

S-C staff recognized as Accomplished Under 40

Stevenson Elementary Principal Karen Douglass and Wind River Middle School teacher John McLandress were recently honored as two of 40 individuals cited for exceptional community and career accomplishments achieved while under the age of 40 years old. The *Accomplished Under 40* awards were handed out during a luncheon in Vancouver on November 11.

Douglass was singled out for her leadership role during the remodel of Stevenson Elementary, while at the same time, working on her principal's credentials and still staying grounded in classroom activities. In addition, her volunteer activities in the community were also praised. Douglass has been in the district for fifteen years serving as a classroom teacher, lead teacher, and now principal at Stevenson Elementary.

McLandress' leadership in teaching staff development courses in the District, as well as his extensive background in special education, and connecting students in meaningful ways to education, were cited as examples of putting "children first." McLandress has been at Wind River Middle School for 12 years. For ten years, he was the special education teacher, and has recently switched to teach Language Arts and PE.

The *Accomplished Under 40* program, in its third year, is sponsored by the Vancouver Business Journal, in cooperation with Leadership Clark County. It seeks to recognize current and emerging leaders in a variety of professional fields and community endeavors in the southwest Washington region.



Karen Douglass (left) and John McLandress (right) display their Accomplished Under 40 certificates. Jaime Grosshuesch (center), John's mother, was proud to attend the event as well.

Community Report and Parental Notifications available

The 2004-2005 Stevenson-Carson School District Community Report is now available online and in a printed hard copy version. The Report, similar to an annual report, provides data and statistics under the No Child Left Behind Act, and also provides a consolidated look at school activities and performance.

Each year the Stevenson-Carson School District is required to provide parents information on the following items: Confidentiality and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), releasing information, military recruiter information release, asbestos plan, child identification procedures, drug-free schools, Title IX, sexual harassment and bullying, teacher qualifications, pesticide policy, college credit program information and child abuse prevention.

The Community Report and Parental Notifications can be accessed online at www.scsd.k12.wa.us (click on the link on the homepage), while printed copies are available at the District Administration office (located at 350 NW Bulldog Drive, Stevenson) or by calling 509-427-5674. A printed copy of the Community Report was also sent home with each student in the District, while the Parental Notifications were published at the beginning of the school year in the Skamania County Pioneer newspaper.

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A Community Newsletter

Fall 2004



Stevenson-Carson meets WASL standards

This year's fifth, eighth and 11th graders have something to be proud of...helping the Stevenson-Carson School District meet or surpass all the standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) tests administered last Spring. In 2002-2003, the District met the standards in all but one area - 7th grade math. However during the 2003-2004 school year, the students and staff concentrated on the concepts tested by the WASL in reading, writing and math, included expanded work on the algebraic concepts tested on the 7th grade test, and were able to make gains in scores.

"The WASL tests are more aligned with the state's Grade Level Expectations, so we aren't spending time in the classroom 'teaching to the test,' but rather teaching the concepts demanded by the district and state curriculum guidelines. The state also realized the 7th grade math test was testing concepts that only students in more advanced math classes had been exposed to. With the realignment of the tests and the curriculum, we are giving kids a better shot at success," explained Brian Howe, District Assessment Coordinator.



The district also used other assessment tools to monitor student progress - such as the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) - that are given several times a year in nearly every grade. These tests track individual growth and performance across a student's academic career and assist teachers in providing individualized help.

From the Superintendent

Student success takes many methods and outcomes

Dear Community:

It is easy to get caught up in test scores, dollars spent per pupil and other ways to measure outcomes in a school district. However, unless we stop and look at the real outcomes for each student and measure success as an individual accomplishment, we may miss the shining examples of learning. We have wonderful staff at every school building who not only teach, but mentor, fill in gaps and provide support to students - in more areas than just academic.

Please take time to read the wonderful stories of student learning that are included and help us celebrate the many faces of Stevenson-Carson success.

Jim Saltness

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2003 SHS grad focuses on success

When Rachel Hamilton and her family moved to Skamania County from Missouri during her freshman year, nobody expected she would become a 2003 SHS graduate. As the oldest of 12 children, Rachel didn't have one extended family member (mother, father, grandparents, aunts or uncles) that had graduated from high school, let alone college. Rachel had never attended the same school for more than a year or two, and entered SHS with a straight "F" average.



SHS grad Rachel (Hamilton) Bryan

Nearly six years later, Rachel is a proud SHS grad with honors, and in her second year at Clark College courtesy of a Gates scholarship. But the transformation from failing student to Gates Achiever didn't happen without a lot of work on Rachel's part and assistance from a caring SHS staff. "I had struggled in elementary and middle school because I had attended large schools and got lost in the shuffle. We actually just stopped here on the way to Alaska, but once I enrolled at SHS and started to succeed in the smaller school environment, I begged my family to stay here so I could graduate," she said.

Rachel says many teachers and administrators helped her to succeed in high school, as well as encouraged her to apply to the Gates Achiever program. "Mr. Fossa (former SHS principal) would tutor me in math. When I got my first 'B' on a test, he posted it in his office. Mr. Johnson's drama class helped me fit into the school. Mr. Johnston encouraged me to become politically active in leadership, while Ms. Harmening kept after me to apply to colleges. Mr. McKee motivated me to see myself as successful and keep trying. That's how I became a Gates Achiever."

While Rachel initially planned to attend Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, she decided to stay in the area and go to Clark College after marrying SHS grad William Bryan. She is a member of the Associated Students of Clark College and on the Clark cheerleading squad. Rachel plans to graduate this summer with an Associates degree and then continue her education at Washington State University-Vancouver. Her first career goal is to become a police officer and work her way up to a detective position - and then fulfill her long-term goal of running for political office.

She also serves as an example of perseverance to her family - her father enrolled in college and is now a published author, her grandmother is taking computer classes and her 15-year old sister Adrianna has decided college is something to aim for as well. And when someone tells Rachel a goal isn't possible, she counters "I love a challenge, and it has become a driving force in my life to prove people wrong. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't achieve your goals."

How the Gates Achiever program works...

The Gates Foundation, in collaboration with the Washington Education Foundation, established the Washington State Achievers Program in 2001. The \$100-million scholarship program was founded to help low-income students in Washington state gain access to higher education. The rigorous application process for the Gates Scholarship includes eight essay questions, two letters of recommendation, an interactive task-completion session, and participation in a leadership camp.

There are five groups, or cohorts, from Stevenson High School that are part of the program. There are 43 students from the area currently attending colleges and universities across Washington state.

Finding ways to connect...

New project taps untraditional leaders



SHS Vice Principal Tim Haney spends the day with some of the members of the new leadership project: (l-r): Megan Rike, Heather LaCroix, Jaron Eve and Misty Braget.

For a dozen Skamania County teens who face academic and/or life challenges, a new program, funded under a grant from the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council and run by the Stevenson-Carson School District and Educational Service District 112, is providing them an opportunity to take a leadership role in the community. The program hopes to remove barriers for students not seen as traditional leaders, and help them achieve academic and/or career success.

Under the guidance of a series of adult instructors, the teens will

explore their communities, observe civic engagement activities and conduct service-learning projects. The first all day session on November 5 provided Dependable Strength training - a course to help the teens identify their natural strengths and how they are now using them and then how they can effectively channel them into new areas.

"This is a pilot project in the region, and we hope to be able to reengage the teens with their schools or communities, give them a greater understanding of the community - and their place in it - and provide some leadership capacity in a group that has been untapped in a traditional school setting," explained ESD 112's Jeanne Bennett.

Looking for work yields dividends for junior Shonna Rae

Last spring, Shonna Rae was looking for a way to pay her driver's education fee. The chances of finding a job looked slim until Shonna heard a presentation from WorkSource's Lenora Atwood about job training and employment options for youth. After discussing her interests, and being interviewed (including using a resume she had prepared during a class at school), Shonna received training and was placed at a local daycare working four hours a day during the summer.

Shonna not only earned enough money to pay for drivers' ed, but also learned that there's more to working in a daycare than just watching kids: there is lesson-planning, time management, and understanding the abilities of different age groups. She also learned she wants to find a career that interacts with children such as a teacher or pediatrician.

Shonna also was one of the first to sign on as part of the new Leadership Project (see above) and has volunteered to be the group's designated photographer. Shonna says if it wasn't for

Lenora Atwood's help last summer, she wouldn't be aware of, and take advantage of, these new opportunities. In fact, the Youth Workforce programs have a variety of opportunities for youth, ages 14-21 who may have economic challenges, to gain work and career experience - opportunities that Shonna will again rely on as she looks for other job options in the area.



Career exploration starts early

Many students don't start thinking about a career choice until they near high school graduation or beyond. However, for the last several years, Wind River Middle School students have a full career and job exploration unit.

This fall, middle school students visited Clark College and then attended the College Fair (with hundreds of colleges represented from across the United States) in Portland. The unit started last year, when students met adults in a variety of careers and asked questions about the type of skills they need, how they got interested in their career, and other important issues.

"The goal is to expose our students to as many possibilities and options and help them see the relevance of the subjects they are now taking and how it will help with future career options. They also begin to see the need for further education (including college or



Wind River students meet an instructor and students in the Culinary Arts program during a recent visit to Clark College in Vancouver.

technical training) after high school, and can plan their middle school and high school class choice accordingly," explained Wind River Principal Kathy Browning.

HS visioning to help plan for future

Over the past summer, community members, staff and education consultants began a process to look at the existing vocational programs offered at Stevenson High School. As the planning group met, the process evolved into a bigger vision for integrating all high school programs into a comprehensive approach. LSW-Visioning, a group of educators and design experts help lead the process with an emphasis on learner attributes that Stevenson-Carson graduates would need to be successful in the future.

On August 24 and 25, more than 50 people gathered in Stevenson to look at such concrete issues as the existing vocational program - a program that had its roots dating back to the 1960s, to the facilities at the high school: all with input from a variety of constituent groups. The process was funded in part by the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council who is leading the effort in forecasting future careers and training needs in the region.

After one-and-a-half days of work, the group concluded with some possible proposals including: career, technical education and academic program revitalization, continued upgrading of the Stevenson High School facility, on-going inclusion of faculty, staff and community members in planning, leveraging of existing resources such as the Gates grant and the setting of implementation targets for the next several years.

"There is a lot of material, recommendations and hard work that have gone into the process so far. We are working at integrating it into the School Improvement Plan, the accreditation recommendations and the Gates evaluation so that we have a comprehensive approach to our programs - including those at the elementary and middle schools," explained SHS principal Brian Howe.