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Campus Spotlight: Garfield Elementary

Despite being in a building that is almost 60 years old, and utilizing four portable buildings for more than 15 years, the classroom teachers and staff members are keeping things moving! This year at Garfield Elementary there are many exciting things happening to encourage healthy lifestyles for the students and staff members thanks to the wellness team led by Summer Parsons, PE teacher. Mrs. Parsons was awarded a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas to install a new rock wall in the Garfield gym. This Rock wall will give students a chance to experience a new way to work out their upper body strength and engage in an activity that many students may never be exposed to outside of school. Mrs. Parsons also includes a healthy fruit or vegetable into her PE class three times a week thanks the Healthy Fruits and Vegetables Grant. There will also be a special week of roller skating in April. Mrs. Parsons has worked with the Garfield Booster Club to bring roller skates to Garfield for a week long unit on skating. The parents are extremely excited about this opportunity for their students and have even organized a family skate night on April 10th so Garfield families can celebrate fitness together with this fun activity most Garfield students have never experienced. While Mrs. Parsons and the wellness committee have worked to increase student health, they also created a well-

ness challenge for staff this winter. Staff members could join teams to compete against each other to see which team could log the highest average of workout minutes. After four weeks of intense and light hearted competition, the winning team received a healthy lunch from Subway. Having the students, parents, and teachers involved in health and wellness this year has been positive and exciting. Many Garfield teachers are active in the community with

members are invited to come, eat, and enjoy live entertainment. The past two years the Alma Folklorica Dancers from Guymon, OK have performed at the dinner. Parents and students enjoy watching the traditional Mexican dances and sharing those cultural traditions with their families. Another tradition Garfield celebrates is Dr. Seuss's birthday each year in March. Students rotate through classrooms during the morning to participate in

a wide variety of Dr. Seuss activities created by the classroom teachers. Community members also visit Garfield and read

"Garfield is like Ellis Island because it is a melting pot of various cultures coming together for a common goal. We have students who are American, Mexican, Guatemalan, Somalian, Burmese, African American, and Bulgarian. Our students, parents, and staff all work together towards meeting the mission of Garfield Elementary "to promote pride, responsibility, and the pursuit of life-long learning." – Principal, Kendra Haskell

their churches, Kids Inc., traveling sports teams, and social clubs. Most recently, several students were involved in the Pancake Day activities. Garfield had students compete and win in the flipping, eating, and race contests. Garfield's PE teacher, Summer Parsons, even won the official Liberal Pancake Day race. The school was extremely proud of Mrs. Parsons and all of our students who participated in the Liberal Pancake Day traditions. Many years ago, Garfield had a traditional Mexican Dinner night. Last year, the Garfield booster Club decided to revitalize the long time tradition and bring back the Mexican dinner to Garfield along with some new added changes. The Mexican Dinner is homemade and authentic Mexican food prepared by Booster Club parents. Garfield families and community

books to the students. Some of our local celebrity readers include Jill Stout, Renae Hickert, Steve Helm, Kelly Kirk, Earl Watt, and Al Shank. Dr. Seuss day is always an exciting day that encourages parents, students, and community members to celebrate the love of reading. Something unique about Garfield Elementary is its partnership with the Retired Teachers Association. Each month students from one grade level eat lunch with a group of retired teachers. While at Garfield the retired teachers get to meet and get to know a variety of students. Students in the grade level also work to make 60 seasonal crafts each month to present to the retired teachers association. The retired teachers then take those crafts and deliver them to **Continued on pg. 3**

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District Spotlight: USD 480 Fine Arts - Music and Theater

A Conversation with Fine Arts Chair, Mr. Claus

What is the overall purpose of the Fine Arts Department?

The overall purpose of the Fine Arts department of USD 480 is to develop in students the ability to understand, appreciate, and participate in the areas of music and drama. The fine arts provide countless opportunities for growth and creativity. Students can learn to work as part of an ensemble to produce a performance bigger than the individual parts. They can learn to focus in depth on details to attain the highest levels of achievement. They will be able to communicate through the use of the fine arts and understand the communication from others in other time periods and parts of the world. Many of these students will carry the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of their generation into the future with their artistry in music or drama.

What is the size and scope of the Fine Arts Department at USD 480?

The Fine Arts Department consists of 14 music and drama teachers and two accompanists. Each student in USD 480 is in music classes from first grade through intermediate school, and they can then choose to participate in instrumental and vocal groups through middle and high school. Drama classes and instruction begin in the middle schools although dramatic productions can be found at all grade levels throughout the district. Recent drama productions at the high school have included "The Odd Couple" (female version), "Les Miserables," "Godspell," and various one

act plays. The musicals have incorporated drama, music, and technology classes in collaboration. In all of these productions, all LHS students are welcome to audition and participate. Each middle school has 7th and 8th grade choirs and bands. At the high school, "That" Liberal Band, the LHS Jazzmen, and the drum line are the instrumental groups. Redskin Singers, Chorale, and Mixed Chorus are performing vocal groups. Students may also take one semester courses in general music where they learn the basics of music. Advanced students may take the A. P. Music Theory course.

Who is involved with the Fine Arts Department at USD 480?

The Fine Arts Department is comprised of the teaching staff, accompanists, and assistants; although different faculty and staff help occasionally with different productions. Certainly all staff can be involved in holiday concerts, especially for each of the elementary schools or talent shows.

What is special or unique about the Fine Arts Department at USD 480?

One of the special qualities of the Fine Arts Department is the faculty involvement in community fine arts programs. These professionals do not merely teach, they share their love for the fine arts and lead by example with their involvement in our local performing groups. We have teachers directing or performing in many different community groups. Our staff can be found participating in choirs, instrumental groups, community plays, and musicals. In our case, those who can DO

teach!

Why would someone (a teacher for example) want to become involved in Fine Arts Education?

Fine Arts Education is one of the bedrocks for our culture. Each generation needs ways to define who they are. They also need to demonstrate how they experience and process the events of their lives. The fine arts offer the vehicle for each of us to let others know what is important to us. They can help aid in communication where words fail. Fine arts allow for the expression of emotions too broad and deep to be understood any other way. In our world, we celebrate with music; we change minds and enlighten with dramatic appeal and comedy. Teaching the fine arts is fascinating because many of the common experiences of humanity do not change, but our stories are never the same.

What are some new or exciting things that are happening with Fine Arts at USD 480?

"That" Liberal Band just finished their fish-fry and is preparing for their upcoming trip to Florida. Redskin Singers just performed the national anthem for the 5A State Girls Basketball Championship game in Topeka. Both instrumental and vocal students are also preparing for music festivals in April. The drama and music departments have also recently finished successful performances of the musical "Godspell."

What are some needs the Fine Arts Department might have? Suggestions for filling those needs? The Fine Arts Department is always grateful for the support of our

community whether it is in performing opportunities or fundraising. We know we can count on the Liberal community.

What other district programs involve the Fine Arts Department?

Music and drama employ so many other disciplines from other areas of education. Music often deals with foreign language and science. Drama makes use of speech, English, grammar, sewing, construction, and art skills. Both music and drama make use of technology for lighting, recording, special effects, and sound amplification.

How is the Fine Arts Program helping our students?

How do the fine arts help students? There are entire books and research studies devoted to this question alone. Briefly, fine arts like music help students academically. It helps organize their thoughts and incorporate new concepts. The brain usually can accept new information and retain it longer when set to music (The old "School House Rock" series on TV is a great example). It is a major platform for creativity. It helps synthesize concepts. Performers often have to incorporate dialogue, lyrics, rhythm, tone, movement, pitch, harmony, blend, and balance. It helps socially. It provides platforms for the brilliantly gifted and for those that struggle with more basic concepts. It can reduce stress and promote unity and school spirit. Performing groups from USD 480 are natural ambassadors for our district and community. In this high-tech, internet-driven age, it is often too easy for people to close

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Garfield Continued... Liberal residents who receive Meals on Wheels. The community connection between Garfield, the Retired teachers Association, and the Meals on Wheels program has been a great benefit to students. They feel appreciated and learn that they can make a difference in the life of a Liberal resident. Each month the students are excited to create a project that will be loved and appreciated by the

Meals on Wheels recipients. Assisting teachers and staff members in all of these exciting traditions and activities is Stephanie Waldorf, the instructional coach. She has been at Garfield for 31 years. She began her teaching career at Garfield and has stayed there as a dedicated and loving teacher and coach ever since. Stephanie displays Garfield pride in everything she does. She attends

and helps with every school event sponsored during the year with a smile and caring heart. She visits classrooms every day and provides learning opportunities for teachers on a regular basis. In addition to the support provided by Mrs. Waldorf, Garfield teachers and students also use technology on a daily basis to impact student learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards, ELMO's, Mobi

interactive slates, and laptops on a regular basis to provide powerful instruction while integrating technology. Students at Garfield enjoy using the iPads during small group and intervention time. This year there are three iPad carts for the grade levels to share. The students use the iPads to practice reading, writing, and math skills through a variety of educational and grade appropriate apps that are available.

Fine Arts Continued... themselves off from others. The fine arts give students a common ground to share. After all, many of us like movies and concerts. It helps them individually gain confidence to perform in front of others. It helps them globally. Music and drama are celebrated and studied throughout the world. There is a community of performers and audience mem-

bers everywhere in the world. Fine arts students will find they are welcome in those communities because they already have things in common. People interested in the fine arts can almost always find a place where they "fit in."

How does the community benefit from the Fine Arts Program? Many of our stu-

dents currently perform throughout the area in different venues. Several former students are involved locally in Fine Arts activities and again, our faculty also helps with these endeavors. Some Liberal students have gone on to become nationally recognized in the fine arts.

How can community members get involved with or

support the Fine Arts Program? We encourage interested community members to first come see our students in action; we love a good audience! If you have a community group or event that can use student performers, please let us know.

Student Showcase: McKinley Elementary and South Middle School



My favorite thing about being in 2nd grade is that we learn. If I could change one thing about my school, I would change the tables into desks because it's better. You can get your books out from the bottom of a desk instead of having to have them on the table. My favorite subject is science. We learn new stuff like the Sun. My favorite teacher is Ms. McAlpine because she's nice. I'm different from my classmates because I am good at making people laugh. One thing I hope to get better at before school is out is how to borrow in addition problems. When I grow up I want to be an archeologist and look for crystals and gems. I like Liberal because it has the rec (Recreational Center). When I'm not at school, I like to play games and sometimes go outside. I also like Minecraft.



My favorite thing about being in 7th grade is that I can experience more. We get to work with technology more, and they trust us more. If I could change one thing about school, I would change it to where we would have to use our iPads in class more. I would like for the teachers to include them in their lessons more. My favorite class is Band. I get to play instruments and show other people how to play instruments. My favorite teacher is Ms. Kordek. She's really nice. She teaches us with respect, and sometimes we need to show her more respect. I am different from most other students because a lot of people don't like band, but I make it fun for my classmates. I hope to improve in math this year. You need math and language arts in life, and I would like to get better at it. I want to learn more. I'm a really nice student. In the future I would like to become a dog breeder and raise Rottweilers, Dobermans, and Pit Bulls for pets not guard dogs. One of the things I like most about USD 480 is that they have a lot of organizations, and they let us interact with students at other campuses. When I'm not at school, I like to explore nature and play sports and games.

U.S.D. 480 Liberal Public Schools

Points for Parents: Responsibility Taught at Home Pays Off with School Success

All parents hope their children will grow up to be responsible adults. A good way to make that happen is by helping them be responsible students. Thankfully, parents have more influence on this than anyone else! To help your child take control of her behavior, commitments and relationships:

- Enforce rules and consequences. Pick a few important rules. State them clearly so your child knows exactly how to behave—and what will happen if she doesn't. Then stick to them.
- Encourage sympathy. Help your child understand how classmates and others feel. "Sonja's sad because she's moving to a new house. How could we help her?"
- Monitor your child's homework. Make sure you know what the assignments are. Establish a homework routine for your child, so she'll be able to turn assignments in on time.
- Support good financial habits. Many kids earn an allowance or are paid for extra chores. These are perfect opportunities to teach about budgeting, spending, saving and giving.
- Find ways to help others. Discuss what it means to be responsible to yourself, your family, your school and your community. Choose useful ways to contribute, such as planting flowers in the school garden.
- Adjust responsibilities. As your child matures, her abilities will change. Perhaps she can take on a more grown-up chore or make new, exciting decisions. Talk about how responsibility feels great!

Source: M. Purcell, "Building Responsible Kids," PsychCentral, <http://tinyurl.com/p865ppq>.

Online Learning Activities for Families

Elementary/Intermediate <http://www.highlightskids.com/> With over one billion copies in print, Highlights for Children has been helping children become their best selves for more than 65 years through magazines for children and toddlers, puzzle clubs and kids' games. Whether it is Hidden Pictures® puzzles, Goofus and Gallant™, the Timbertoes® or Puzzlemania®, Highlights helps your children enjoy reading, learning and thinking. Learn more about the Highlights family, its mission, values, history and information on some of our most popular characters and features.



Secondary- <http://free1.ed.gov/index.cfm> FREE makes it easier to find teaching and learning resources from the federal government. More than 1,500 federally supported teaching and learning resources are included from dozens of federal agencies. New sites are added regularly.

District Contact Names and Numbers

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1611 W. 2nd St.
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Keith Adams, Principal

South Middle School

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Gilberto Rito, Principal
West Middle School
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Cottonwood Intermediate
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Donna Sill, Principal
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Jennifer Workman, Principal

Garfield Elementary

516 W. 1st St.
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Lincoln Elementary
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Melinda Cline, Principal
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Kathy Fitzgerald, Principal

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