

White Pine Pinenut High School

Students Learn to Include

by Britney Kingston
Digital Publishing Staff

Nevada recently created a new office at the Department of Education, called the Office of Safe and Respectful Schools. This office is charged with helping schools in the state continue their improvements to become inclusive, nurturing places. Schools in White Pine have been working on several initiatives connected to this new office.

One of the office's activities is to sponsor the Safe and Respectful Schools Conference, held annually in Reno. This conference is designed to bring students, teachers and parents together to learn about school culture and how to encourage and facilitate school environments where all types of people thrive. WPHS counselor Steffani Thompson said that it is a way to make students feel more safe. Topics at the conference include treatment of students and how to make sure all students are comfortable and safe, setting the stage for maximized learning.

Attendees at this year's conference included Hayley Ochoa, Jessie Leyba, Brooke Anderson, Danyell Gledhill, Colbey Beshale, Chelsey Bailey, Jace Maynard and Hunner Doty with Robin Griffin, Amy Newman, and Kara Anderson as chaperones.

The conference taught students to work as a team and to be an example to those in the hallways. Mrs. Thompson said, "I think that attendees learn a lot about teamwork, and about the ability to look past what students typically judge each other on and be able to work together for the betterment of all kids." This conference allows for students to come back with positive attitudes and skills they can use to

encourage others to be more tolerant, welcoming, and inclusive.

A second initiative connected to the Safe and Respectful Schools movement is the hiring of a district social worker. This is the second year White Pine has had a social worker, paid for by grant funds. The social worker's job is to influence school culture positively by working with parents and students to provide social and emotional supports. The social worker visits students homes, conducts parenting workshops, runs group activities for students and more. White Pine's social worker, Kara Anderson, chaperoned the trip to the Safe and Respectful Schools conference and worked to select students to attend who would most benefit from the experience. Anderson said, "As a social worker at White Pine High School I hope to bring back a way for teachers and students to communicate better. I want to be able to teach teachers how to make class more fun and make the students feel like winners. By showing students small accomplishments it slowly breaks down their walls and lets them be more successful in their endeavors. Everyday our students are succeeding."

Another project related to Safe and Respectful Schools is gathering data about how students perceive the atmosphere of their school. Last year, students responded to the state's Safe and Respectful Schools survey on two different occasions. Topics such as how students perceive the way other students treat them to how students perceive the staff treats them are covered in the survey.

Thompson reported, "Seeing that data is eye opening for many of us in where we're at and how students view us and being able to remember that one of the reasons we entered this profession was to make connections with kids and to help



White Pine students pause for a moment at the Safe and Respectful Schools conference for a brief photo opportunity.

them in every way not just in learning the academic content."

Staff members at WPHS reviewed this data last spring and held a series of discussions about how they can use the data to better respond and address students' social and emotional learning needs.

Social and emotional learning is the overall objective of the Office of Safe and Respectful Schools, according to superintendent Adam Young. "The pressures of No Child Left Behind forced schools to focus on students' academic progress sometimes at the expense of all other worthwhile endeavors. Social and emotional learning is now being recognized and given the importance that it has always had. Our schools must be places where high academic achievement is at the forefront, but we can't ignore the fact that students will learn more efficiently in an environment where they are valued as people not just as test scores." Young reported that one of the school district's performance goals is

focused on social and emotional learning.

By going to this conference it has made teachers reconnect with their students and focus more on the connections that they are making rather than just teaching them the subjects that are required.

National educational expert Dr. Anthony Muhammad has stated, "School culture happens whether it's planned for or not. If it's not planned for, then negativity and toxicity rule the day. If it's planned for, school leaders can shape and positively impact the environment where adults and students can thrive." The initiatives from the Office of Safe and Respectful Schools being implemented at a local level are not random; they are purposeful and planned and creating a forum where people can come together to rally for a common cause: to bring safety, love, caring, respect, and nurturing to every student at the school.

Singers Perform in Elko

by Britney Kingston
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A musical tradition for more than 10 years, the WPHS Singers recently had the opportunity of participating in the Northeast Nevada (NENZ) Regional Honor Choir which was held in Elko, Nevada on October 10th and 11th.

Honor Choir is an opportunity for singers to meet up with students from different choirs and perform musical pieces that have been organized by the guest conductor. The rehearsals begin at 8 am and consist of practicing specific musical selections and learning and refining musical concepts. For example, students learn how to sing with better diction, emphasize important words, and blend the different section of the choir together.

For 2016 there was a significant amount of music to learn, so the guest conductor split the men and women to learn the parts more efficiently. They were given

six pieces of music to learn instead of the typical four or five pieces of music. Having that extra piece of music made learning and applying each principle of music that much harder, which is why it was important to have the men and women split. Junior Henry McOmber reported, "I was surprised at the difficulty of songs, and the amount of singing that we did. To get the results that guest conductor needed, we had to sing out and it made my voice very sore."

But it's not just musical knowledge that students gain at Honor Choir. Senior Samuel Stewart noted, "Honor Choir has taught me that it takes a lot of focus and dedication to get the best quality work. It has taught me that hard things are achievable when you have the desire to pursue your dreams." Senior Gabe Harris echoed this thought, "Honor Choir has taught me that being a good singer takes you places." Other students noted that persistence was one of the most important life skills that they learned while rehearsing in Elko.

The guest director of Honor Choir

The 2015-2016 White Pine High School Singers, shortly after their performance at the Clark County Advanced Choral Festival.



2016 was Anthony Turner. Turner, recently retired choir director, has conducted choirs for Washoe County School District and the Northern Zone. He has also been an adjudicator, a clinician, and a director of many choirs in the Reno-Sparks region. Turner worked in the Washoe County School District for 31 years as a music specialist for kindergarten through twelfth grade, where he taught general music, middle school/high school choral music, and music history. He received his B.M.E. from Wartburg College.

The following students of White Pine High School made 2016 NENZ Honor Choir: Altos Aaleeah Jacobsen, Britney Kingston, Cambria Poulsen, Jill Van Tassel, Kendra Thompson, Kimber Loftus, Paige Horsley, and Rachael Jones; basses Gavin Henriod, Henry McOmber, Henry Sorensen, Macrae Windous, Marco Pacheco, Samuel Stewart, Seth Robertson, Sharmyn Brewster; sopranos Allison Thompson, Emmaline Sorensen, Hannah Barber, Kamrin Herring, Madison Panagopoulos, and Maryn Van Tassel; and tenors Caysen Connell, Collin Young, Gabe Harris, Jonathan Gonzalez, McKean Windous.

White Pine also had three section leaders. All students have to submit audition recordings in order to be selected to Honor Choir. The audition include singing intervals, singing a chromatic scale, and performing an excerpt from one of the musical selections (all without piano accompaniment). The recordings are then sent to Elko where they are adjudicated by music educators. The students who score the highest in each section (alto, tenor, bass, soprano) are selected as section leaders. Section leaders are expected to take attendance for their section and to be models in the rehearsal process. The three White Pine section leaders for 2016 were Colln Young and Gabe Harris for the tenor section, and Henry Sorensen for the bass section.

Additionally, students who have been Honor Choir participants for all four years of high school are recognized at the concert. White Pine's Seth Robertson received this accolade. Robertson has actually been a member of the WPHS Singers for five years; he began as an eighth grader. But

students must actually be in high school to be considered for the Honor Choir.

WPHS director Adam Young required all students in the choir to audition for Honor Choir, 27 of whom qualified for the Honor Choir.

It is a great experience for students to branch out of their comfort zone and sing with singers from different schools. Robertson reported his favorite part about Honor Choir was the concert. "I liked being able to see all of our work being put into play." Having the final piece in action was magical.

The WPHS Singers will be having their 15th Annual Benefit Concert on November 9 at 7:00PM. This is the first home concert of the year... There are quite a few freshmen in this year's group, and so much of the work up to this point in the semester has been focused on learning about music: how to sight read notes and rhythms, how to train the ear to recognize intervals, how to blend as a section, and how to add expression to music.

At the concert, the Singers will perform a Kenyan Folk Song, Wana Baraka; a lively piece with only numbers as words composed by Kevin A. Memley, entitled Count On It; a selection from the musical "Rent" called Seasons of Love; and a beautiful and simple number arranged by Andy Beck called Something Told the Wild Geese. The choir will conclude with Z. Randall Stroope's "Amor de Mi Alma," the piece that brought the audience in Elko to its feet when performed by the WPHS Singers at the Honor Choir concert. This selection features a profound Spanish text about love and devotion. Singers break into eight parts and contrast soaring, powerful crescendos with intense and intimate pianissimos.

The Benefit Concert will be on the WPHS Stage on November 9, tickets can be purchased at the door for a mere \$3. Proceeds will go to the choir's uniform and travel fund. The WPHS Singers, along with several guest performers from the community, will be putting on a fantastic program and encourage you to bring all your friends and family for a fun night full of beautiful music!

National Honor Society Inducts Members

by Hailey Ernest
Digital Publishing Staff

All around the country each fall, high school students spend hours crafting essays, soliciting references, and listing activities so that they can be considered for membership in the prestigious National Honor Society. At WPHS, the E.H. Ward NHS chapter recently inducted 20 new members at its annual ceremony.

The National Honor Society has four pillars set as expectations to which students are expected to aspire.

The first pillar is scholarship. Scholarship is characterized by a commitment to learning. This pillar can only be achieved through diligence and effort. Scholarship means always doing the best work possible, regardless of impending reward.

The next pillar is service--the willingness to work for the benefit of those in need without compensation or recognition of any kind. NHS is highly concerned with giving its all to the school and community at large.

The next pillar is leadership. Leaders

take the initiative to aid others in a wholesome manner throughout daily activities and sacrifice their personal interests in order to yield to the needs of others. Some examples of leadership include heading group activities in the classroom and in the community, being an officer in a club, being a primary member of the band or choir or being captain of a sports team.

The last pillar is character. Character is what distinguishes one individual from another. It is the product of constant striving to make the right choices day after day. Students with good character demonstrate respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship in all of their actions.

On a local level, WPHS expects NHS members to be all around good people, to represent all of the pillars, and to be students of high integrity. Students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.4 and complete a ten question application. Kelly Sturgeon is the NHS advisor. Her idea on the value of students being involved in NHS, "One of the core values of NHS is character and a lot of times we don't know our character until we have actually served and NHS is a community service organiza-



White Pine High School's 2016 National Honor Society inductees.

tion. We do things for other people and it is not a self served organization. One of the most fundamental ways to build character is sacrificing and doing things for others. I think there is so much value in doing that and that is why I always tell the kids that they have earned their cords."

WPHS's NHS 2016-17 officers are Toby Sturgeon, Delaney Marich, Ena Lester, and Henry Sorenson. New inductees

include Hannah Barber, Zachary Bellander, Michayla Cessford, Hailey Ernest, Lily Fullmer, Rebecca Hall, Gage Hunt, Britney Kingston, Johnathan Kunz, Bailey Leshner, Kimberlyn Loftus, Lanette Marshall, Henry McOmber, Cambria Poulsen, Mikinley Prengel, Zachery Santaita, Henry Sorenson, Kendra Thompson, Maryn Van Tassel, and Collin Young.

Students Take Challenge to Celebrate Education

by Collin Young
Digital Publishing Staff

It seems to be a popular pastime right now to condemn public education, including those who are students, teachers, administrators, and even parents who are "naive" enough to send their students there. But in White Pine, an effort is currently underway to share with the community the many inspirational efforts those involved in public education are making to improve education. This effort is in partial response to a challenge issued by nationally renowned educator Dr. John Draper, who recently visited White Pine to speak with the district staff and also parents and community members. Dr. Draper challenged educators to be more proactive in sharing the progress they make in the difficult work of inspiring learners. The WPHS Digital Publishing staff decided to create a video, featuring people from around the school community.

Teachers in this project have said things such as "We are here for the kids not the money."

One teacher stated, "It is inspiring to see that click in students when they finally get something after multiple times of explaining; to see that change in students is inspiring."

Another teacher shared, "I believe in a student's ability to teach other students after figuring out a problem."

A principal noted, "I believe in making a difference by knowing each student

and by helping each student to achieve what he or she wants to do."

Additionally, "The best part of school is seeing the students and interacting with them."

Another educator proclaimed, "My goal as an educator is to help kids progress through their classes instead of them just coasting through school."

Sharing these thoughts and others with viewers of the video will help them understand what motivates educators.

But the project is also about what students think and believe. It is important for people to understand how students in the system view the system and those who teach them. One student shared, "Something that encourages me is when teachers are willing to help me individually when I need that kind of help."

A middle school student commented, "My school secretary makes my day better by smiling at me and by saying hi whenever I see her."

And a high school student stated, "The best part about school is when I can be learning with my friends in a group. I like this because when I get stuck, there is always at least one who can help me through the problem and explain it in a way that I will understand."

The title of this project is Celebrate Education. Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The point of this project is to inspire students, teachers, and parents alike. We hope to inspire students to feel encouraged by



National educational expert Dr. John Draper speaks to community members at a recent luncheon. The Digital Publishing Staff's Celebrate Education Project is a response to Dr. Draper's challenge to educators to do a better job of showcasing the successes of public schools.

their teachers and feel more comfortable to come to school and be in challenging classes. We hope to inspire teachers to feel more connected to their students to allow them to reach out and help more individual students. We hope to inspire parents to feel proud of their kids going to White Pine County School District. We hope to inspire other schools their pursuit of higher levels of learning.

The project will take most of the year to record, edit, and polish. The class hopes to present the project to the National Schools Public Relations Association upon completion.

If you would like to be involved in this project, please contact Digital Publishing staff member Collin Young at 775.293.1797.

Preparing for Success on the ACT

by Collin Young
Digital Publishing Staff

The Nevada Department of Education recently changed graduation requirement starting with the Class of 2015. All juniors in Nevada must take the ACT as a measure of College and Career Readiness. With that, one must study in order to score well on the ACT. Too many high school students seem to think that earning a high score on this exam will occur by accident or osmosis. But in reality, there is a very small chance of scoring well without studying. With that, there are some steps students can take to purposefully plan for success on the ACT.

First, I signed up for the test. This may sound obvious, but the deadlines can sneak up unsuspecting teenagers, even when parents constantly remind and nag. It's important to plan ahead when signing up because the deadline for registration is one month prior to the administration of the test. Check sports schedules and other weekend activities in order to determine which test date is optimal.

Second, I downloaded the ACT Online Prep app. The ACT Online Prep app is a great tool in helping to study. It sets up a whole plan and students can choose when they want to finish the course. There

are four main subjects in the app. Science, Math, Reading, and English.

I started on Math. It went through a few subjects of Math, then had me take a test including all of the little subjects I went through, and then it took me to Reading. It did the same thing for Reading, went to Science, went to English, and then went back to Math. Once it got back to Math, it had me take another short test on the previous Math terms that I had learned, and then it introduced more.

The app continued this process until I had gone through all of the knowledge terms that are covered on the ACT. Once I went through all of them, it had me go back to the ones that I didn't do well on. This app was a great guide in my studying. I learned a lot, including how to manage my time, and how to use test taking strategies such as allotting a certain amount of time per question, problem solving when attacking a question, reading quickly and more. The only downside was that this app costs money: \$40. However, that was for a whole year's membership so really it is only about 11 cents per day. It is a great tool and I highly recommend it.

Third, I set apart a time every single day where I could study. I found it important to block this time out because of the nuances that appear on the ACT but aren't explicitly taught in my high school classes. I knew that if I didn't make the

time to study, I wouldn't gain exposure to some of the items on the test. This might mean the difference between a 30 (which is outstanding) and a 33 (which is full ride scholarship material).

Fourth, I searched for some of the ACT Analysis Writing Prompts so that I could practice for the writing portion of the ACT. Studying for writing is a much more sophisticated endeavor than studying for the other portions of the test. I wanted to read sample essays and have practice responding to the prompts as opposed to coming into the writing section cold.

Fifth, I printed out my ACT student ticket. This is important because I had to upload a picture to the ACT site and then bring my identification to the test even though the school counselor (who is also my aunt) knows me by sight. The test administrator must provide written verification that each student provided identification to be admitted to the test. In the past, students could show up to the ACT without even being on the roster and still sit for the exam. But in today's world of paranoid test security, don't expect to sit for the test unless all documentation has been correctly submitted.

One of the reasons I study so much for the ACT is because I want to earn scholarships for college. Education is free in high school, but afterwards it becomes much more expensive. I hope to offset this cost

by earning scholarships. A second reason that I work so hard is because I want to be the valedictorian of my class. The WPHS Student and Parent Handbook, in reference to determining the valedictorian, states, "In case of a tie, the student with the higher ACT score prevails." Third, I am a very competitive person and earning a high ACT score will always give me bragging rights over other nefarious individuals in my class who shall remain nameless. And last, I can't let my big brother beat me! I still have a ways to go to be able to outscore his 34 composite, but I am determined to do it.

Once again, I would like to stress the importance of putting in the time to study for not only the ACT, but for anything that you are working towards. When we want to be great athletes, we practice! When we want to be great musicians, we practice! When we want to be great students, we practice! And if we want to score well on the ACT, we must practice! Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of "the fierce urgency of now." His words were directed towards the Civil Rights Movement. But they could also be applied to us as high school students. Don't procrastinate! And don't think there will always be time tomorrow to do something. When preparing for the ACT or for other endeavors, we should all understand "the fierce urgency of now" and motivate ourselves to practice and prepare.