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Lincoln is rich in resources

Staff awards, library cited

By Susan Troller
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Lincoln Elementary School Principal Beth Lehman and former students say the school's greatest resource is an excellent staff that tries to teach to each child's strengths, but it has some other, surprising assets as well.

"Knowing our kids well and helping them develop in all areas is our passion, and I think that's shared across the board at Lincoln," Lehman said.

She also noted that there is not much turnover among teachers at Lincoln, and there is a genuinely cooperative effort.

She said the staff includes many teachers who have won both national and local awards. There are also published authors among the group.

The most recent teacher to win a prestigious award at Lincoln is Marc Kornblatt, who teaches fifth grade and recently received the Lois Gadd Nemec Distinguished Elementary Education Alumni Award from the University of Wisconsin's School of Education, given annually to an outstanding graduate.

Two years ago, reading teacher Andreal Davis won a Milken National Educator Award, which carries a \$25,000 prize. Only a handful of the awards are presented in Wisconsin each year.

Lehman said Lincoln, like Midvale Elementary, has a professional development relationship with the UW's top-ranked School of Education. What this means is that every semester there are UW students coming through Lincoln, sharing their energy, fresh knowledge and enthusiasm with veteran teachers. Both benefit, and so do students, Lehman said.

"You can't stand in front of a young, pre-service teacher and just go through the motions. Having them in the class keeps us sharper," Lehman said.

There are other resources that help teachers teach, and students learn.

Both the library and a staff book room at Lincoln are a reader's dream.

The large library includes both a nonfiction room and a fiction room, inspiring art created by staff members and students plus comfortable chairs and a welcoming environment; it's no surprise that the library is usually crowded with kids.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Lincoln Elementary has won the district's elementary Book Bowl two years in a row.

The leveled book room is for staff, and it includes thousands of books on thousands of topics, systematically organized not only by grade level, but by proficiency in reading. What it means is that teachers have a rich resource

always at hand to provide materials that feel nearly custom-designed to the needs of each student.

A Read 180 computer program also allows students - with their watchful teachers - to get immediate feedback on how they are doing on a daily basis with their reading skills.

In addition to a Saturday soccer program that Lehman describes as phenomenal, Lincoln has a wide variety of after-school programs that are highly popular with both students and parents.

There have been craft classes like beadwork, a poetry club and a karate club. A staff member has led a horse club and there are several after-school groups that help students with homework so it's finished before they head home.

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