads, tablet readers, and bookshare.org, but we are excited to expand our resources in an area so beneficial for kids.

At the middle school and high school they are also beginning to use some of the same assistive technologies. The secondary teachers are helping students navigate high school and partnering with their students' other teachers to make sure their curriculum serves each student's needs. The entire special education department (K-12) is excited to move into the new classrooms and Life Skills lab next year. An important part of a secondary specialist's job is to plan transition goals that address every kind of need for students with disabilities after they leave school. Our new lab will help with the non-academic aspects of special education, and make sure our students are also prepared to live independently.

Please do give us a call if you have any need for information about our programs, or if you would like to volunteer in an important area of need.



New scholarship opportunity from ShoeString Community Players

ShoeString Community Players is announcing a scholarship that will be available to a Columbia County student pursuing a degree in theater arts.

At least one scholarship of \$650.00 or more will be awarded in 2012. Additional scholarships or funds will be at the discretion of the ShoeString Community Players' Board. The scholarship funds will be sent directly to the college, university or conservatory indicated by the recipient.

The scholarship is funded by a portion of the proceeds from the SSCP annual summer musical, other productions, and by funds donated specifically for the scholarship.

To apply, submit a completed application form, theatrical history, an essay, a copy of your transcript and two recommendations to: 2012 Scholarship, c/o ShoeString Community Players, P.O. Box 481, St. Helens, OR. 97051.

Scholarship applications are

available from <http://www.sscp-musicals.com>. All documents must be received by SSCP no later than May 1, 2012. Late applications will not be considered.

Recommendations from people having specific knowledge of your work in theater are strongly encouraged. Both recommendations must be from an adult and one of them must be from a teacher.

CORRECTION

Vernonia Middle School inadvertently omitted seven students from the High Honors list in the academic honor roll that was published in the March 7 issue of *The Independent*.

The following students also earned High Honors: Lily Buchanan, Morgan Harral, Ashley Jackson, Ariel Masog, Cheyanne March, Clay Sullivan, and Madison Zavales.

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PCC students help Vernonia's new school go green

After two floods in 11 years destroyed their schools, Vernonia School District students and staff worked with Portland Community College students and community leaders on Saturday, March 17, to plant new landscaping plants in the front of the new K-12 school and

community center in Vernonia. This event culminated a remarkable partnership supporting the new K-12 school in Vernonia, and provided a new meaning for wearing green for St. Patrick's Day.

Roughly 40 PCC landscape design students completed design elements of the exterior grounds adjacent to the new schools as part of a class assignment. These PCC students worked with Vernonia Middle School students to install the winning design. "I feel so honored and excited to be part of this schools project," said PCC student Jen Harrison, whose design was selected to be used as part of the campus landscaping. "The school's approach to the landscaping is a perfect match for my own values and the way I want to design projects in the future."

Rock Creek President David Rule spoke to the crowd of muddy but enthusiastic students and supporters, and stated, "PCC is proud to help this community move closer to opening their new schools, and we can also provide hands-on,

valuable experience to our own students."

State Senator Betsy Johnson, Columbia County Chair Tony Hyde and Vernonia Mayor Josette Mitchell were also on hand to celebrate the work of the students and PCC's partnership with the school district. "There is something truly inspirational in watching these community college students dive into the mud and make a difference in the lives of the children of Vernonia," shared Senator Johnson, adding "Since the floods, partners from across the state have rolled up their sleeves to help a neighbor in need. Today is a remarkable example of the kind of caring and compassion that make me so proud to be an Oregonian."

"We couldn't be more pleased with the opportunity to work with PCC Rock Creek, and we thank these wonderful students for helping to get this landscaping in place," said Dr. Ken Cox, Vernonia Schools Superintendent. "This school represents the hard work of so many people and organizations, and I hope these stu-

dents come back and see the school once it is open this fall."

The plants were donated as part of another partnership between the Vernonia School District and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Several firms on the project helped to prepare the site in advance of the landscaping project. "I would like to thank Teufel Landscaping and Crestview Construction for adjusting their schedules to help make this possible," Dr. Cox said.

Commissioner Tony Hyde summed up the celebration: "This new school will be the site of decades of natural resource-based education and jobs training for the students of Vernonia and many other communities. It is entirely appropriate that we celebrate the work and contributions of these landscape architecture students as they move toward their future careers."

Donations to the new Vernonia school can be made at www.vernoniaschools.org. The website also features construction progress updates, including a live webcam of the site.

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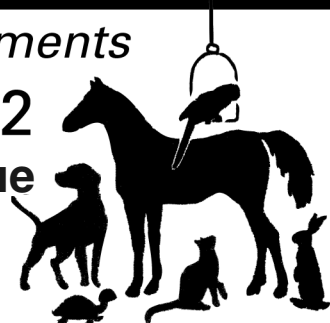
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