

District 49 Dispatch

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Evans International Elementary School fifth-grade students May 6 at the USAFA Equestrian Center for Pioneer Movement Day. (District 49/Sam Dosen)

EIES Pioneer New Learning Methods

By: Sam Dosen

Digital Communications Manager

Evans International Elementary School fifth-graders had the opportunity to explore social studies and science units at the United States Air Force Academy Equestrian Center, May 6, for Pioneer Movement Day. Students reviewed units in a Movement Method based way with ten stations designed to learn more about animal adaptation, Native American history, art expression, shelter building and much more.

Volunteers from the USAFA community manned the ten stations, fostering the connection between our military community and schools, by reviewing materials and allowing exposure to movement and nature to trigger interest and emotional health for students.

"Movement method is a framework for teachers to allow true integration, help students reconnect with nature and develop problem solving skills," explained Bianca Rimbach, fifth-grade teacher at EIES. "The philosophy is based on allowing children to move, and do as much as possible in nature. This field trip was an innovative idea by Emilee Huff to integrate our training and understand to allow students the most effective access to learning and growth."

"The thing I love about this field trip is I get to spend time with the animals, and I love nature," said Inis Magana, fifth-grader at EIES. "I love to learn everything about animals!"

EIES students rotated through the ten stations, where they were exposed to different experiences and opportunities to work with animals, build shelters, encounter new materials, and learn about the westward expansion.

"I think this is a fun field trip because we get to see the animals and play with them," stated Brianna Martinez, fifth-grader. "We also got to make boats, but the animals are my favorite part!"



Bianca Rimbach, fifth-grade teacher at EIES, working with students May 6 at the USAFA Equestrian Center for Pioneer Movement Day. (District 49/Sam Dosen)

Woodmen Hills Teacher Honored by Down Syndrome Association



Stephanie Kelley and her daughter, Faith Newcomb, student at Woodmen Hills Elementary School, show appreciation to Jennifer Sims, special education teacher, May 9. (District 49/Amy Matissek)

By Amy Matissek
Internal Communications Manager

Jennifer Sims, special education teacher at Woodmen Hills Elementary, received an appreciation award May 9 from the Colorado Springs Down Syndrome Association. Stephanie Kelley, WHES parent, nominated Sims for the accolades.

“When my daughter, Faith Newcomb, was born with Down Syndrome, one of my first thoughts was that she would struggle in school,” Kelley shared. “Because of Mrs. Sims, I can confidently send Faith to school knowing she is safe, well cared for and loved ... Faith is thriving because of the dedication of Mrs. Sims.”

Thank you, Mrs. Sims! You are a gift to Faith and her mother. Faith will be a fifth-grader at WHES this fall.

FMS Firebirds Go for Launch on Space Camp Adventure

By: David Nancarrow
Director of Communications

Two Falcon Middle School Firebirds will take the field trip of a lifetime this summer. Alease Church and Gavin Adams have confirmed spots at Space Camp where they will train like astronauts. Located at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., Space Camp boasts a unique, hands-on, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) experience for students of all ages.

The all-expense paid trip is sponsored by Northrop Grumman, which provided scholarships for two students and a teacher to share this adventure. FMS opened up the opportunity for all students to earn a scholarship, encouraging them to submit a video explaining why they’d like to be Space Campers.

Alease and Gavin, both FMS seventh-graders, emerged as the two nominated students. At an all-school assembly April 5, the

soon-to-be traveling STEM learners were announced as the recipients by Christina Thomas, a representative from Northrop Grumman.

“The goal is to send them to Space Camp to spark and ignite a love and understanding of science,” Thomas said. “They’ll get to do the anti-gravity machine, all kinds of different simulations, problem-solving, working as a team, learning about logistics and some of the things astronauts do in space,” she added.

Alease has some big-picture plans for her week in Alabama. “I’m excited to be able to try out everything and see if I would want to pursue it as a career,” she said. Gavin wants to get his hands on the NASA technology. “I’m just excited. It looks pretty cool,” he said. “There’s a gyrosphere-- you’re trying to park it and get it stabilized.”

FMS science teacher Peggy Browne will accompany Gavin and Alease on the trip, scheduled for July 2019.



Northrop Grumman representative Christina Thomas (right) congratulates, Alease Church, Gavin Adams and Peggy Browne (left) for their selection to attend Space Camp, Summer of 2019. (District 49/David Nancarrow)

D49 Shows Support for Military Families in April

By: David Nancarrow
Director of Communications

A sunny day and warm greetings welcomed military connected families and community members alike to D49’s 3rd Annual Military Family Appreciation Day.

Some visitors to the April 27 event stopped to let their kids take a turn in the bounce house, or grab a snow cone from the Kona Ice truck set up in the front courtyard of Sand Creek High School.

Inside SCHS local businesses and vendors spread out in the commons and gym offering information on their products or educational opportunities.

“We just registered and went to orientation for my five-year-old,” said CW2 Jacob Burleson. Burleson wandered through the crowd with his young son, visiting the display staffed by a team from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

“I don’t see many folks do this, so this is nice to see,” Burleson shared. “It helps my wife out and gives the kids something to do. Hopefully she can meet someone here friends wise and just be able to link up with them.”

The event began with an opening ceremony featuring the National Anthem, presentation of colors and Service Branch recognition by the SCHS JrROTC. At midday, visitors paused for a brief service to recognize two D49 alumni who were killed in action while serving in the U.S. military.

“We want our visitors to know, our military community to know, that we are here to support them,” said Melissa Dashner, D49’s military student transition consultant.

Military appreciation day followed a Purple Up Day earlier in the week which invited D49 staff, students and families to wear purple to show their support for military connected students. Paired with the event for families at SCHS, Dashner believes D49 is sharing a clear message.

“This lets all the other community [members] know that we’re banding together for our military community and we’re here for them for anything they need,” Dashner said.



Community members visited SCHS D49’s 3rd Annual Military Family Appreciation Day, April 27. (District 49/David Nancarrow)

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VRHS Unified Team Scores Big with Student Body



Zachary Adams, freshman, heads onto the court to take on the El Paso County Sheriff's Office team during the Unified basketball game April 24 at Vista Ridge High School. (District 49/Amy Matissek)

By: Amy Matissek
Internal Communications Manager

Camaraderie and excitement filled the gym at Vista Ridge High School April 24 for the Unified basketball game against the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. Unified basketball brings together students with and without disabilities on the same athletic team, and promotes inclusion through sports.

"At Vista Ridge, we try to incorporate inclusion in everything we do," shared Diane Dumas, special education teacher. Just recently, the school was recognized as a Special Olympics Unified Champion School for building a community for everyone through activities that affect school-wide change.

Students, band members and cheerleaders all attended the game to root for their school's Unified Team, but support began well before the event.

Junior Isaiah Watkins, along with the Advanced Leadership Club, helped organize a campaign the week prior to generate awareness for students with disabilities. The leadership club members gave away bracelets

and t-shirts to promote inclusion. "Awareness is key to it all," shared Watkins.

The team's players believe building relationships is a key component of the Unified games. "Being on the Unified Team is an opportunity to create a smile," commented Mark King, senior. "It's good to know I can help someone else."

Sergeant Travis Kitowski with the EPCSO shared similar sentiments. "The sheriff's office is really big on community support," he stated. "It's fun for us to get involved as much as we can." This was the second year in a row the officers took on the challenge of playing the VRHS Unified Team.



Although the Unified games are about the importance of promoting inclusion of all students, the team showed up prepared to play hard. "I'm going to do my best," shared Andrew Bonser, junior on the team. "It helps we have a secret weapon that is good at stealing the ball."

The spirit of the team aided them well as the VRHS Unified Team rolled to a victory with a score of 46-22.



Kaycee De Los Santos, senior, shows off her ball-handling skills during the Unified basketball game April 24 at Vista Ridge High School. The team, which consists of students with and without disabilities, took on a team from the El Paso County Sheriff's office. (District 49/Amy Matissek)

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GRADUATION 2019



Trinity Murphy, Student of the Year award winner and Coke Scholarship winner, receiving her awards during Springs Studio for Academic Excellence graduation ceremony May 17 at the Doubletree Hotel. (District 49/Sam Dosen)



Rebecca Knoche, salutatorian, addresses her classmates during commencement exercises May 25 at The Broadmoor World Arena. (District 49/Amy Matisek)



Falcon High School graduates celebrate one of life's biggest milestones May 25 at The Broadmoor World Arena. (District 49/Amy Matisek)



More than 330 VRHS seniors received their diplomas during the commencement ceremony May 25 at The Broadmoor World Arena. (District 49/David Nancarrow)



District 49 Home School Program students celebrate their moment onstage at the Creekside Success Center May 18. (District 49/Aaron Villegas)



Congratulations Power Technical School Students, Class of 2019, you made it! The Power Technical School held their first Completion Ceremony May 23, at the Pinery on the Hill in Colorado Springs. (District 49/Aaron Villegas)



Jade Phinn, graduate of Pikes Peak Early College, receiving her diploma from Rochelle Kolhouse, principal May 20 at the Antler's Hotel. (District 49/Sam Dosen)



Angela Pretzeus, student commencement speaker for Patriot High School's graduation ceremony May 17 at Hotel Elegante. (District 49/Sam Dosen)

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That one Time We had a Snow Day in May...

By: David Nancarrow
Director of Communications

As the district continued its sprint to the end of the '18-'19 school year and graduation crept ever closer for the D49 Class of 2019, Mother Nature roared a final time, disrupting a Tuesday in May.

Specifically, May 21, the final Tuesday of the school year.

A heavy, wet, snow system pummeled areas of the Pikes Peak region including a significant portion of District 49 territory. Heavy bands of snow created impassable conditions along major traffic corridors we use to get students to school and staff to work.

District 49 accordingly closed May 21, and our Facebook followers shared images of the storm moving in Monday, May 20, as well as what they woke up to on that snowy Tuesday. And on the next day, D49 returned to business as usual. The hard work of district support staff who put in extra shifts to keep campuses safe ensured District 49 could prioritize safety and pursue learning through a busy severe weather season by district standards.



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We Want to Hear From You!

District 49 opens a survey after every weather event to learn from our community what went well and how we can improve our communications or decision making. Join the conversation by taking the surveys through our D49 App.

Search for "Colorado School District 49" in the Google Play Store or App Store.



Jessica Hausmann shared this photo from her home near WHES in the Falcon Zone May 21. "Was glad to see this call this morning," she commented. "I swear there was almost a foot of snow outside this morning." (Facebook/Jessica Hausmann)



Josh Gordon posted this photo from his neighborhood May 21, a snow day for District 49, with a simple comment: "Good call." (Facebook/Josh Gordon)

D49 Students Win from Amazing Pageant Experience



Aislynn Cates, sixth-grader at Falcon Middle School, participated in the Colorado Miss Amazing pageant March 30. The event transcends pageantry, creating a platform for girls with disabilities to have their voices heard and their faces recognized.

By: Amy Matissek
Internal Communications Manager

There is a place in the spotlight for learners like Aislynn Cates, a sixth-grader at Falcon Middle School. “It made me feel unique, and like I can do anything,” shared Cates. She and other D49 students took the stage at the Colorado Miss Amazing pageant March 30. The event transcends pageantry, creating a platform for girls with disabilities to have their voices heard and their faces recognized.

Kyra Brockberg, seventh-grader at FMS, and Makiyla Dunson, ninth-grader at Falcon High School, also participated in the event at the PACE Center in Parker to share their abilities, ambitions and dreams. Each of the girls completed the competition with lessons learned. “I like it because it gives us

confidence, especially those who are shy,” shared Brockberg, who was crowned queen of the preteen group, while Cates earned the title of first-runner up of the preteens.

Dunson highlighted her abilities by participating in the talent portion.

Best of all, lifelong friendships developed because of Colorado Miss Amazing. The event is for the entire community to witness the impact of this program. “It is a truly empowering experience for girls and women who have disabilities,” commented Jennifer Hills, D49 teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. “The pageant focuses on the fantastic abilities of each and every participant.”

Colorado is one of 30 states across the country to host Miss Amazing events, and approximately 100 girls in the state have participated in the program since 2017.





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UK Educators Learn With Charter School Counterparts in D49

By: David Nancarrow
Director of Communications

During Teacher Appreciation Week, District 49 shared a look at the Colorado side of a teacher exchange at Banning Lewis Ranch Academy. BLRA hosted a team of teachers from the United Kingdom who traveled to Colorado Springs during their spring break in April to visit and learn from their American counterparts at BLRA. This exchange also allowed BLRA elementary school teachers to travel to Great Britain and work with educators in the U.K. “It’s been fantastic! We’ve been given such a warm welcome,” said Martha Burnige, an executive from BLRA’s exchange schools in the U.K. “Shannon [Molnar, BLRA principal] and this team are fantastic. The teachers are so dedicated. We love the atmosphere.”



Kirsty Canty, elementary school teacher from the U.K., passes out postcards written by students at her school to students in Ms. Benders’ class during a teacher exchange with BLRA in April. (District 49/David Nancarrow)



Richard Keightley, elementary school teacher visiting from the U.K., chats with BLRA students during recess April 8. (District 49/David Nancarrow)



Sharon Meredith, elementary school teacher from the U.K., works with students in Ms. Ramos’ class during a teacher exchange with BLRA in April. (District 49/David Nancarrow)