November 6, 2015

Group of Norwegian Student Teachers Visit Hansen Elementary
Hansen Elementary recently had the privilege of playing host to a group of three Norwegian university students. These students have been training in kindergarten classrooms in Norway and came to Olympia for their program of study to see what a kindergarten classroom looks like here in the states.

Our Norwegian friends spent three weeks in kindergarten classrooms and in that time became independent and adjusted to the environment very well. All three took copious amounts of notes and had deep conversations with Hansen staff members about the differences between the programs here and in Norway. This truly was an eye-opening experience for the group as kindergarten classes in Norway serve students who range in age from 10 months to 5 years old. One other surprise was the amount of time spent outside during the school day. In Norway students spend anywhere from three to four hours outside participating in “free time”. No matter the weather!

On their last day at Hansen, the Norwegians proudly wore their “Hansen” sweatshirts, which had been gifts from the staff. They also took a moment to share the work that their Kindergarteners had given them as parting gifts. One student had carefully written out the three extra letters included in the “Norwegian Alphabet.”

The Hansen Elementary students and staff will certainly miss their newfound friends from Norway. As Assistant Principal Kim Doughty told us “Their excitement was infectious!”

Three OHS Seniors Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists
Olympia High school seniors Anya Dickinson-Cove, Deirdre Francks and Quinn Johnson learned this fall they have been named National Merit Scholarship Program semifinalists.

The prestigious nationwide scholarship program, sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, recognizes students for exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

The three Olympia High students entered the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program last year by taking the 2014 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. That test served as an initial screen of program entrants.
The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of high school seniors in the United States, includes the highest-scoring entrants from each state on the qualifying test.

By being named a semifinalist, the three Olympia High students have an opportunity to continue in the competition for 7,400 National Merit Scholarships worth more than $32 million.

To become a finalist, the students must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they outline their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received.

National Merit Scholarships will be announced in spring in three categories:

- Every finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit $2,500 scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis.
- About 1,000 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 250 corporations and business organizations for finalists who meet their specified criteria.
- About 190 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 3,900 college-sponsored merit scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

McLane Elementary Students Plant Daffodils by the Dozen
McLane Elementary students recently participated in their annual bulb planting along the McLane Trail and the McLane School Forest. Students have been planting trees and bulbs on the McLane trail for the past 23 years. This year students planted 4,800 bulbs. Ralph Munro and Bob Barnes coordinate the planting along with community help from Steve North at the McLane Fire Station, the Thurston County Sheriffs department and the Evergreen State College Police. The daffodil bulbs themselves are purchased from the Satsop Bulb farm. This entire community event is made possible by over $1,000 in donations from the McLane community each year.

Pioneer and Washington Students Join Walk N Roll Program
Wearing bicycle helmets and sturdy walking shoes, Pioneer Elementary and Washington Middle School students joined parents and other community members this fall in the “Walk N Roll” program, which promotes safe walking and biking among school-age students.

The two schools held Walk N Roll events on October 7 and November 4 and plan to repeat the program once a month except in January. The next Walk N Roll is scheduled on December 2.

At Pioneer Elementary, students celebrated International Walk to School day on October 7 by gathering at a designated meeting space and then walking to school with Principal Linda Heade.
International Walk to School Day is a global event that involves communities from many countries that choose to walk or bike to school on the same day. The focus is on safe routes to school.

Rain didn’t dampen the enthusiasm among the many Pioneer Elementary participants in October, including students, parents, community members, the Olympia High School Cheer team, and Olympia police and fire department representatives.

Washington Middle School students who walked, biked and carpooled were greeted with a donut hole by the middle school leadership students. Participants were also entered into a drawing to win a gift card to a favorite ice cream shop later that day. Leadership students plan the Walk N Roll dates, promote them, encourage their classmates to participate and plan the incentives.

Walk N Roll also offered Washington Middle School students “Earn a Bike” classes. These after-school classes provided four hours of on-bike instruction along with four hours of bike mechanics and maintenance. After students completed the four classes, they were able to take home a refurbished bike and helmet.

The Walk N’ Roll program is coordinated by Intercity Transit in partnership with the Thurston Regional Planning Council.

Olympia School District English Language Learners Parent Night
The OSD recently hosted a parent night for all K-12 English Language Learners and their families throughout our district. This event took place on Wednesday, November 4 in the library at Jefferson Middle School.

More than 80 people attended parent night, and all those in attendance agreed that there was a wonderful sense of community building throughout the evening. Pizza was available for all attendees, as well as flu shots for those interested in getting family members vaccinated. OSD employee Eunbi Lee was overwhelmed by the response from the community: “This kind of event thrilled me,” Lee said. “You walk into the room and see staff, students and their family members interacting with one another, all with a common goal. The look of pride on students faces was extremely special.”
There was amazing support from the Olympia community as well. Team members from Cielo were present, as well as the Olympia YMCA and Hands on Children Museum, which provided free family passes. The South Sound Reading Foundation also provided free books for families in multiple languages.

A big round of thanks goes out to OSD employees Gayle Mar-Chun, Carol Richardson, Nancy Faaren, Ivy Marple and the many others who helped make this event possible. We’re already looking forward to next year!

**Madison Students Solve the Case of the Missing Principal**

Recently fourth and fifth grade students at Madison Elementary investigated a (make-believe) crime scene in which their very own principal, Domenico Spatola-Knoll, had gone missing. Could anyone locate Mr. DSK?

This exercise was a huge hit with students as they got to inspect the “crime scene” and make inferences about each item that had been discovered to attempt to solve the mystery. Well-done Madison mini PI’s. I think we will all sleep safer tonight knowing that Mr. DSK is at Madison, safe and sound!

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**Mark Your Calendar - Upcoming Dates**

- **Veterans Day (No School)** - November 11
- **MS & HS Grading (Half Day)** - November 13
- **Board Meeting (Pioneer)** - November 16 at 6:30 p.m.
- **Thanksgiving Break (No School)** - November 26-27