

The Growler

ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL, ODESSA, MISSOURI



Thursday, March 11, 2010

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Speech and Debate students work on Reader's Theatre where they practice a play on being "proper ladies."

OHS Speech and Debate Team Competes at Districts

By Makenzie Koch

OHS Speech and Debate Team prepared for District competition on March 5 and 6.

Speech and Debate consists of competitions in 13 different events ranging from storytelling to debating and theatre.

Sarah Esser, Speech and Communication Arts teacher, sponsors the team.

"The kids have been doing really well. We're a young group this year, but that will be good for next year," said Esser.

The team's biggest

strength is in their acting events. Their biggest weakness is in formal speaking events.

"Our veterans this year are Hallie Spaar and Neva Sheaffer. They're great leaders and have the most experience," Esser commented. Spaar and Sheaffer are juniors.

"My favorite event is duet acting because it is a lot of fun, and I get to work with a great partner (Jarrod Best, senior)," said Sheaffer.

Speech and Debate will have their state competition on April 23 and 24 in Columbia.

We Care Club Helps Teacher in Need

By Dyllan Ratigan

We Care Club is an OMS organization designed to help the community, the country and the world. The club was created four years ago by Angela Gregson, OMS seventh grade Communication Arts and Social Studies teacher. Gregson is the main sponsor.

Recently, We Care Club decided to take on a project to help Dena Tate, fifth grade teacher at Upper Elementary, who came down with a series of medical issues that will keep her from working for the rest of the school year. We Care Club started raising money for Tate February 1.

To help Tate, the school

held a Hat Day to raise funds. Students choosing to participate brought \$1 to donate. Despite the \$1 donation, many students and teachers decided to donate more. A Jeans Day was also held for the teachers, where they could pay \$5 to wear jeans and donate to the cause.

In the end, a total of approximately \$1,200 was raised for Tate. Some of the students who are involved with We Care Club are Ian Scott, Tabitha Rider, Colby Dowell and Madison Ault.

"OMS is a very caring bunch of individuals. We were shocked at the large amount of money donated," said Gregson.



Dylan Hayner, Sara Fossett and Trey Braswell, fifth-graders, work on a science experiment.

Fifth-Graders Conduct Science Experiments

By Rilan Smith and Celeste Meuschke

Fifth grade science classes have been conducting many experiments this year. They have completed six experiments this quarter alone. Going Up, Shine a Penny, Heat Lamp and Salt Water Saturation are a few.

Chris Doering, fifth grade science and math teacher, said that he does his best to incorporate math with the science experiments that his classes do. He said the graphs that they make help to illustrate the data. Doering also said the students enjoy the experiments more than just reading in a book or discussing a topic. He believes the students learn more by performing the experiments too.

"They wish they could do one (an experiment) every day," said Doering.

Sara Fossett, fifth grader, said, "My favorite experiment that we have done so far was the edible mixture because we got to eat it when we were done, and it was fun."

Doering's favorite experiment this year was when they tested the saturation of salt water. "It's just taking the curriculum above and beyond. Anything where they can use more than one of their senses is helping them learn," said Doering.

PIPs Improve Skills OHS Will Host Special Olympics

By Shelby Moore

Players In Progress (PIPs) are working hard to improve their basketball skills. This year, fifty-six students ranging from kindergarten through seventh grades are participating in PIPs, and their next performance will be March 19 at Fort Osage.

Robin Smith, fourth grade teacher and PIPs coach, said, "The goal is not only to teach younger kids basketball skills, but more importantly to build confidence, self-discipline and teamwork."

Other coaches are Kristi Bieri, OUE P.E. teacher, Tamra Mefferd, fourth grade teacher, Brandi Moore, OUE speech pathologist, and Gayle Bainbridge and Valarie Stark, third grade teachers. The PiPs coaches continue to teach the students the skills at their practice times on Mondays but expect them to go home and perfect their skills.

Cade Adams, second-grader,

said that he loves PIPs and he enjoys practices because they are fun, exciting and they learn new skills like the "rocking chair." Cade's favorite new technique is the "rocking chair" where players bounce the ball front to back between their legs.

Garrett Austin, second grader, said that he looks forward to the performances in PIPs. Garrett loves to show off his ball tricks, which include spinning the ball on his finger. Garrett's favorite part is the "star passes" they do at their performances.

Emma Austin, kindergarten, said that she loves practicing but really enjoys showing off her new skills in the "big gym." She admitted that she does get nervous because all the people are looking at her, but that doesn't stop her. She enjoys practicing and performing her low dribbles and her bounce passes.



Rhyannon Patrick and **Erica Fieth**, seventh grade PIPs participants, show off their ball handling skills at the OHS Court-Mat assembly.

By Tayler Klemenz and Rachael Monteil

Odessa R-7 School District will host the Special Olympics for the first time on March 27. Odessa and 27 surrounding school districts will gather to participate in the event.

The list of events includes 25, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 meter races, 4 X 100 and 4 X 400, 100, 400 and 800 meter walk, 25 and 100 meter wheelchair race, high jump, shot put, running long jump, standing long jump, softball and tee ball throw.

Many different organizations including Student Council, DECA, Spanish Club and Men's Choir are pulling together in hopes of creating a successful event. Makenzie Smith, senior, is also assisting for her senior project. She will help organize, put up flyers and work on the day of the event.

Leslie Heimsoth, Olympic activist and special education teacher at OHS, said, "I thought that it was important for kids with specials needs to show their talents and to educate the public. These kids are just like everyone else, and it's their time to shine."

Heimsoth was instrumental in bringing the event to the school district. Her interest rooted during college where her sorority's philanthropy has stuck with her throughout the years. She has hopes that the event will educate people and create a bigger sense of acceptance of special education students.



Fourth-graders in Jennifer Smith's class are writing to military pen pals in Afghanistan. Seth Bayless's father is in troop 1141 Engineer Company (Sapper).

Fourth-Graders Write to Military Pen Pals

By Kelsey Cox

Fourth-graders in Jennifer Smith's class are writing to military pen pals. Seth Bayless, one of Smith's students, is especially enjoying the project because they are writing to his father's troop. The class is writing to Jeff Bayless who is currently serving in Salerno, Afghanistan in troop 1141 Engineer Company (Sapper). The troop searches for IEDs, Improvised Explosive Devices. J. Bayless was deployed in September of 2009 and is due home in September of 2010.

S. Bayless said that having his dad serving in the military can be hard at times, but his grandparents help out whenever needed.

Smith said that the class is learning how important it is to remember soldiers and their families by communicating with their military pen pals.

The students sent the soldiers Christmas and Valentine's Day cards, and the students have received a flag that was flown over the military base, a plaque in honor of the class and letters and pictures from the soldiers. The soldiers decorated their base with the students' cards.

Smith said, "It brought the soldiers joy that people were thinking about them."

According to Smith, she sees benefits from her students having military pen pals. Smith said, "The students put more effort into their writing when they know the soldiers will be reading their writing, and the students have learned what soldiers do and are more concerned about their families. It also touched the class that the soldiers took time to send them items. It was an honor."

Around R-7

HS JV Girls Basketball Team Improves Patience

By Hannah Williams

JV girls basketball team ended the season 10-6, under the direction of Rachel Ritter, JV coach and elementary art teacher.

Ritter said that she enjoyed getting to know the girls and watching them progress throughout the season.

According to Ritter, this year the team has improved on their intensity and patience with the game. At the beginning of the season their biggest weakness was ball control, but as the season progressed they became stronger. Ritter noted that the team's defense has been strong throughout the entire season.

Ritter said that she was proud of the girls' efforts this year and everything they brought to the game.

"I had a lot of fun with the girls this year. It was a great group of girls that made this season well worth it. I am looking forward to a great season next year," said Rayna Smith, freshman.

Peer Mediators help OMS students

By Kinsey Canon

OMS began a new Peer Mediators program this year which allows students to help other students with their problems.

The program was introduced before Christmas break during an assembly. Representatives from the Peer Mediators Center in Kansas talked to the students. Following the assembly, each class nominated students to serve as Peer Mediators.

Twenty students are currently serving as Peer Mediators. The students were trained on two Friday mornings in January. During the training,

the students were taught the correct way to mediate.

"Students in the program help another student come up with a Peer Mediators solution and make a plan," explained Hal Davis, counselor at OMS. During the mediation two students meet with another student to try to help him/her set up a plan to solve the problem.

Davis along with Rebecca Cowman, OMS secretary and Outreach Worker, and Domini Shepard, eighth grade social studies teacher, run the program.

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JV Boys Basketball Team Finishes the Season

By Sam Wilson

JV boys basketball team finished the season with a record of 6-9. The close loss to Pleasant Hill, February 19, ended the season. They had recent wins against Harrisonville, Warrensburg and Excelsior Springs. Their recent losses were to Pleasant Hill (twice), Grain Valley and Harrisonville. The team played Harrisonville twice winning one game and losing one game.

Kurt Ream, OHS science teacher and coach, said, "The biggest improvement I've seen this season is that the boys are starting to work as a team."

Ream said that his goal for next season is to work on

strengthening the basketball players by working on basic skills. They will focus on passing, shooting, offense and defense.

Ream also stated that he thinks approximately six of the JV boys will move up to varsity play for next year. He believes that others could move up as well, but it will depend on the development of the players during the off-season.

Taylor Robinson, junior, said, "The season didn't end exactly how we expected, but as the year went on, we all improved and learned how we can become better players for next year."

OHS Wrestling Comes to an End

By Jordan Peek

OHS JV wrestlers finished the season February 6 with a final tournament in Warrensburg. All the wrestlers placed either first or second in the tournament, and they only had two losses as a team.

With some of the JV wrestlers moving up to varsity, they ended the season with two JV wrestlers, Chris Swearingin and Zach Parks. The team also ended with five freshmen, Vinnie Nickell, Jimmy Eaton, Evan Young, Nate Leonard and Colten Wright.

There were approximately 40 wrestlers at the beginning of the season, but the numbers dropped as the season progressed. Adam West, history teacher and assistant coach, said that is not uncommon be-

cause wrestling is not an easy sport. He said that most people associate wrestling with cutting weight which they don't want to do.

West and Jason Kusick, assistant coach, plan on recruiting more wrestlers for next year by getting to know more of the school's athletes by helping with track. They would like to see more wrestlers out next year.

"Having more people on the team would make practice more challenging and not so monotonous," said West.

According to West, the team's strengths were a good work ethic and strong conditioning. He also said that the team's practice habits improved during the season, and he looks forward to next season.

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R-7 Activities & More



FCA had a good turnout when they hosted Courts for Christ on February 3. Brad Ziegler, OHS graduate and pitcher for the Oakland A's, spoke on his faith and sports. The band, Last Place also performed.

Fellowship Of Christian Athletes Provides Fellowship To Students

By Kelsey Cox

OHS Fellowship of Christian Athletes members meet at 7 a.m. on Friday mornings in the wood gym for fellowship where students participate in student-led lessons, singing and games. Approximately 40 students attend.

"I learn more about students' strengths and how much they care about helping other people," said Chad Meyer, head sponsor. Meyer teaches business and coaches girls' golf and boys' basketball at OHS.

Other sponsors include: Kevin Hill, Kenny Grubb, Julie Whitaker, Par Pitts, Jessica Wade and Zachary Meler, all OHS coaches and activity sponsors.

FCA leaders attended a training camp at FCA headquarters in Kansas City. They learned how to improve their

"huddle" or meetings. Next, members attended Fields of Faith at Oak Grove High School where they listened to guest speakers and participated in a group prayer. The club hosted Courts for Christ in February which was similar to Fields of Faith.

"I hope that FCA has impacted OHS to help students understand how important it is to help other people and think of others before themselves," said Meyer.

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Sign Language Club To Perform

By Lauren Grubb and Ashton Dodson

McQuerry Elementary Sign Language Club plans to perform at the Spring Fling on April 23 at OHS. This will be their first performance of the year.

Laura Scott, hearing impaired educator, Laura Cozart, deaf interpreter, and Trisina Alvested, early childhood special education teacher, are the sponsors. Alvested, who has taught for 13 years, said, "I love how it gives students who aren't able to speak yet, a means to communicate."

Sign Language Club starts at the Kindergarten level but involves first- and second-graders as well. The club meets every other Monday after school from 3 to 4 p.m.

During practice students learn basic skills such as the alphabet, colors, numbers and animals. They also learn about the deaf culture. Sometimes they also learn how to play games. The club takes language concepts and makes them more concrete and easier to learn.

Sloane Poindexter, first-grader in Carrie Moore's class, said, "I joined the club because it is fun, and we get to make songs."

There are usually 35 to 40 students in attendance. The club was started nine years ago in 2001.



Odessa Middle School Additions Benefit Students

By Rachael Monteil

Two recent additions to OMS, a fitness room and a new Practical Living Program, help prepare students for the future.

"The point of the fitness room is to help promote healthy living for the students and give them a jump start for something they can do for the rest of their lives," said Phillip Kolster, OMS P.E. teacher. Kolster's background in physical fitness consists of being a personal trainer, competing as a body builder, and owning the All-American Fitness Gym in Blue Springs.

Kolster was interested in adding the fitness room, along with Sherry Billings, OMS principal, and Tia Saxon, OMS health teacher and girls basketball coach.

The fitness room has not yet been approved to be a morning and after school program, but it will benefit

the P.E. and Health curriculum, the Alternative Program and the Special Education Program.

The Special Education Department will also benefit from the new Practical Living Program which will help prepare students to live independently.

"We are trying to teach my students what they'll need after they graduate for everyday aspects to live," said Michelle West, special educator and head of the program.

West's twelve students have been making items such as lanyards, scented soaps with different designs and beaded snowflakes to sell to help teach the students some life skills. They will be selling the products throughout the school year at events such as choir and band performances.

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