

**NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS**

**Butterflies of HOPE**

BY KIM NEISWANGER

When a butterfly emerges from a chrysalis and begins to move its wings, not only is it completing the life cycle, but it is also setting into motion another phase of life. As the wings flap, they begin to make a small change in the environment around them, and when they continue to move, the area affected becomes broader and broader. In theory, life is changed when one small butterfly's wing is set into motion. What a beautiful thing!

At Ruch Outdoor Community School we decided to study the butterfly effect and teach all of our students, from kindergarten through eighth grade, that everything they do has a greater impact on the people around them. To first graders this is a huge concept that doesn't begin to make sense

until they see it in action. After all, how can a little six-year-old possibly change the world? To middle-school students, this means stepping outside of themselves to realize the value of someone else.

We decided to help students set their wings into motion with several school-wide activities, such as raising butterflies, planting pollinator gardens, designing butterfly kites, engaging in lessons that foster student empowerment and recognizing each one's value.

In a challenge we titled "Butterflies of Hope," students were asked to change someone's day by writing a positive message such as "You are important," or "You matter," on a paper butterfly. These messages will be delivered to retirement homes around the valley in an effort

to bring some hope during these lonely times.

Our school has a strong partnership with Pioneer Village, and I have seen the impact the relationships with the residents have on our students. This is a way for us to continue to reach out to our friends and also to make a connection with residents in other facilities.

Our goal is for our students to understand this quote from Andy Andrews: "Every single thing you do matters. You have been created as one of a kind. You have been created in order to make a difference. You have within you the power to change the world."



Ruch students huddle around a butterfly cage. Photo: Jody Hubler.



Paper butterflies colored by students are hung in a window. Photo: Jody Hubler.

Ruch Outdoor Community School staff, students, and community are changing the world, one flap of our wings at a time.

Kim Neiswanger  
First-grade Teacher  
Ruch Outdoor Community School

**A traditional close to a nontraditional year**

BY LISA BALDWIN

Hidden Valley High School's class of 2021 will have a traditional graduation ceremony (as traditional as COVID-19 restrictions will allow) on June 2, bringing to a close a very non-traditional school year. Diplomas will be presented to 130 graduates. One unusual aspect of the class of 2021 is the naming of three valedictorians, but no salutatorians. Principal Damian Crowson said the decision "was cut-and-dried. There was no question about the top three" academic honorees.



Co-valedictorian Kaiah Fisher.

Those addressing their classmates in valedictory speeches are Kaiah Fisher, Jada Hurley, and Noel Sandeen. Commencement exercises begin at 7 pm, outdoors on the main athletic field on the school campus, 651 Murphy Creek Road.



Co-valedictorian Jada Hurley

With the school year ending for all students, HVHS has two summer programs to help students recover from what has been, for many, a bumpy academic ride. One program, Summer School, is intended specifically for credit retrieval by finishing or reworking courses not successfully completed. Summer School runs for four weeks, June 21 through July 15, four days a week (Monday through Thursday), four hours each day (8 am to noon). The other summer program, Summer Academy, is meant to connect or reconnect students with their school.



Co-valedictorian Noel Sandeen.

Incoming ninth graders are welcomed to the high school in their Summer Academy, August 16-19. Next year's 10th graders have a Summer Academy the week of June 28 through July 1. These students

have not yet experienced a full-time instructional year in high school, and Summer Academy activities will address that unique situation for the sophomores. Next year's juniors and seniors, grades 11 and 12 in the fall, also have a Summer Academy, June 14 through June 24, a two-week program that may include some credit retrieval and other activities.

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year is focused on returning to "a normal year," according to Mr. Crowson. Students can expect a seven-period day, starting at 7:30 am and releasing at 3:45 pm. The first day of the school year is August 30.

The new year brings some exciting changes to Hidden Valley. Elective programs are growing with the addition of a full-time woodshop, a metal shop/welding program, an expanded foods/culinary program, and expanded offerings in the business program and physical education (PE). A full-time music teacher will also be on staff.

Passage of the Three Rivers School District's Bond Levy in the May 18 special election would have funded significant facilities upgrades at Hidden Valley, including new roofing, a new water treatment plant, and a new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. The bond would have provided better campus security, driveway resealing, lights in the parking lot, additional parking, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility to the athletic fields.

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**Williams Elementary School kindergarten registration opened**

BY STEVE FULLER

Spring is in full bloom, summer is fast approaching, and Williams Elementary is close to wrapping up what has been a challenging year for everyone. With the exception of the brief winter move to Comprehensive Distance Learning (Oregon Department of Education's plan for online learning), Williams has been teaching on-site full days for kindergarten through fifth grade all year.

The school held its annual Jog-a-Thon fundraiser on April 15. Everyone had a great time and ran lots of laps, although the students did miss having all their family and friends who usually come and cheer them on. This year's theme was the Color Run. Everyone got a little wet and doused with color. The students ran a combined total of 2,070 laps, and we are on target to raise over \$8,000.

Williams Elementary held a kindergarten Meet and Greet on May 13. Students and parents had the opportunity to meet the kindergarten teacher, Ms. Hart, and tour the classroom, always following COVID protocols of wearing masks and social distancing.

Online kindergarten registrations open June 1. Registrants will need immunization records, birth certificates, and proof of address so we can make copies and have them on file.



Williams Elementary students competed in their annual Jog-a-Thon in April, raising more than \$8,000. Photo: Steve Fuller.

We will be having summer school in combination with Applegate School for two weeks, June 14-24, from 8 am to noon Monday through Thursday. Busing and food will be provided. If you are interested, please contact the school for more information.

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Ruch School students will take "Butterflies of Hope" to retirement homes. See story at top of page. Photo: Jody Hubler.