



# EAST VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT *express*

Volume 25 · Number 2 February 2010

## Music program turns challenge to opportunity

arts; staff creativity in rising to a challenge; promotion of student learning; and institutional advancement of music education.

The short story goes like this ... last summer the district found itself short one music teacher heading into the fall term. No one panicked. Rather, after a deep breath, the administration turned to the people who know music best - the district's 12 music instructors - Marla Pflanz, Lucien Saurette, Gail Sherrodd, Matt Thistle, Rose Waterbury, Faye Atwood, Ronni Galeener, Beth Good, Carol Jeffries, Connie King, Andrea LaPlante, Garry LaPlante - and asked for recommendations.

What ultimately emerged was a scheduling recommendation that would require all but two members of the music staff, the two middle school choir directors, to travel between buildings. It seemed like a reasonable solution. Music students wouldn't have to be bused and the needs of every school would be met - end of story.

Well, not quite.

In fact, the best part of the story was just emerging. As they wrestled with scheduling options, the music staff saw an opportunity to tackle a second issue that had bothered them since 2002. That was the year the fourth-grade orchestra program was moved from the school day and made a before-school activity. That change brought a sudden and dramatic drop in participation that eventually reverberated all the way to the high school.

The music staff proposed an idea. If fourth-grade students, during what was normally their general music time, instead had the opportunity to participate in orchestra, the district could return the orchestra curriculum to the school day.

That idea found favor and was immediately implemented. The concept also was expanded to fifth-grade students, who could choose between band, orchestra

If the Grammy Awards had a category entitled "Best Contemporary Performance: Music Educators," a strong nomination could be made for the East Valley School District.

The nomination would be based on four factors: administrative support for the



*East Valley Middle School musicians include: (above) Nicole Virga and Alex Poteet. (left) Cassie Coburn, Kayla Isaacson and Allia Clemente.*

and general music. In some schools, a visual arts class was added as well. Fourth and fifth grade students now attend a Fine Arts Block known as FAB 4 and FAB 5.

"Our success stems, in part, from a staff belief that we can't shortcut one music discipline to the benefit of another. This means we still have a lot of work to make certain that each discipline has the opportunity to be successful - general music, choir, band and orchestra," says elementary/middle school orchestra and general music instructor Beth Good.

"We are excited that we have been asked for input by an administration that recognizes and embraces the fact that the arts are core academic subjects whose individual disciplines are to be respected and supported as much as any other curriculum."

There is a word for that kind of attitude and belief - teamwork.

Some places talk about it. East Valley models it. Call that a benefit for the ages.

Volume 25, Number 2  
February 2010

This newsletter is published during the academic year by the East Valley School District Board of Directors and the Superintendent. Comments, suggestions or questions may be directed to the Superintendent.

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**Upcoming Board meetings**

All Board meetings are held in the District Administration Center beginning at 5:30 p.m.

February 9, 2010

February 23, 2010

March 9, 2010

March 23, 2010

**Coming up....**

**Mid-winter break**  
February 16-19

**Elementary conferences**  
March 22-26

**Middle school conferences**  
March 24-26

*Superintendent's message***Individual efforts pay collective dividends**

This newsletter highlights a few of the great things happening in the East Valley School District. I am proud to say that items highlighted here represent but a fraction of the great programs and activities that occur every day in your schools. The showcase programs we discuss in this newsletter are pretty impressive, but it is the day-to-day work that I would like to focus on in this message.

Every day in every school, in every classroom, on every bus and on every playground, caring adults are working with our children to ensure they are happy, comfortable and safe. As an organization, we like to draw attention to our innovative and cutting edge programs.

While it is important for our patrons to understand that we are an innovative and progressive learning community that is working to maximize opportunities for kids, we must also remind our patrons and ourselves of the really important things.

We must recognize the cooks in each and every one of our buildings, who work with kids, in a number of ways to ensure no child is hungry. We must recognize our bus drivers who make sure every child is dropped off at a safe place and is properly clothed. We must remember our para-professionals who wipe noses and tears, give warm hugs and hold hands.

We must remember our teachers, who while their most challenging kids keep them awake at night, strive to ensure that every child learns and is engaged. We have coaches who teach life-long lessons and bring forth accomplishments that often surprise even the kids they serve. We have support staff who ensure everything is in place for learning and that the buildings are clean, safe, comfortable and attractive.

We have administrative staff who work long hours, often resolving conflict, who have dedicated themselves to the smooth operation of this district. We have a Board of Directors dedicated to the future of the district. Most importantly, we have parents and patrons.

The successful operation of this entire organization is dependent on the continued support of our parents and patrons. East Valley School District is extremely fortunate to have people who support us in making this the best organization for students. We would not have the capacity to develop and build the programs highlighted in this newsletter without these efforts. I thank you.

Please visit your schools. We have some great things happening. If you want to contact me you can call me (509) 924-1830 (work), (509) 928-0519 (home) or e-mail me at [glenewinkelj@evsd.org](mailto:glenewinkelj@evsd.org) or just drop by the district office at 12325 East Grace.

Sincerely,

*John Glenewinkel*

John Glenewinkel  
Superintendent

Enrollment in the Washington Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program is open through March 31.

**GET program now open**

GET is a pre-paid tuition plan in which families lock in current rates for future college expenses. The dollars invested are guaranteed to keep pace with inflation and the units may be used at nearly any public or private college, university or vocational school in the United States.

The cost of one GET unit is \$101 during the current open period. GET units purchased 10 years ago have nearly doubled in value – and the cost of college tuition continues to rise at double-digit rates. For more information, visit [www.get.wa.gov](http://www.get.wa.gov) or call (800) 955-2318.

# Homegrown, hands-on idea takes root

Sometime this spring, after the last snow has melted, the open space between East Valley High School and East Valley Middle School will take on a new look. What is now an empty parcel of real estate will become a hub of activity as the Farm to School program literally sprouts from the ground.

Farm to School is the next phase of the district's health and fitness initiative (Express newsletter, February 2009). The initiative began with the promotion of healthy eating habits and the consumption of locally grown products.

Now, students will have a chance to get their hands dirty, addressing the food pyramid from a producer's point of view. They'll see – and do – all the things that happen before food magically appears on the table. Roughly five acres of open ground at Sullivan and Wellesley will be set aside for raised beds in which students will grow a variety of crops.

It was a prophetic convergence of three similar, but independent, ideas that launched the project, says East Valley parent Lynette Romney.

Romney herself had envisioned a school garden as a logical extension of the healthy eating initiative. So had East Valley High School Vice Principal John Savage and local agribusinessman Eldon Jons, owner/operator of AC Starr Farms of Newman Lake.

After the three got together, voila! A committee was formed,



*Farm to School committee members include Eldon Jons, Dawn Wieber, Lynette Romney, John Glenewinkel, Jodi Brown and Barbara Cruse.*

master gardeners were contacted and a firm plan was outlined for the 2010 growing season. The project will be developed with all donated materials and labor.

"This project is exciting because of the benefits it will bring on so many levels," says Romney, who is leading the 12-member organizing committee. "Whether their interests are in science, agriculture, nutrition or business, we can involve a wide range of students in everything from soil testing to harvesting. It's also a great project for connecting our schools with the community."

Indeed, the organizing committee includes a diverse cross-section of local talent that includes Romney, Savage and Jons, along with: Chris Hilgert, WSU Master Gardeners program; Pat Munts and Gary Varrella, WSU Extension; Dawn Wieber, Second Harvest Food Bank; plus EVSD staff members Georjean Kuntz, Barbara Cruse, Joe Kostecka, John Glenewinkel and Jodi Brown.

Interested in participating? Volunteers are welcome. Contact Lynette Romney at 230-9436 or momromney@earthlink.net.

## Eight earn national certification

Eight members of the district teaching staff joined elite national company in December, earning certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. National certification is extended only to teachers meeting rigorous standards through intensive study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review.

In Washington, only 1,249 teachers – an average of about four per district – earned national certification in 2009.

East Valley's eight winners were: Michelle Brenner, Georgiann Delgado, Leah Lucero, Kelly Michael, Drew Vanderpool, Dani Wicks, Joanie Wiecks and Norma Woodward. Congratulations to all!

## EV welcomes new leaders

The East Valley School District is pleased to welcome two new leaders ... Heidi Gillingham, a newly elected Board member; and Frank Brou, the new principal of East Farms Elementary School.



*Gillingham*

Gillingham is herself a product of East Valley schools, graduating from EVHS in 1987. She and her husband, Doug, have two children currently enrolled in East Valley schools – Hanna, a student at Mountain View Middle School, and Jason, a student at Otis Orchards Elementary. She also has two adult stepchildren, Amanda and Brandon.

She has been a long-time volunteer in district schools, assisting with fundraisers, skating nights, yearbooks and more. She also has served on the Otis Orchards Elementary PTSA executive board.



*Brou*

Brou joined the East Farms staff following 16 years in the Port Townsend School District in Western Washington. He and his wife, Susie Kunz, are the parents of two East Valley students – Alex, a sophomore at East Valley High School, and Ryan, a 7th grader at Mountain View Middle School.

He is a graduate of Washington State University whose background includes 22 years as an elementary principal.

*Welcome Heidi and Frank.*

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## Fire science program makes debut

On a warm afternoon last September, motorists were not mistaken when they saw a fire truck shooting giant plumes of water behind East Valley High School. But what was going on? No sirens, no smoke, no fire, no emergency of any kind.

The scene was strangely quiet. The only sounds were the calm voice of Neal Kimball speaking over the din of rushing water.

It was just a training exercise – but not the kind involving professional firefighters under the guidance of a veteran fire chief. This was a high school class.

Last fall, East Valley launched a fire science program in partnership with the neighboring West Valley and Central Valley school districts. EVHS serves as the host site. Classes are conducted five afternoons a week and training includes hands-on work aboard a fully functioning fire engine loaned by Spokane County Fire District 4.

The program is patterned after a similar cooperative in north Spokane County involving the Riverside, Deer Park, Mead and Spokane school districts. Kimball serves in both programs, working mornings with the northern consortium; afternoons with the Valley group.

Kimball is a career educator and a veteran firefighter himself, currently serving as a volunteer training lieutenant with Fire District 4.

The fire science program is “articulated,” meaning participants can earn college credit while still in high school. Students spending two years in the program will earn 17 credits at Spokane Community College. The high school curriculum follows national standards keyed to the first level of professional National Firefighter certification.

Kimball additionally has enlisted the cooperation of the Spokane Valley Fire Department, which offers real-life lessons to supplement the academic side of the program. This relationship, he says, has been invaluable to the learning experience, which focuses on three major areas – structural fires, wild fires and first-responder emergency medicine.

Sixteen students started in last fall’s inaugural Valley class and Kimball hopes to increase that number to 18-20 with the eventual participation of the Freeman School District.

For the last five years, participants in his north Spokane program have competed in SkillsUSA, a competition for students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.



*This 3-inch “Blitz Line” was pumping upwards of 900 gallons a minute during training exercises at East Valley High School.*

In the firefighting competition, which includes oral and written testing and hands-on skill demonstrations, his students have finished first in the state four times.

If the past is an accurate predictor of the future, the products of Kimball’s Valley program will be exceedingly well prepared for college and eventual careers. In an occupation that has little margin for error, he preaches an ethic of safety, precision and accuracy.

Ask his students about CPR, defibrillators or the fundamentals of fire rescue and it is clear the lessons have been learned. It is easy to see why his students usually clean up at state.

For more information, or enrollment questions, please contact Neal Kimball at (509) 993-8845 or [kimballn@evsd.org](mailto:kimballn@evsd.org).

## Free parent education

You are invited to a free, two-hour parent education class based on an amazingly simple, little-known “magical” process to get kids to listen and stop annoying behavior. This information is applicable for children ages 2-12, but parents with younger children also may find it beneficial. The curriculum is based on the book 1-2-3 Magic, by Thomas Phelan, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and expert on child discipline and attention deficit disorder.

To register, contact Ashley Frein at the Spokane Child Abuse Network office: (509) 458-7445. WHERE: Trent Elementary Auditorium, 3303 North Pines Road. WHEN: Tuesday, February 23, 2010 and Thursday, February 25, 2010, 6-8 p.m.