

Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Learning Community Striving to Meet the Individual Needs of Each Student as a Whole Child

Our theme for the month of April is respecting the environment. The following shares a couple of efforts that could fall under the category of respecting the environment:

Nearing Start to Bicycles in 5th Grade PE

The 60 bicycles shown in the photo to the right are raring and ready to go. Luckily, Rob Bucklin, elementary PE teacher, has been getting ready for them. We will be starting our first inclusion of bicycles in our fifth grade PE program in early May. Our bicycle experience will begin in the gym (prior to riding bicycles) and include learning about such things as bike safety, helmet fitting, the ABCs of bicycling, basic bicycle maintenance, and the rules of the road. Experiences with our fleet of bicycles will take place in the parking area near our old bus garage and will include working on riding skills and practicing the rules of the road. While all this may sound simple, Rob has had to work on quite a few questions. Some include: How can students quickly choose and check out appropriate bicycles each day? (Remember, we have 40-minute PE sessions in a different building.) What if a student does not own or bring a helmet? What about the possibilities of sharing head bugs with loaner helmets? How can we legally and inexpensively sell helmets to those who would like to purchase one? What if a student does not know how to ride a bike, is not allowed to ride, or is injured? How do we minimize injuries? How does a student know which bike they are using each day? How can one teacher effectively supervise around 25 students on bicycles? There have been many more questions. Rob has done his best to answer each. He will have some adult help. The Surdams, parents of students at each of our three schools, were trained last spring and will be helping to supervise and lead students in bicycling. Danielle Rivers, our nurse, will be helping out with helmet fitting. Our office staff will be selling helmets for \$10 each to those who wish to purchase. Learning experiences have been planned and contingency plans have been developed. Many more have been helping out in the process. Now we excitedly near the fun part, riding.



Honey Bees

We are lucky to live in an area that offers some great natural experiences. The wetlands, for example, offer wonderful opportunities to learn more about our natural surroundings. There are



times when nature can also go about doing its normal business, not necessarily worried about the potential impact on our school and learning. We have had some interesting times with such animals as turkeys, raccoons, wild cats, peregrine falcons, yellow jackets, and mice, to name a few. Recently, we learned more about honey bees. A swarm of a few hundred to a few thousand made their way through the round building portion of campus. They found a tree their queen seemed to like between the round building and cafeteria. The photo at the left was taken by Teresa Robinson. This was just as school was about to get out. We do have students who are allergic to bee stings. We also have students who seem to enjoy swinging at bees. These can make for a tough combination. Luckily, many worked together to help out. Mr. Grotte worked with maintenance to caution tape the area off. He and others worked to divert students around when school let out. Then Monica

Klump (secret beekeeper) and Jennifer Graham did some calling to find a beekeeper willing to help the bees to a more beneficial location.

As you know, honey bees are very beneficial to our plants and have had a tough time with dying off these past years. They found Troy Graham (no relation) and his two daughters, who could help out. Their 4-H club had just had their last hives die off or move on to new territories. They were kind enough to don bee keeper outfits and gently gather the queen and a few hundred bees into a special box to transport to their location. We learned a lot from the experience. For instance, once worker bees are separated from their queen, they will not join another hive and will die off within 30 days (their average life span). It may also take a few days for the remaining bees to fly off. They continue to go back to where the queen was for a while. This is the fourth day since the queen left and we still have around 100 bees clumping on the same spot on the branch. But they have been kind. I am unaware of any bee stings at our school since they arrived. They seem much calmer than the yellow jackets we often encounter on our buildings in the spring and fall.

Community Member(s) of Mystery

Our April Community Member of Mystery has worked in the elementary two to three days a week for the last three years. This will increase to full-time during the 2015-2016 school year. She grew up in Lake Oswego, Oregon and still lives in the same house of her childhood. The college she graduated from is from a little farther, the University of Montana. She did come back to Oregon and married her high school sweetheart. They have been married for 23 years. Our community member of mystery enjoys reading and gardening. She also enjoys fishing and camping. Her fishing mostly includes fishing for trout, salmon, and steelhead. For many years, she and her husband tent camped, but now enjoy camping in their truck camper. One of her favorite camping outings was a three-week trip through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and California. Who do you think our Community Member of Mystery for April is?

Our March Community Member of Mystery has been with our school for thirteen years. She grew up in Portland, Oregon and now lives on a small farm in La Center. This is only the second house she has lived in her whole life. She has been married to her husband for twenty-six years. An interesting La Center education fact, her father-in-law was the first La Center High School student president in 1938. Our Community Member of Mystery and husband have three adult sons and currently raise cows, chickens, and pigs. She has just started her own quilting business and is in “the pioneering stage.” Other than quilting, she enjoys many other activities. She loves gardening, long walks on the beach, cooking, and decorating. Many may not know that she has also served as assistant girls wrestling coach at the high school. She also loves watching college football and basketball. “Go Zags!” Who do you think our Community Member of Mystery for March is?

If you guessed Joyce Hantho, assistant secretary, you are correct.

