

Visit The District's Digital Home at [D49.org](http://D49.org)The District 49 Dispatch is printed quarterly by  
School District 49 - 10850 E Woodmen Rd - Peyton CO 80831-8127.  
Postmaster: Direct address changes/corrections to the printers address.

Vol 2, No. 1 • Jan. 13, 2017

# Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence Awards District 49

**By Matt Meister**  
Communications Director

District 49 earned a 2016 Timberline level Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence Award

Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence is a non-profit organization serving as the regional organization for the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program through the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Baldrige Framework for Excellence, a proven best-practice program, evaluates organizations in seven areas: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement; analysis and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results, according to the RMPEX website.

"The Timberline award recognizes organizations that have mature processes for the overall performance

excellence requirements, as established in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program framework," said Jim Walker, RMPEX managing director, in a press release.

District 49 received the RMPEX Foothills level Performance Excellence Award in 2015. The 2016 Timberline award reveals a sustained commitment by District 49's employees in applying the Baldrige framework to all aspects of their organization.

Walker said RMPEX award honorees apply the Baldrige Framework for Excellence to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

"District 49's values to innovate and be creative are supported by a systematic approach for stimulating innovation and determining intelligent risks," said Walker.

"They employ systematic processes to collect and use data to drive performance, to listen to customers and to support their workforce."

"We are committed to improving our performance across the organization through the Baldrige framework," said Marie LaVere-Wright, District 49 Board of Education president.

"From Board of Education decisions down to the individual classroom, using and applying the framework to what we do is helping us provide a quality education and operate like an efficient business."

RMPEX awards are scheduled for presentation April 14 during a Quest for Excellence conference at the Auraria Campus in Denver.

## Public Meeting Notice

### New Elementary School Construction

**When:** Tuesday, Feb. 1  
6 p.m - 7:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Falcon Middle School  
9755 Towner Ave.  
Peyton, CO 80831



District 49 and El Paso County leaders present an opportunity for residents to learn about the overall scope of the project for the new elementary school to be built near Falcon Middle School. It's an opportunity to learn, ask questions and share concerns. More information available at [D49.org/3B](http://D49.org/3B).



# 3B Approved, Projects Move Forward

**By Matt Meister**  
Communications Director

Voters in District 49, one of the state's fastest growing school districts, overwhelmingly approved ballot question 3B, a mill levy override, according to El Paso County official general election results released Nov. 18.

"We have actively worked to engage with our community in a patient conversation over the last year," said Marie LaVere-Wright, District 49 Board of Education president.

"We learned that investing in our schools and teachers is important, but not at the expense of increasing taxes."

The final results released by the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder revealed District 49 residents supported 3B at historic levels, a nearly 2-to-1 margin.

Issue 3B involved four strategic priorities, including new school construction and more competitive teacher salaries, without increasing property tax rates.

The ballot language approved by voters requires all funding to benefit schools; no funds will be spent on administration.

"We found a way to support students, teachers and taxpayers," said Brett Ridgway, chief business officer, watching the results on election day.

"We will continue to be transparent and accountable during the numerous construction projects and new investment in our educators as a result of today's vote."



The citizen-led committee that formed to provide oversight for an approved mill levy override in 2014, will bring the same public accountability to 3B funds. Expenditure requests and committee recommendations are shared at [D49.org](http://D49.org).

Community members may follow the committee's progress at [D49.org/MLO-oversight](http://D49.org/MLO-oversight).

"The partnership between a strong school district and an engaged community cannot be overstated," said LaVere-Wright.

"We thank our community for participating in the process and choosing to invest in District 49 as we provide a world-class education for the next generation."

### Four Priorities

The 3B ballot language defines four priorities for the new investment in District 49 schools and teachers:

1. Attracting and retaining highly effective teachers by offering salaries and benefits that are competitive with other districts in El Paso County;
2. Making priority capital improvements to restore and refurbish all existing educational facilities on a regular pattern going forward;
3. Investing in the traditional high schools to ensure

the buildings provide equitable opportunities for students, and safe and effective environments for student achievement;

4. Constructing two K-5 neighborhood schools, in order to serve current demand in the central and northern portions of the district.

### Next Steps

Finance, planning and design phases are underway for 3B's projects.

The business office is finalizing credit ratings, offering statements and performing other tasks necessary to bring certificates of participation to market. Initial funding for 3B projects is expected to arrive in March.

School accountability committees are working with the mill levy oversight committee to finalize restoration and refurbishing projects at existing schools. Design work continues for additions and remodeling projects at the three traditional high schools.

Site development plans, surveys, design and other pre-construction work is underway on the two new elementary schools, approved by 3B. Site preparation work on the new elementary school along Meridian Road is expected to begin this summer.

Updates on important project milestones will be provided in upcoming issues of the District 49 Dispatch. Other project information will be added to the district website at [D49.org/3B](http://D49.org/3B), as planning details are finalized and construction work begins.



# FEF Awards Mini Grants to Innovative Educators



Cat Giadone, an art teacher at Ridgeview Elementary School, is awarded a mini grant by Corrie Chapman from the Falcon Education Foundation during "Fantastic 49" recognition Nov. 10, ahead of a Board of Education meeting in District 49. Falcon Education Foundation representatives awarded \$23,500 to teachers who proposed innovative projects that require funding outside traditional means. In total, 33 mini grants will enable new levels of creativity in classrooms. Giadone received \$995 for "Glamorous Glazes for Ridgeview Roses," where approximately 130 fifth-graders will use Laguna pottery glazes for rose creations. After 8 years as an art teacher, it'll be the first time she's shown children the vibrancy of low-fired glazes. The grants are made possible by community philanthropy, which surges each April during a silent auction and fundraiser. (District 49/Dustin Senger)

## By Dustin Senger

Digital Communication Specialist

Falcon Education Foundation representatives awarded \$23,500 to teachers during "Fantastic 49" recognition Nov. 10, ahead of a Board of Education meeting.

In total, 33 mini grants will enable new levels of creativity in classrooms. The Falcon Education Foundation heard from 75 teachers proposing innovative projects, each requiring funding outside traditional means.

Corrie Chapman, board director, urged

more involvement in the foundation's annual silent auction and fundraiser in April, when teachers, parents and community members converge in support of innovation in education.

Cat Giadone, an art teacher at Ridgeview Elementary School, received \$995 for "Glamorous Glazes for Ridgeview Roses," where approximately 130 fifth-graders will use Laguna pottery glazes for rose creations. After 8 years as an art teacher, it'll be the first time she's shown children the vibrancy of low-fired glazes.

Lura Moore, a science teacher at Skyview Middle School, received \$1,554 to fund two projects, titled "SeaPerch Design Challenge" and "Operation Montserrat e-Mission."

Mary Lougee, a science teacher at Vista Ridge High School, received \$615 for "Build a Bovine," which will allow 11th- and 12th-graders to reconstruct a cow skeleton.

Lougee says future anatomy and bio-med students will be able to continuously deconstruct and re-articulate the skeleton.

"This program is 'udderly' unique," said Lougee in her application.

"To my knowledge it has never been done before with high school students, and only rarely with college students.

"We will be re-assembling a cow skeleton in such way that it can be taken apart, and put together again, over and over. It will be displayed in a plexiglass case."

Learn more about the Falcon Education Foundation, including opportunities to provide support, at [D49.org/FEF](http://D49.org/FEF).

## DISPATCH

### Board of Education:

President, Marie LaVere-Wright  
Vice-President, David Moore  
Secretary, Tammy Harold  
Treasurer, Kevin Butcher  
Director, John Graham

### Administration:

Chief Education Officer, Peter Hilts  
Chief Business Officer, Brett Ridgway  
Chief Operations Officer, Jack Bay  
Communications Director, Matt Meister

This newspaper is an authorized publication of District 49. The editorial content of the Dispatch is the responsibility of the District 49 communications department. Tel: 719.495.1151. The email address is [info@d49.org](mailto:info@d49.org). Printed circulation is 32,000 copies.

The Dispatch is printed by Colorado Springs Military Newspaper Group, a private firm in no way connected with District 49. It is published four times per year.

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by School District 49 or the Colorado Springs Military Newspaper Group, of the products or services advertised. The publisher reserves the right to reject advertisements.

All correspondence or queries regarding advertising should be directed to Colorado Springs Military Group, 235 S. Nevada Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903, phone 634-5905.

The Dispatch's editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the District 49 communications department, 10850 E. Woodmen Rd., Peyton, CO, 80831, phone 495-1151. Reproduction of editorial material is authorized. Please credit accordingly.

## DOGGIE DUDE RANCH DAYCARE & OVERNIGHT BOARDING



Becky Lehn, owner  
Desiree Brown, manager  
**719-683-2902**  
**719-649-4180**  
**1360 N. Curtis Rd.**

*Occasional Siberian Husky & Alaskan Malamute puppies*

Like us on Facebook [lehnup@earthlink.net](mailto:lehnup@earthlink.net)

★ **Military Discount** ★

**"YOUR DOG'S HOME ON THE RANGE"**



# Fourth-graders Study Government, Vote During Election Day

**By Dustin Senger**  
Digital Communications Specialist

With elections occurring Nov. 8 across their country, dozens of fourth-graders in the Falcon area of El Paso County tackled their own heavily debated issue: Dogs or cats?

Catherine Watson, a fourth-grade teacher at Meridian Ranch Elementary School, started the day's lessons discussing the process of popular and electoral votes. She showcased various political party symbols and established campaign practices.

"Why do you think the debates are so important," said Watson, walking between clusters of desks, where 3-4 students, between 9 and 10 years old, gripped onto pencils, notebooks and clipboards.

A student suggested debates are opportunities for candidates to "tell people how they feel about stuff." Another explained how the process encourages people to vote, and ensures they know more about who their next president might be.

During her three years at Meridian Ranch Elementary School, Watson has helped fourth-graders each November understand how elections work, and how they're a contest of opinions, and how people argue positions to influence opinions.

She says the effort establishes a firm foundation of knowledge for more advanced lessons in middle and high school.

Last year, her class sent a letter to Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado's 5th Congressional District. Lamborn represents residents in the Pikes Peak region, including El Paso County.

This year, Watson's lessons started with a parent's presentation.

During a PTA huddle, Rosie Suerdieck asked to support civics lessons. She studied political science and philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. A spouse of a military officer, she wound up working on Capitol Hill for nearly four years, as a legislative assistant and constituency adviser. She wrote speeches and drafted laws. "Government can be a difficult concept for kids, and a bit abstract with how it impacts their daily lives," said Suerdieck, during her presentation Nov. 4 in the school's gymnasium.

"I just want to help children understand that our system is a beautiful one," she said. "Our founding fathers set up our government so the power never goes to one person; it always stays with the people."

After illustrating how the federal government works, from its three branches to ensuring states' rights, Suerdieck flipped through candidate portraits, as mixed reactions erupted. Nearly every child was familiar with at least one candidate.

"Politics is for the people — I'm only here to talk about how government works," said Suerdieck. "Politics takes personal research."

Watson says Suerdieck's involvement was critical to helping students understand how politics connect to career options, and why



Fourth-grader Gabriella Eberhart, 10, frames an argument for why dogs are better animals than cats while learning about elections Nov. 8 at Meridian Ranch Elementary School in District 49. During her three years at Meridian Ranch Elementary School, teacher Catherine Watson has helped fourth-graders each November understand how elections work, and how they're a contest of opinions, and how people argue positions to influence opinions. She says the effort establishes a firm foundation of knowledge for more advanced lessons in middle and high school. "Why do you think the debates are so important," said Watson. A student suggested debates are opportunities for candidates to "tell people how they feel about stuff." Another explained how the process encourages people to vote, and ensures they know more about who their next president might be. (District 49/Dustin Senger)

it's an important area of study.

"They already know about all these different people," said Watson, discussing the unavoidable political advertisements in a swing state like Colorado. They're well-known to show during television programs, and in YouTube playlists.

"We want them to know the process of campaigning and the whole presidential election. These are people trying to get your vote; they know you hold the power."

### 'Two animals'

"It's now Nov. 8, and millions of voters are heading to polling stations to cast their votes," said Watson, preparing the fourth-graders for a contested debate. "We will have to wait for the winner, or who got the most votes."

"We're going to simulate our own election," she said. "We're going to think about two animals, and consider which one is best. ... These are two animals that people tend to have strong feelings about."

She drew headings for "dogs" and "cats" on a whiteboard. As students mentioned

positive aspects of each, she wrote down their ideas. Next, they gathered into groups to discuss their positions, and how to separate facts from opinions.

They debated the differences between dogs and cats. Considering companionship, students praised dogs for alerting people of dangers, and cats for being self-reliant and less demanding.

"Dogs can sense bad people and things, and save lives," said fourth-grader Gabriella Eberhart, 10. Also in support of dogs, classmate Sadie Slezak, 9, added, "Dogs can be protective while cats just freak out."

"If you have a negative about the other side, it needs to be backed up," said Watson. "You have to be able to say, 'What evidence do I have to support my claim?'"

As students tried to persuade opposing teams, conflicting opinions stirred reactions, as Watson ensured each voice had minimal interruptions. Students cited evidence concerning which animal is messier, or more easily startled or destructive.

"Do you see how it really does come down to opinions," said Watson. "Some of you are saying, 'but that's a good thing,' or 'no, dogs

don't do that, or cats don't do that.' Maybe it's not always fact. Do we see that it really comes down to opinions?"

Watson handed out flash cards for her classroom ballot box, instructing each student to write down his or her favorite animal, and then sign their card to certify, "this is my vote and this is what I think."

"What would happen if nobody on your team votes," said Watson. A student described how "it'd increase the chance of the other side winning."

After counting votes on a table, Watson declared dogs the winner, as students speculated that some of their peers had covertly changed their minds.

"Whatever the choice of the popular vote, whether or not you're excited about it, you have to move forward with it," said Watson, as questions led to discussions of checks and balances, and how involved electorates keep politicians accountable.

"I've learned about how people vote," said Sadie. "We're the most powerful part of government, so I think it's important that our voices are heard."

AWARDED INTERNET PROVIDER FOR DISTRICT 49

# FALCON BROADBAND

Speed-of-Light Services

## (719) 573-5343

[www.FalconBroadband.Net](http://www.FalconBroadband.Net)

A man and a young girl are sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. The man is pointing at the screen, and the girl is smiling. There are some colorful markers and a pencil on the desk.

Four social media icons are displayed in a row: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.



# Students Recognize Veterans Through Song, Celebration

By Kayla Maldonado

Marketing and Communications Specialist

"The veterans are coming!" said a student at Woodmen Hills Elementary School as she eagerly peered down the school's hallway. She was joined by her classmates who were holding signs for those who served and currently serve in the U.S. military.

The "American Walk" parade was part of Veterans Day activities Nov. 11 hosted by staff and students. Veterans were invited to the school to attend a musical performance and participate in the walk.

"It's like a parade, but you are our parade," said Sherese Taylor, counselor. "Welcome home. We so graciously want to thank you for your service."

Students lined the halls holding signs with phrases like "thank you" and "go USA." Handshakes, high-fives and smiles were exchanged as the veterans filled the school's foyer and began to walk down its hallways. They were invited to coffee and cookies in the cafeteria after the walk.

"It brings back a lot of good feelings about serving," said Greg Smith, U.S. Air Force veteran, "I appreciate it."

"They did a great job," said Ashley Dunning, who is currently serving in the U.S. Air Force. She praised the students' work in creating the signs they displayed.

Over 150 fourth-graders performed in a concert, singing songs like "Spirit of America" and "Thank You to Our Soldiers." They performed a military service song medley, where those serving were asked to stand when their branch's song was played.

"We're such a big military town, and it ties in with their history standards," said Melissa Ellenberger, music teacher. "We also studied the history behind each branch." She started teaching military service songs to students after 9/11, as a teacher in Connecticut.

Ellenberger says music is intrinsic to ceremonies, and Veterans Day is no different. "When don't we have music in a celebration?" she said.



(District 49/Kayla Maldonado)

**Heritage CLEANERS**  
Drive Thru

Hometown owner operators  
Jake and Debbie Autry

- School friendly
- Military friendly

**ALL work is done on premise**

**We take immense pride in the finished garments.**

**We do hemming, changing patches, ROTC, and all branches of military.**



**OPEN**  
M-F, 7:30a-6p  
Sat. 8:30a-2p

**7356 McLaughlin Rd.**

(between Meineke and Walgreens)

**719-886-7200**

**www.falcondrycleaning.com**



**POWERS**  
DENTAL • GROUP L.L.P.

**Saturday and Evening Appointments Available**

- Family Dental Care
- Invisalign
- Crowns and Bridges
- Teeth Whitening
- Wisdom Teeth
- Root Canal Therapy
- Implants



**Conveniently located on Powers Blvd.**

**Family Dentistry with a Soft Touch for Children, Parents & Grandparents**

**SAME DAY EMERGENCY CARE**



**CareCredit**  
Patient Payment Plans

**597-9737**

**www.powersdentalgroup.com**

★★★ Proudly Serving the Military for over 40 Years ★★★



# HMS students bring ‘JOI’ to foster children Christmas Carnival

By Matt Meister  
Communications Director

“We’ve been having a Christmas party at a church for the last 5 years,” said Scott Mayeux, Fostering Hope regional director. “They weren’t able to do it this year. Horizon (Middle School) called and asked how they could help.”

“It’s serendipitous that it happened on the same day,” said Mayeux.

Junior Optimist International club students at Horizon Middle School hosted families from the Fostering Hope Foundation Dec. 10 for the “You’re in Our Hearts” Christmas carnival.

Nearly 100 foster children and their families enjoyed carnival games, food, prizes, gifts, Christmas carols and time with Santa and Mrs. Claus during the carnival, held in the school’s gym.

“Sometimes foster kids feel stigmatized, that they are different because of their situation,” said Mayeux. “To have these middle schoolers treat them no different is such a gift for our kids.”

The entire event was developed, planned and built by the students in the JOI club.

“It’s really inspiring that we get to substitute this (Christmas gathering) for them,” said eighth-grader Jahzara Davis, 13, JOI club co-president. “It’s nice to know that even though they are dealing with hard situations that they get to celebrate the holidays and have a good time.”

The JOI club is sponsored by the Academy Optimist Club of Colorado Springs, the local chapter of Optimist International.

According to the organization’s website, adult volunteers join Optimist clubs to conduct positive service projects in their communities, helping empower young people to be the best that they can be.

Academy Optimist volunteers attend HMS JOI club meetings to encourage students, as they plan club activities.

“We vote on projects,” said eighth-grader Elise Clark, 14, JOI club co-president. “We’ve helped kids with cancer, veterans and hospitals before. This time we wanted to help foster kids.”

More than three-dozen HMS students participate in JOI club activities. After seeing the carnival flier, several members of the Sand Creek High School JOI club attended the event to help.

“It’s enjoyable,” said 11th-grader Chastine Rivera, 17, SCHS JOI club member. “Making an impact on other people is important.”

Participants earned tickets at carnival games and exchanged them for prizes specific to different age groups.

“We’ve got prizes for everyone, from stuffed animals to electronics,” said Chastine. Students raised support for the event by asking for donations of food and prizes from local businesses.

“The school allowed us to hold a hat day,” said Heather Ullrich, HMS teacher and JOI club co-sponsor.

“Students could pay \$1 to wear a hat and teachers could pay one dollar to wear jeans.” Ullrich says the impact that club makes in the community is only limited by the students’ creativity and imagination.

“It’s important to serve others,” said seventh-grader Isabela Goodridge, 12. “Some people may have a hard time and doing things like this shows a little effort can make a big difference.”

Editor’s Note: The faces of foster children were not photographed at the request of the Fostering Hope Foundation. The children had beaming smiles and shared many laughs at the carnival.



Horizon Middle School seventh-grader Isabela Goodridge, 12, helps a foster child and parent play skee-ball Dec. 10 at the ‘You’re in Our Hearts’ Christmas carnival. “We’ve been having a Christmas party at a church for the last five years,” said Scott Mayeux, Fostering Hope regional director. “They weren’t able to do it this year. Horizon (Middle School) called and asked how they could help.” (District 49/Matt Meister)

# READ THE CSBJ ON THE GO

## WE WANT TO HONOR YOU!

On the 15th of every month, take **15% OFF!**\*

**MILITARY DISCOUNT**

# 15% OFF\*

★ **Under New Ownership** ★

Valid at these Participating Stores on January 15th • February 15th • March 15th

- ★ 6048 Stetson Hills Blvd. ★
- ★ 4845 N. Academy Blvd. ★

\*Please present your military ID at the register

## Gentle Dental Care

Howard Short, D.M.D.

*Accepting United Concordia Insurance for military families!*

**Botox and Dermafill Treatment Available!**

**CALL FOR APPOINTMENT!**  
**719-574-7631**  
**5739 Constitution Ave.**  
(SW corner Constitution and Powers next to Walgreens)

**CARE CREDIT ACCEPTED**

## ASSOCIATES IN WOMEN’S CARE

### Dedicated to Women’s Health

Providing personalized Obstetric and Gynecologic care to women of all ages

**719-591-6666**  
6011 E. Woodmen Road, Suite 320  
[www.myobgyndocor.com](http://www.myobgyndocor.com)

**Dr. Andrea Lerch • Dr. Christine Ryan • Dr. Brent Shelton • Dr. Trudy Skiles • Sandy Winn, NPC**



# Students Strike Chord with Music Program

**By Kayla Maldonado**

Marketing and Communications Specialist

Students enrolled in the life skills course at Sand Creek High School and Falcon High School visit the Colorado Springs Conservatory twice monthly to participate in the “A Positive Note” music program.

According to the program’s website, the goal is for “all participants to access a sense of joy, self-discovery, belonging and accomplishment.”

The program was founded by musician Jordan “Jordy” Smith, after he suffered a brain injury caused by a car accident.

“It’s been quite a journey to get to this point,” said Smith, preparing the conservatory for the students. He said over 400 participants have benefited from the program.

After eating lunch Nov. 30, Sand Creek High School students boarded an elevator and headed to the lower level of the conservatory, where they joined Falcon High School students and took a seat in a circle.

Lewis Keller, Colorado Springs Conservatory lead

mentor, provided students with various types of drums and shakers and began to play a repetitive beat which the students followed. He then explained the term “improvisation,” and encouraged students to try the technique as he started the beat again.

Lewis said the communal aspect of the program provides a fun release for the students, and he enjoys watching them “come out of their shell.”

“It’s a joyful thing,” he said.

Participants gathered into smaller groups and traveled to rooms containing various instruments.

In one area, each student was given a guitar and practiced their strumming in a lesson taught by Smith. In another, they practiced notes on a piano with the guidance of a teacher.

Abby Rowley, life skills teacher, explained that students gain confidence by playing music, singing and dancing as part of the program.

“[The program] allows them to take risks in a small group,” said Rowley.



Sand Creek High School tenth-grader Dayshawn Powell, 15, and twelfth-grader Carlos Atencio, 18, play drums Nov. 30 at the Colorado Springs Conservatory. Students enrolled the life skills course at SCHS and Falcon High School visit the conservatory twice monthly to participate in a program called “A Positive Note”, where the goal is for “all participants to access a sense of joy, self-discovery, belonging and accomplishment”. Students break into small groups where they play instruments, sing and dance. Abby Rowley, life skills teacher, explained that students gain confidence by participating. “It allows them to take risks in a small group,” she said. (District 49/Kayla Maldonado)

# Let’s Move! SES Honored with National Award

**By Matt Meister**

Communications Director

Stetson Elementary School students and staff recieved a 2016 “Let’s Move!” Active Schools national award Dec. 14 at an assembly.

“We commend Stetson Elementary School’s model work around enhancing physical education and physical activity opportunities and inspiring students to go from zero to sixty both in the classroom and in life,” said Charlene Burgeson, “Let’s Move!” Active Schools executive director.

“Stetson (Elementary School) is leading the way in this generation-changing movement that is transforming our nation’s schools into active and healthy hubs.”

The Active Schools award is the nation’s top physical education and activity distinction for K-12 schools. It celebrates student commitments to at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity, whether before, after or during the school day.

The District 49 elementary school, located in POWER Zone, is one of only 544 schools across the country to receive the 2016 award.

“Regular physical activity helps kids stay healthy and strong,” said Matt Monfre, physical education teacher. “It can also lead to higher test scores, improved attendance, increased focus, better behavior in class and enhanced leadership skills.”

To qualify for the award, significant benchmarks must be met in physical education, physical activity before and after school, physical activity during school, staff involvement and family and community engagement.

Monfre presented the award to the student body with professional soccer player Andi Tostanoski, goalie for the Seattle Reign FC of the National Women’s Soccer League.

“Being active can be part of a lifestyle for every one of you,” said Tostanoski. “It is proven that if you move for 60 minutes a day, you’ll be better at every aspect of



Stetson Elementary School first-grader Emmy Sills, 7, dances during a Let’s Move! Active Schools awards assembly Dec. 14. The students and staff of the District 49 school were presented with a 2016 Let’s Move! Active Schools national award for the second year in a row. The Let’s Move! Active Schools National Award is the nation’s top physical education and physical activity distinction for K-12 schools and celebrates a school’s commitment to providing students with at least 60 minutes a day of before, during and after school physical activity. (District 49/Matt Meister)

your life.”

During the assembly, Tostanoski led students through activities celebrating the award. The students danced, played “Simon Says,” participated in grade-level soccer games and scored against the professional goalkeeper with penalty kicks.

Tostanoski helped students understand why being active is important in achiev-

ing life goals.

“I want you to think of what you want to be in this life more than anything,” said Tostanoski, as she led students in a visualization exercise.

“I want you to imagine all the steps it will take to get there. You have to work hard. You have to be willing to accept challenges. You have to be willing to make new

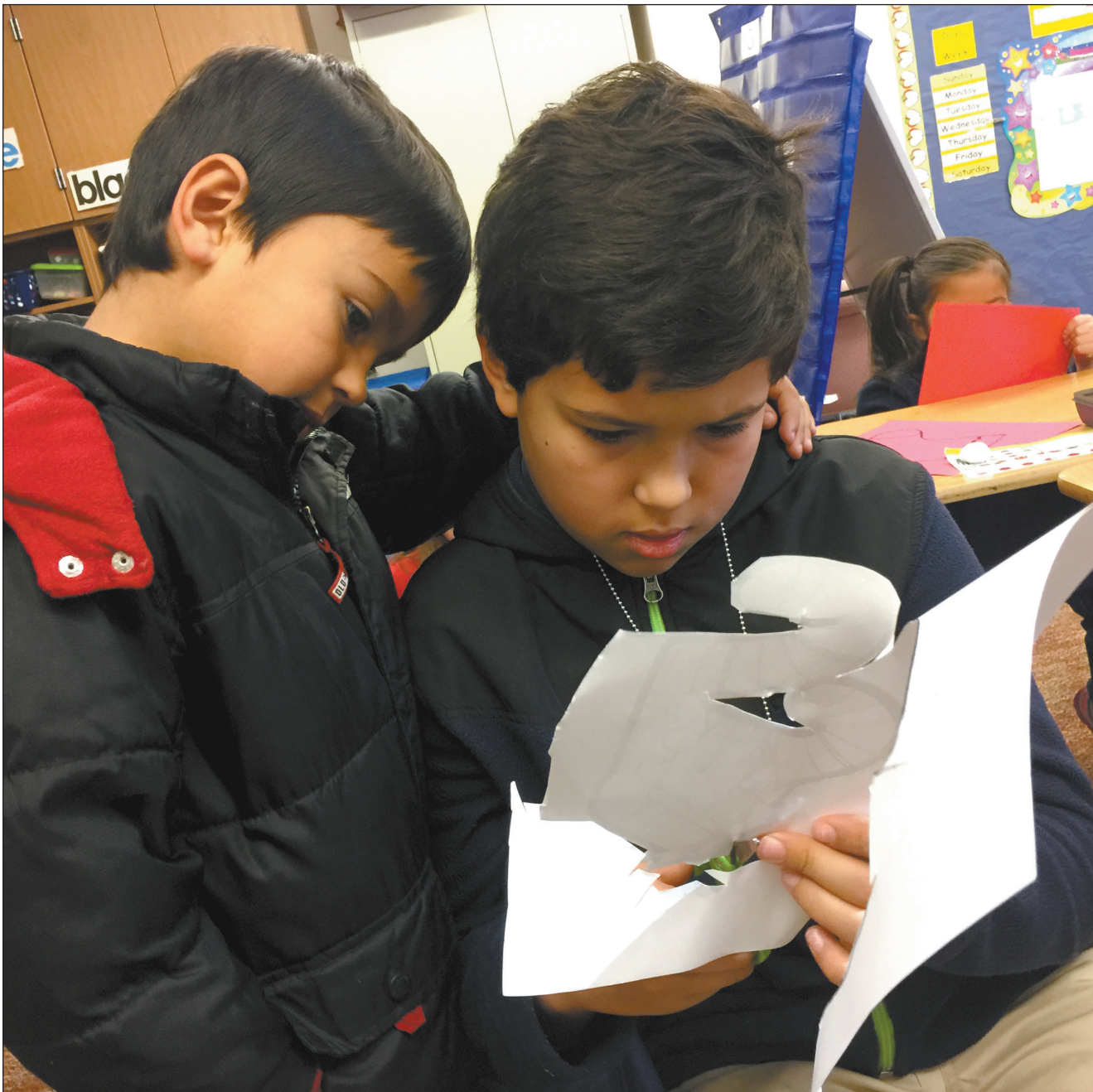
friends along the way. You have to play for 60 minutes and have fun everyday.

“You have to work hard and you have to want it. If you want it, you will be able to do it.”

“I want all of you to take your dreams and run with them,” said Tostanoski. “Every single day you can make yourself better for your dream.”



# Kinder Buddies Build Foundations, Friendships



Rocky Mountain Classical Academy fourth-grader Kohen Decker, 10, cuts a holiday craft while his brother, Adam, 5, looks on during Kinder Buddies. Kinder buddies brings fourth-graders together with kindergarten students each week. The older students often read to the younger students, do crafts and activities with them and participate in character development exercises together. “This school is all about making new friends,” said Kohen. “Our character traits are all about that.” (District 49/Matt Meister)

By Matt Meister  
Communications Director

“I like it when they come to read,” said Christina Lopez, 5, a kindergartener at Rocky Mountain Classical Academy, about the kinder buddies program. “But this is fun too!”

Each week, kinder buddies connects kindergarteners with fourth-graders. The older students read to younger students, complete activities together and participate in character development exercises.

Students created holiday crafts with their partners Dec. 9.

“I like it because we get to know them,” said Christina’s partner, fourth-grader Abigail Warbington, 9. “We get to their personalities so we know what book they’d like us to read and how they’d like us to read it.”

“Not only do my students help kindergartners learn leadership and how to read better,” said Barb Frederiksen, fourth grade teacher, “they get to do character traits together, like pick up trash around the school and other projects that build up who they are.”

Rocky Mountain Classical Academy’s mission statement includes supporting parents in “developing citizens of integrity and character who are equipped with a strong knowledge base and academic skills.”

“This school is all about making new friends,” said fourth-grader Kohen Decker, 10. “Our character traits are all about that.” Kohen was paired with his brother, Adam, 5, for the kinder buddies gatherings.

“I teach him how to read better,” said Kohen. “Plus, he gets to see his brother.”

Kohen said the two siblings get along at school as well as they get along at home.

The older students said they’re aware of the value they bring to the young learners through the collaboration.

“They learn in different ways,” said Kohen. “Maybe they understand other kids different than adults.”

# STEM Workshops Aim to Inspire

By Dustin Senger  
Digital Communication Specialist

Students from three elementary schools in District 49 gathered Oct. 18 to learn about their planet’s core, states of matter, and the tools of science.

Over a three-hour workshop, they used their hands and various lines of inquiry, while connecting lessons to their world.

The POWER Zone workshop was designed to support budding science, technology, engineering and math skills, according to Bobby Gagnon, STEM consultant. It was offered during a two-week fall break to inspire pursuits of scientific knowledge and processes.

In the library at Odyssey Elementary School, where school year lessons benefit from a STEM laboratory, volcanic eruptions of vinegar and baking soda covered Play-Doh landscapes.

After making ice cream to explore solids, liquids and gases, Gagnon suggested the workshop might slightly exceed its original three-hour timeframe. Third-grader Sydney Poore, 8, said, “Let’s keep going – let’s stay here another two hours.”

“Science is about curiosity,” says Gagnon, who coordinated two workshops: one for elementary school students in third through fifth grades, the other for sixth- through eighth-graders at Skyview Middle School.

He hopes to offer the workshops again during spring break.

Gagnon is a senior instructor at University of Colorado Colorado Springs. He’s part of UCCS Teach, a collaborative program for earning a bachelor’s degree in mathematics or science, along with a secondary school teaching license, under the guidance of master teachers.

“Students need to see that science isn’t about memorization; it’s about creativity and problem solving,” says Gagnon. “There are so many standards to meet today, there are so many things to do, that sometimes



Fifth-grader Jesse Smith, 10, waits for materials to explain what happens to rocks exposed to extreme heating and cooling during a fall break workshop Oct. 18 at Odyssey Elementary School in District 49. The POWER Zone workshop was designed to support budding science, technology, engineering and math skills, according to Bobby Gagnon, STEM consultant and senior instructor at University of Colorado Colorado Springs. It was offered during a two-week fall break to inspire pursuits of scientific knowledge and processes. “Our goal is to elaborate on concepts, so students are inspired to make meaningful, real world connections,” said Gagnon, who coordinated two workshops: one for elementary school students in POWER Zone, the other for the zone’s middle schoolers. He hopes to offer the workshops again during spring break. (District 49/Dustin Senger)

inspiration gets lost, or a focus on curiosity isn’t there.”

Gagnon met with teachers to determine the STEM topics needing support, those with limited time for inquiry-focused activities. He created lessons with third grade teacher Amanda Bower, who earned a bachelor’s in biology and elementary school education from UCCS.

“Everything we’re doing here today teaches elementary

level standards,” said Gagnon, “but our goal is to elaborate on concepts, so students are inspired to make meaningful, real world connections.”

Fifth-grader Ha’ani Castro was listening over a poster board covered in white, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple pompoms, ranging from dime- to silver

See **STEM workshops** page 8



# PHS Students Share Artwork with Community

By Kayla Maldonado

Marketing and Communications Specialist

Students in Lisa Yutzy's art class at Patriot High School presented their final projects to peers, family members and staff Dec. 15.

Yutzy's classroom was set up to mimic a professional art opening, with students standing near their displayed artwork, describing it to attendees and answering their questions.

The event served as a platform for students to exercise their artistic voice. Twelfth-grader Kayla Burke, 18, used charcoal to recreate a photo she took of her best friend.

"Talking about (the artwork) let's other people know they can do it, too," she said, noting that the event helped her to break out of her comfort zone.

Many students focused on social justice themes for their subject. Tenth-grader Angela Pretzeus, 16, created a piece about air pollution and its effects on the human population.

"I was focusing on something I'm really passionate about," said Angela. "Air pollution is a big concern that not many people realize."

Yutzy said the opportunity helps students find a voice in solving current global issues.

The artists had 6 weeks to complete their project.

"I'm most proud that they delivered on their work," said Yutzy, who sent emails and made phone calls to families, inviting them to the opening. She credits her relationship with the students as one reason for the event's success.

"We really are a family," she said.

"Art for art's sake is not enough," said Yutzy, stressing the importance of inviting community members into the high school to view the artwork.

She explained that visual arts shape how we think, our passions, and our perspectives in daily living. She says her students continue this legacy through their artwork.

"I'm proud of you all," said Yutzy to her students, as they finished their presentations.



Tenth-grader Angela Pretzeus, 16, shares her artwork during a final presentation Dec. 15 at Patriot High School. Lisa Yutzy, art teacher, set up the classroom to mimic a professional art opening. Students stood near their displayed work, describing it to attendees and answering their questions. Many students focused on social justice themes for their subject. Yutzy said this is an opportunity for students to have a voice in solving current global social issues. "Art for art's sake is not enough," said Yutzy, stressing the importance of inviting community members into the high school to view the artwork. She explained that the visual arts shape how we think, our passions, and belief in daily living. She says her students continue this legacy through their artwork. (District 49/Kayla Maldonado)

## STEM workshops

From page 7

dollar-sized diameters. The board was divided into quarters, where she modeled a solid, liquid, gas and plasma.

"With plasma, they're all far apart," said Ha'ani, 10, holding a bottle of glue. "With solids, they're always clumped together, and they never change unless they get broken."

"We use things like volume and mass in pastry cooking, so this lets me know what that is," said Ha'ani, who wants to become a pastry chef. "If I need to do a presentation on pastries, this helps me understand the ingredients better."

"With medicines, some are solids, some are liquids," and it's important to know why, said Sydney, who's interested in becoming a nurse or a doctor.

"Next, we're going to talk about the tools you'd use as scientists," said Gagnon, displaying various cylinders, stands, clamps, scales and microscopes. "When we're doing science, we have to be precise – we have to know exactly what we're doing."

With an atomic and molecular acceleration lab displayed during a slideshow of laboratories on an overhead television, Gagnon explained how scientists propel molecules against metal plates, and then measure their speed by analyzing the resulting sound.

"Oh, wow," said Ha'ani.

While studying rock cycles, the students discussed the ways rocks form, breakdown and reform. They explored the differences between igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic formations.

"We'll pretend this is our igneous rock," said Gagnon, holding up a blue crayon. He asked about ways that it'd be weathered or eroded down. With hands in the air, stories of water and wind unfolded. Ha'ani directed attention to how contact with other rocks causes erosion, too.

Each student was instructed to peel the wrapper off his or her crayon, and then shave off layers of wax using scissors. After the students mixed a pinch of their colored shavings with others, they put pressure on it. Next, they melted the piles using cupcake wrappers and hot water.

"Are these the same crayons?" said Gagnon.

"No, because we changed them with heat," said Sydney.

"With this workshop, students can go to Garden of the Gods and appreciate what really happened there," said Gagnon. He says the public park provides a space to see how millions of years of geologic processes led to colorful, sculpted layers of sedimentary rock.

"Science is everywhere."

*Beautiful Smiles for the whole Family!*

**Dr. Suter**  
definitely exceeded  
my expectations  
for perfect teeth.  
My Teeth look better  
then I imagined,  
the team there is  
amazing and  
super friendly.  
— V. G.

**Orthodontic Experience  
you can Trust, Results  
you will Love with  
Exceptional Care and  
Reasonable Pricing**

Call for your Complimentary Consultation

**SUTER  
ORTHODONTICS**  
experience. trust. results.

**TO SCHEDULE AN  
APPOINTMENT CALL  
550-0222**  
Conveniently located at  
Powers and North Carefree  
5760 N Carefree, Suite 160 • Colorado Springs, CO 80917