

PHOENIX RISING

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Engerson shares talents with students

By Anna Lock

Phoenix Rising staff

Ms. Jeanne Engerson, a Phoenix Middle School psychologist since 2009, recently won an award for School Psychologist of the Year for the whole state of Wisconsin.

“Probably the coolest thing that I have ever been awarded,” said Engerson. “(Principal) Mr. (Hank) Schmelz took the lead on secretly nominating me for the award and gathering the letters of recommendation from different staff members.

“I cried tears of joy and appreciation when I found out that he had nominated me...and when I found out that I actually was chosen as No. 1, I felt so honored. I don’t come to work every day so that I can win an award, but it sure does make someone feel even more appreciated.”

However, Engerson didn’t always know this was the right career path.

“I always knew that I wanted to work with children and adolescents, but I had no idea what that would look like,” she said. “I remember ‘teaching school’ to my stuffed animals for hours when I was little - I loved ‘taking attendance,’ but little did I know there was so much more to teaching than just taking attendance - ha, ha!”

Luckily, though, she chose to study psychology in college. Engerson, who grew up in Milwaukee and Brookfield, got her bachelor’s degree from the University of Minnesota and her master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Throughout the tough journey of college and finding a career path, everyone needs a little help along the way. Engerson had many supporters, but she claims her parents were the most helpful for her success.

“My mom and dad have always been so helpful throughout my career,” she said. “My mom used to work for Milwaukee Public Schools, so she is easy to talk to about any challenges I’m facing because she has faced them, too! My dad is a grumpy old man with a heart of gold and he is really good at giving pep talks and building me up. I love my family!”

Engerson still takes on many challenges today. The most common issue she deals with is social media troubles and cyberbullying.

“If I could go back in time and DELETE ALL SOCIAL MEDIA, I totally would,” she said. “What happened to the good ol’ days when we used to pass notes to each other in class? Now there’s a whole new way of bullying, gossiping, and causing drama and it’s called Snapchat, Instagram...and whatever else. THINK before you post, people!”

Also, as well as helping the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students, this school year fifth graders were added to the building. The addition of the new grade level has brought about more chal-

lenges in Engerson’s job.

“I think that adding the fifth graders was a difficult change for parents of fifth-grade students,” said Engerson. “They worried about fifth graders being around eighth graders...and that’s part of the reason why we try to keep everyone in their special hallways. There is a big maturity gap between 13-year-olds and nine-year-olds!”

Her statement was a common issue amongst parents and students. Engerson’s ability to continue to strive and keep working hard are important parts of her job.

“The relationships and connections with students EVERY day,” said Engerson of key factors in her work. “It’s always a good thing to make sure that people know you notice them and care about them. Don’t you feel great when people reach out to you? Our school is a better place because our teachers truly care about our students.”

Engerson isn’t always working and enjoys many things in her spare time. Some of her favorite hobbies are “snowboarding, fishing, ice fishing, out fishing with Mr. Schmelz, new learning classes with Joey the pup (like scent classes, dock diving, and agility), riding my motorcycle, creative arts and crafts projects (Pinterest is the best!), and playing sand volleyball all summer long!”

She also loves to spend time with her two dogs, Joey and Rex. They are both loyal Australian cattle dogs and are also pretty talented.

“Joey does doggy agility courses and Rex...well, he is still working on puppy manners classes,” she said with a smile.

In addition to spending time with her beautiful dogs, Engerson has a long-time boyfriend, Shawn, who “is a welder at Generac in Eagle, Wisconsin, and his nickname is ‘pumpkin’ - ha, ha!”



Jeanne Engerson



Rex (left) and Joey are Ms. Jeanne Engerson’s dogs.

(Submitted photo)

Thorson offers insights to bullying in the classroom

By Emma Robertson
and Riley Flintrop
Phoenix Rising staf

Almost everyone in Phoenix Middle School has dealt with kids who picked on them or said mean things, but there is a larger issue at play here; bullying. There are many different types of bullying and if you have ever experienced any of them you should tell a trusted adult.



Lori Thorson

Bullying can occur anywhere - in the classroom, on the soccer field, in the cafeteria, but no one really pays attention to it. Sometimes it might look like people are just arguing, but someone might actually be hurting someone's feelings and it could impact their lives; it can also lead to depression and anxiety. A big question is, how does bullying affect students in the classroom?

Mrs. Lori Thorson, one of the sixth-grade Language Arts teachers, was asked how often she encountered bullying in the classroom.

"Infrequently, within the classroom," she said. "I think it's more frequent that I will encounter it in the hallways or in the commons or during passing times."

Then asked about the possibility of bullying happening in the hallway or commons, Thorson said, "I would say I see it fairly frequently, but it also depends on year to year. This particular group we have this year, we do not encounter a lot of bullying, compared to other years."

Thorson was asked how she dealt with bullying in the classroom.

"Well I would deal with it privately first, and then get their per-

spective on what is going on and how they're feeling and get them to talk to a counselor or something," said Thorson. "And then I would talk to the bully, and that's where I would bring in administration, such as the principal and the assistant principal and parents."

So, how could students feel safe while they're dealing with the bullies? Thorson brought up Restorative Justice, which is a new thing within the school.

"So we do community circles in all of our academic classes at least twice a week, like yesterday (Oct. 25) we had, not a bullying instance, but just some regular chronic behavior issues, and so an administrator and a counselor came down," said Thorson. "We had the kids circle up and we talked about what was happening in the classroom, what their part in the issue was, and how they could be a part of solving it."

"And we have a talking piece that we pass from student to student so all the kids get a voice in the classroom. So maybe sometimes, kids that would be less likely to share how they're feeling, could have that opportunity. That's been a pretty positive way to deal with small issues before it can become an even bigger one." How can students recognize whether they're being picked on or bullied?

"We talk about that a lot in sixth grade, about the difference between someone just being a jerk or being a bully," said Thorson. "And bullying is that chronic, continual picking on someone or a group of people and it's unbalanced, unfair and unequal. Whereas if someone is being unkind, they're usually unkind to lots of people, as opposed to just that same person. So repetitive, unfair, unequal and unwanted by the person being bullied."

That is an insight, through Thorson, on bullying in the classroom. Not everyone deals with bullying in the same way, it depends on who is being bullied or who is doing the bullying. If you are dealing with bullying, the strong advice is to tell a trusted adult, such as teachers, counselors and parents.

Many celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

By Crystal Reyes
Phoenix Rising staff

Hispanic Heritage Month was proclaimed on Sept. 13, 1988, by President Ronald Reagan. Hispanic Heritage Month begins on Saturday, Sept. 15, and ends on Monday, Oct. 15.

These are the countries that are celebrated for Hispanic Heritage Month: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua,

and Cuba, but, in addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sep. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

Mrs. Michelle Lopez, the Spanish teacher at Phoenix Middle School, was asked what she does for this month, if her and her family do anything special, and she said she tries to get together with their other family members from Costa Rica and celebrate it with a cookout and typical Costa Rican food. She said she wants her kids to understand both cultures and customs

But the reason this month is important to her is because her husband is from Costa Rica and her kids are part Costa Rican.

Mr. Hank Schmelz, principal at Phoenix, said when this was created he was in college. He said he thinks it's important that a nation comprised of immigrants from all over the world should celebrate



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'Aladdin' musical will be bilingual effort

By Anna Lock
Phoenix Rising Staff

The Phoenix Middle School musical this school year is ... you guessed it, Aladdin! But, there's a twist because this year the musical is bilingual. The show will consist of some Spanish-speaking characters and some English-speaking ones. This is the first show at Phoenix that is bilingual and, if all goes well, this will probably continue to be a tradition.

Also, with the addition of fifth graders at Phoenix for the first time this school year, there are a lot more people wanting to be in the show. So, unfortunately, this is the first year Phoenix has had to cut some people out of the show.

However, the students that don't get accepted can always try out next year. For those who do get accepted, they will be working really hard. Students will have rehearsals many days a week, depending on their roles. Practices will run from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., on students' assigned days.

If being up on stage is not your thing, or you just want to help, students who are in eighth grade may participate in the stage crew. Stage crew is in charge of lighting, costumes, sets, etc.

The show will be directed by Julie Ropers-Rosendahl and Tammy Fumall, who have been running the show together for many years.



Meet the staff: Camden Lockhart

By Ethan Kraayeveld
Phoenix Rising staff

If you can imagine enjoying barbecue wings being washed down with Mountain Dew, the person consuming that may be Camden Lockhart, a seventh-grade student at Phoenix Middle School. Lockhart is in his second year as a member of the Phoenix Rising newspaper staff.

When it comes to eating, Lockhart also enjoys sour-cream Pringle's and mini-wheats.

For entertainment, his favorite song is "Despacito," and he considers Infinity War his favorite movie. Lockhart also picks Nisekoi as the best anime, Lost Pause as his preferred Youtuber and Xbox 360 as the best console.

Favoring the number 42 and the color teal, Lockhart considers tennis as his favorite sports. He said if he could go anywhere in the world, it would be Japan. His favorite subject in school is math.

When asked why he joined the newspaper club, he replied, "Because Ethan (Kraayeveld) told me to."

Asked what he would be when he is older, Lockhart had a diverse choice - either a cook or a NASCAR race driver.

In addition, once it gets closer to showtime there will be dress rehearsals for each grade level throughout the school day.

The public performances will be Friday, Jan. 25, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 26, at 2 p.m. Also, the performances will be taped, so if you miss a show, or just want a copy, order one and find Mrs. Ropers-Rosendahl when the orders are in. Along with a CD, members of the musical can buy an Aladdin T-shirt. Everyone is invited to come and support the Phoenix bilingual edition of Aladdin. It is free to attend, although donations are accepted.

Hispanic Heritage Month...

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on a day it can be recognized for its independence.



Monica Los

Monica Los, who is on the Delavan-Darien School District's school board, said she came from Peru and then moved to the United States. She said she does not celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, but when she moved to the United States she met different people from different countries. She participates in the different cultural events that happen around town, like the Hispanic Heritage Festival and she mainly eats Mexican food.

A student named Abigail in fifth grade was asked what her family does for this celebration and she said that every year her grandma comes this way from Texas and they celebrate by going to a Mexican restaurant called Nana's and she said it's tacos are the best.

In our school hallways, there were posters to see where the celebration takes place or just to put some photos of where Hispanic heritage lives and what their country looks like. Then there were trivia questions every week talking about the Hispanic Heritage Month and whoever got it right went into a drawing and names were pulled. Winners received a gift card to Los Agaves.

The pictures filled up the hallway going all the way down and some people took time to stop by and look at them closely and see what they are about. Some of my friends looked at them and said, "I wish I went there," and they also said, "I wondered what it would be like when it is decorated; it must be nice and pretty and beautiful." They all wished they went to go see the places that were shown in the hallways.



Michelle Lopez

Then there were some posters in the hallways that were decorated and colorful from Phoenix students and they said things on them about the Hispanic Heritage Month. In Lopez's Spanish classroom, she had things all over - dolls, tablecloths and her room is decorative of items from various places and it all came together for Hispanic Heritage Month.

Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois re-submitted an amended version of the bill that was re-enacted into the law on Aug. 17, 1988, on the approval of public law 100-402. Sept. 15 of every year was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. All declared independence in 1821.

Pioneering: School newspapers return, with changes

By Thom Aiello

Advisor for Cometeer and Phoenix Rising

The 2018-19 school year has been up and running for about one quarter now and it brings with it some changes, including with the school newspapers.

Last school year saw the revival of The Cometeer, the newspaper at Delavan-Darien High School. Since the newspaper club there was new and limited in numbers, the meetings for the Cometeer were combined with the meetings for the Phoenix Rising, the newspaper that was continuing at Phoenix Middle School, at the library at Phoenix.



Also, as the newspapers were printed (in limited numbers) and sent out electronically to all students, parents/guardians and also posted on the school district's Web site, the "covers" were

reversed. The high school editions led with the Cometeer on the front cover and the Phoenix Rising on the back side. The Phoenix Rising, then, led the middle school editions, with the Cometeer on the back. So, in essence, it was two newspapers in one.

With the returning members of the Cometeer hopeful of having their own meetings at the high school and having more recognition as a club, change was also afoot at Phoenix. Because of a failed referendum, there were staff trimmings and Darien Elementary School was closed. That led to fifth-grade students moving from Darien to Phoenix for the first time. Suddenly, the "population" at Phoenix grew one more year younger.

As some members, and potential members, of the Cometeer were interested in addressing some more high school/societal issues, there was a feeling that some of their topics might not be as appropriate for those younger students at Phoenix. There is a world of difference between grades 9-12 than grades 5-8.

So it was decided to give a try to having separate meetings and separate issues. The D-DHS meetings so far have been held after school on Wednesdays in the high school library. The newspaper will run separately, though it is still possible some items, such as this column or possibly stories that relate to both schools, will still appear in both editions. The Phoenix Rising meetings continue to be held after school on Thursdays in the

Phoenix library, the same as the past school year.

If the participation numbers get too low, or if there are scheduling conflicts, it could still be an option to return all meetings to Phoenix. Also, there will be times the high school staff members might be asked to come to some meetings at Phoenix to help mentor the middle school students.

The other change will likely have less effect. D-DHS remains on a quarterly school year schedule, while Phoenix has moved to trimesters this school year. Last school year was the first time it was attempted, and accomplished to have newspaper editions published at or near the end of each quarter.

The goal is to again have four newspapers for each school during the school year. It will follow closer, then, to the high school quarterly timetable.

Meanwhile, more students are needed.

The high school has added a few students, but even more would really help. There is the potential of some excellent additions, but the proof is in the production, to paraphrase a saying.

The middle school numbers at the first meeting were impressive. But, again, production is the key. Also, sticking with a club is another factor. The meetings can be fun, and snacks and beverages are provided. It takes about 45 minutes every two weeks or so. Students have reported that working on articles, from the start of preparing questions to finishing the write-ups, takes anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours. Even if a student did a couple of articles per quarter, that is a pretty limited amount of time involved.

Many students are involved in other clubs or after-school activities. Sometimes those conflict with the newspaper clubs' meeting times, but the students can still participate by staying in email contact if they cannot make meetings. All articles and photos are sent through email.

The papers are fortunate to again have the talents of Wendy Shafer to do the design work. It is a process to get everything put together, but it is important for students to have a "voice" in their schools. Those involved believe in that.

That's what this is all about. Hopefully you, the reader, will enjoy it and learn more about what is happening in the schools and find out about some of the issues that students, from grades 5-12, are facing these days.



It's Never Too Late To Get Involved and
Contribute to

PHOENIX RISING

If Interested, Contact Mr. Aiello at

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Referendum passes for school district

By Jacob Prado
For Phoenix Rising

The school year for Delavan-Darien students is well on its way and if you feel that this year there are double the amount of students in school, you're not the only one. Perhaps, after the Nov. 6 referendum, that will change in the near future.

Voters passed a \$2.8 million non-recurring operational referendum for the Delavan-Darien School District, with 850 people (56.5 percent) approving it.

Last spring, a referendum put out by the district failed, resulting in a massive layoff for teachers across the board, while also shutting down a local school.

Due to the failed \$3.5 million referendum, 39 teachers were laid off and Darien Elementary School was shut down at the end of the last school year. Because of the amount of layoffs, classes sizes at the high school have increased, which makes it seem like there are more students than are actual. Phoenix had another grade level added to the building, with fifth-grade students now attending the school instead of being in Darien.

This year, once again, the school district proposed a referendum that was voted on Nov. 6. This year's referendum was different than last year's, with the ballot reading, "Shall the School District of Delavan-Darien, Walworth and Rock Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$2,800,000 per year for four years, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year and ending with the 2022-2023 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of operational costs to reduce class sizes, and support curriculum and instruction?"

What this said was the school district would receive \$2,800,000 more per year for four years in order to keep the school functioning, reduce the increased class sizes, and update the school district's curriculum.

What made this year's referendum different is that the money the school receives every year would only be for four years, rather than last year's proposed recurring referendum. This year's ballot also no longer included an increase in funds for fixes to Borg Memorial Stadium, and funding for extracurricular programs.

Similar to last year's referendum, the school district put out information relating to the increase in property taxes for residents. When compared to last year's increase in property taxes to this year's expected rise in property tax, there is a \$127 difference as last year's expected rise in property tax was \$202 for every \$100,000 of property value.

After past superintendent Dr. Robert Crist left at the end of the

2017-18 school year, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Jill Sorbie, took over as interim superintendent. Sorbie met with all students at Delavan-Darien High School to introduce herself and talk about the referendum. Sorbie answered questions students had about the referendum, including future goals and expectations for the district.

Because this year's referendum does not include funding for extracurriculars, Sorbie proposed taking advantage of advertisements with companies that will be able to provide the necessary funds to provide for the needed extracurriculars.

Sorbie, along with the district, did a lot in promoting the November referendum to community members in order to ensure that it passed. When ballot time rolled around, the November



Dr. Jill Sorbie



referendum passed. (Last year's referendum fell short by more than 500 votes.)

Now that it has passed, Sorbie has many plans and high hopes the district can be even better than it is now. One of the biggest focuses this year is to build up Comet Pride and show spirit, not just for the schools, but for the local communities, she said.

One of the things Sorbie has been doing is working closely with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in order to recruit student teachers for next school year to hire and help decrease class sizes. Sorbie, interviewed two days after the election, said she feels this is a big responsibility and, in order to do the best for the students, they need to recruit the best teachers they can for next year. Already, Sorbie is looking to bring in two student teachers for the history department, one for English, one for math, and has hopes of hiring another woods teacher for next school year.

The district will look to hire about 18 more teachers, according to Sorbie. Class sizes would shrink and the district's low fund balance will be reinforced.

As part of her plan to better help students, Sorbie has been putting together a survey regarding the future of World Language at the high school that will be sent out to students and other community members. Sorbie is looking into a Birth-to-Three program to implement into the school district, but as of right now it is simply something being considered.