

THE DISTRICT DISPATCH

School News & Updates
for the School District 197
Community
Summer 2022

By the Numbers



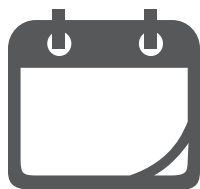
Number of school activities hosted at
new Two Rivers facilities in the
2021-2022 school year:

130+



Community rental time
of Two Rivers facilities:

Average of **7+ hours** a day,
365 days a year outside
of school hours



Number of community events and
activities offered to seniors at
Thompson Park Activity Center:

170+ per year,
with nearly 1,300 participants



The Somerset Spring Carnival made a return and brought the community—and even Somerset alumni—back together in a big way!

From the Superintendent

At School District 197, we believe that together, we thrive. You'll find that reflected in our district value statement and you'll see the #TogetherWeThrive197 hashtag on our social media posts. I believe that at the heart of this sentiment is *community*—both in our classrooms and schools, but also our connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and wider communities in which we serve.

When I reflect on the meaning of community, I think of individuals coming together for a common purpose. For School District 197, that means helping every student achieve their full potential and contributing to the long-term vitality of our community. In this issue of the *District Dispatch*, you'll see all of the amazing ways we're building and celebrating community.

You'll read how the new Two Rivers High School facilities are bringing in people from all over the state to enjoy activities right here in Mendota Heights. You'll learn how the Heritage MarineTeam welcomed more than 700 community members for their annual open house, and how the Somerset Spring Carnival gathered alumni and families for an end-of-year community celebration. You'll also read about Garlough's partnership with Dodge Nature Center and Dakota County to create a mural in the Charlton Tunnel as part of the River-to-River Greenway trail—and so much more.

I hope you're able to get out and about in our wonderful community this summer! We are so excited to welcome you all back into our school community this fall.

Peter Olson-Skog
Superintendent

Nurture. Inspire. Prepare. Together, we thrive.

Garlough Environmental Magnet School



Garlough Tunnel Art Community Collaboration

Garlough, Dodge Nature Center, and Dakota County are teaming up to create a mural in the Charlton Tunnel. The tunnel, part of the River-to-River Greenway trail, connects Dodge Nature Center with Garlough and is used by students with their “Walk From School” initiative. The mural will be a collaboration between a team of artists and Garlough students.

“I believe this project will be a powerful project for school pride and students will feel an ownership for the beauty of the tunnel,” Garlough Principal Sue Powell says. Project design is underway, and installation is expected to happen this fall. The project is also designed to serve as a pilot project for future murals throughout the Dakota County trail system.



Garlough Students Dance Around the World

Garlough students and families came together in June to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school community through music and dance. After a two-year hiatus of the event, everyone was so happy to be back together! Special thanks to Robert Hanson and ALMAS for providing the music.



Mendota Elementary School

Mendota and Friendly Hills Team Up to Help With Transitions

Friendly Hills Middle School counselors spoke with Mendota Elementary fourth-grade students about transitioning to middle school. The counselors told the rising fifth-graders who will be attending Friendly Hills what would be the same and what would be different, and gave them a virtual tour of their soon-to-be new school. It was a wonderful welcome and community-building event!



Mendota Students Spread Kindness with Eagan Art House

Mendota Elementary has been working with Eagan Art House for the last three years during October's Anti-Bully Prevention Month. During the event, students “chalk up the walk” with positive thoughts and messages, and choose a book that promotes kindness. Students and staff also work together to create a wall mural for students to take selfies!

Moreland Arts & Health Sciences Magnet School



Moreland Students Fundraise Through Kindness

Moreland students hosted a new fundraiser this year—one built on kindness and community service projects. Through the Raise Craze fundraiser, students asked family, friends, and neighbors for donations while doing acts of kindness throughout West St. Paul. In just three weeks, they completed 2,684 acts of kindness, raised \$20,000, and inspired a community to be kind and give back.



Moreland Made Celebrates Student Creativity

At Moreland Made, Moreland's learning showcase event, students showcased projects from art, STEAM, and their classrooms, and showed their families and friends all the amazing learning going on at Moreland. "It felt so good to have our school full of families again," says Principal Mark Quinn. "You could feel how excited everyone was to be with their school community, celebrating our student's creativity and hard work."

Pilot Knob STEM Magnet School

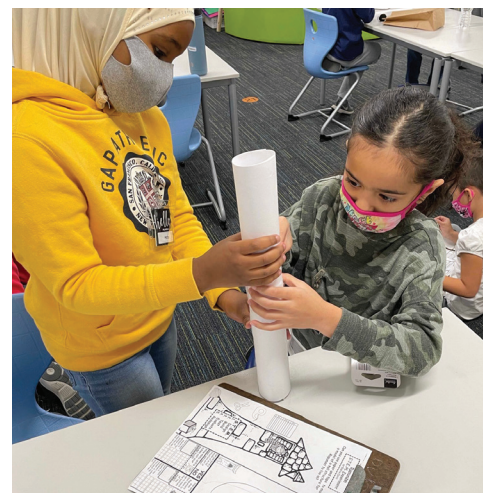


Pilot Knob Students Get Outside to Play

More than 250 Pilot Knob students and families visited Cascade Bay Water Park in Eagan for PK Swims. PK Swims is an extension of PK Plays, a program that teachers and staff created to build community and get students outside to play. Once a week on Tuesday evenings, families gather at Pilot Knob to play soccer and basketball, and to play on the playground. According to Principal Tom Benson, "This has been a wonderful time for students and families to get together to make new friends and strengthen our school community. We are looking forward to adding the game of cricket and taking school community bike rides as well."

Pilot Knob Receives Prestigious PLTW Award

Pilot Knob has been recognized as a 2021-22 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School. Pilot Knob is one of just 282 schools across the U.S. to receive this honor for providing broad access to transformative learning opportunities for students through PLTW Launch. PLTW is a nonprofit organization that serves millions of PreK-I2 students and teachers in schools across the U.S. Congrats, Pilot Knob staff and students!





School

Somerset Elementary School

Somerset Spring Carnival Returns

The Somerset Spring Carnival made a return and brought the community—and even Somerset alumni—back together in a big way! “We were overwhelmed with the amount of people that attended, clearly people were ready

for fun again,” Principal Libby Huettl says. “Thanks to everyone who showed up to support our students and school community, and to all the amazing Somerset alumni who came as well. We are so happy everyone still feels at home here at Somerset!”



Connecting Community and Generations at Somerset

Second-graders at Somerset have been making friends with older adults from the community for over 30 years through SPIFF (Special Pals in Fun Friendships). In June, students welcomed a smaller group of older adults back to Somerset for the first SPIFF get-together in over two years. The two generations met for a scaled-down “mini SPIFF” version of the program, and got to know each other by asking questions, such as: “How do you like to spend your time?” and “If you could be any animal, what would you be?” The older pals shared photos of themselves when they were in elementary school with their new second-grade pals, solved some math problems and completed a word search together.

Friendly Hills Middle School

A New Science Garden at Friendly Hills

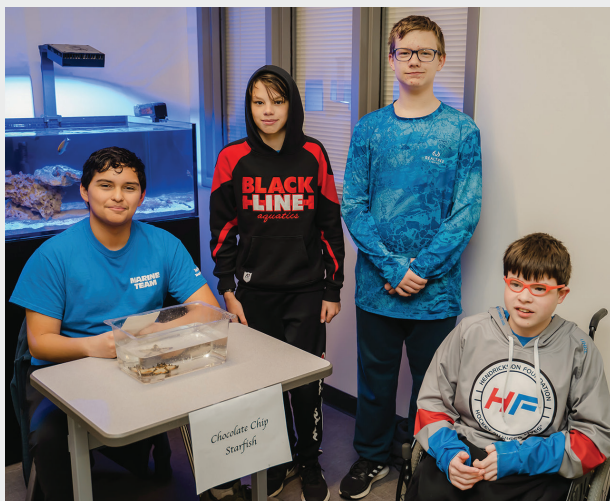
Friendly Hills has a new garden! Students in Patrick McCormick’s science classes planted the petunias they grew from seeds back in March. The new garden was created as you drive into the Friendly Hills parking lot, and makes the shapes of an F and H. It was a true team effort from seed to flower—and now students, staff, visitors and community members have a beautiful new garden for everyone to enjoy.



Friendly Hills Celebrates Diversity

The Friendly Hills Student Diversity Club, started by cultural liaisons Raquel Calles and Farhiyo Farah, is an open space for 40 student leaders to participate in self-care activities, host leadership conversations, and explore identity and inclusive language. The club has hosted a career panel, a field trip, and in June a family showcase where club members’ families were welcomed to an afternoon celebration.

Heritage E-STEM Magnet Middle School



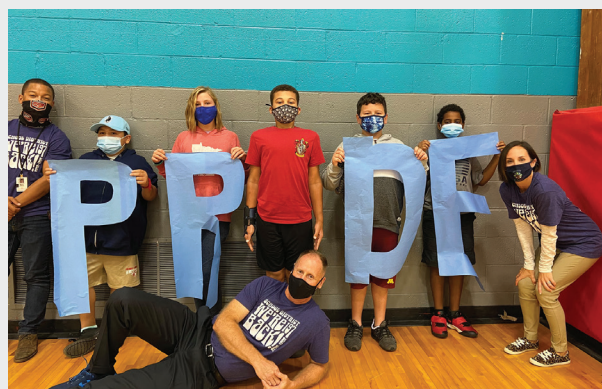
A Full House for the Heritage MarineTeam Open House

The Heritage MarineTeam, a group of 200 middle school students and volunteer science teachers, hosted their annual MarineTeam Open House in April. It was a great chance for the students to show off their knowledge of aquatic animals to the 700+ community members in attendance. We are proud of the MarineTeam students and the skills and professionalism they demonstrated at this community event!



Heritage Students Take PRIDE

Staff at Heritage held the first pep fest of the year for students to focus on PRIDE (People Respecting Individual Differences Everywhere). The pep fest reminded students of the importance of taking pride in oneself, others, and the building. The event brought students and staff together to participate in a relay race that involved teamwork and positive encouragement. It was an amazing community-building event filled with smiles and laughter!



Two Rivers High School

Two Rivers Welcomes Community to New Facilities

Have you noticed extra activity around Two Rivers High School lately? That's because for the first time in years, we've been able to host a number of sporting events and other activities thanks to our new facilities made possible by your support. From hosting the track and field Metro East Conference championships to the dance team invitational tournament, our new facilities are welcoming people from all over the state.



Two Rivers Seniors Visit Former Elementary Schools

A new tradition has started at Two Rivers High School! In collaboration with School District 197 elementary schools, seniors are visiting their former schools—where their academic journey began—on the last Friday of the school year. Seniors parade through the halls to show our current elementary school students what hard work looks like, and where it can take them.



Warrior Highlights



Cultural Liaisons Celebrate End of School Year

School District 197 cultural liaisons and translator/interpreters hosted a community event at Dodge Nature Center in June to celebrate the end of another successful school year. Families enjoyed free meals, games, a raffle, lots of prizes, and most importantly—the chance to connect with their beloved school liaisons. Special thanks to our liaisons and translator/interpreters for supporting our students and families in such important ways!



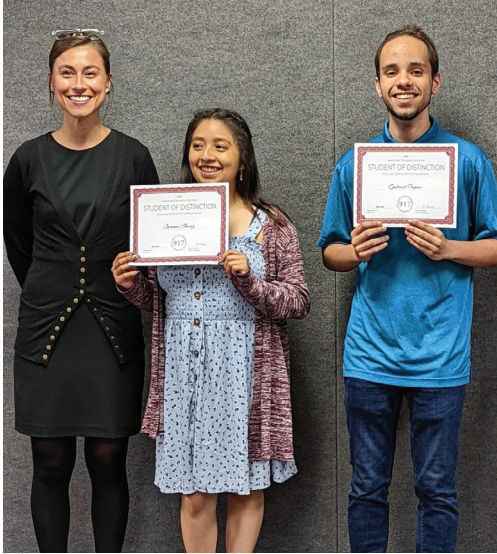
Welcome, Naida Medicine Crow!

School District 197 is pleased to introduce Naida Medicine Crow, who will be serving as the district-wide American Indian Cultural Liaison.

“Han Mitakuyapi! Hello Relatives! I come to you with a wealth of knowledge and experience working with American Indian families and youth, actually over 20 years serving the American Indian community in different capacities,” says Naida, who is enrolled with Crow Creek Hunkpati Dakota Nation. “I went to school at MSU-Mankato and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a Dakota Language focus. I am looking forward to working with the families and youth of School District 197! And I am excited for the upcoming year!”

In her role, Naida will serve all American Indian students and families across the district and will be working out of the District Office. Please contact Naida if you are interested in obtaining a backpack with supplies from Shakopee Mdewakanton Dakota Community at naida.medicinecrow@isd197.org or 651-403-7344.

Student Showcase 197



Branch Out Partners with Dakota County Technical College

The Branch Out program has dedicated itself to supporting and educating youth with disabilities as they transition into adult life. The goal is to increase these students' self-knowledge, give them access to education and job training opportunities, and immerse them in the community. And this spring, three Branch Out students received "Students of Distinction" awards for their coursework at Dakota County Technical College! Congratulations to Carmen Chavez (Visual and Graphic Arts), Cheyenne Pecore (Fundamental Chef), and Gabriel Pagan (Visual and Graphic Arts)!

TriDistrict CAPS Students Show Off Their Internship Experience

Two Rivers High School, South St. Paul Secondary School and Simley High School students in TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS)

courses showed off what they learned this past year at the Spring Showcase. Students in CAPS Business & Entrepreneurship, CAPS Healthcare, and CAPS Transportation & Skilled Trades courses held internships at hospitals, marketing firms, animal clinics, automotive repair shops, and other local businesses. Teachers, administrators, family members, local professionals, and post-secondary staff attended the showcase to hear from students and learn more about the TriDistrict CAPS program.



Congratulations to the Class of 2022!

Graduation commencement for the Two Rivers High School Class of 2022 took place on June 5 at Roy Wilkins Auditorium, RiverCentre in St. Paul. May all the warm memories of your school years accompany you on your journey to success—there are many more to come!

REGISTER NOW!

13TH ANNUAL
WARRIOR 5K
WALK/RUN

Saturday, September 24, 2022
Race starts at 9 a.m.
Two Rivers High School



School District 197 Educational Foundation donated funds to every school library in our district last year. Help us continue these great programs by joining us at the Warrior 5K! Click on the QR code to register.

There's Still Time to Enroll in Kindergarten!

Know someone who needs to enroll for the 2022-2023 school year? Encourage them to visit www.isd197.org/district/enrollment or stop in to the District Office (1897 Delaware Ave., adjacent to Two Rivers High School) soon to complete their paperwork. We look forward to seeing you in the fall!





West St. Paul + Mendota Heights + Eagan Area

1897 Delaware Ave.
Mendota Heights, MN 55118
www.isd197.org

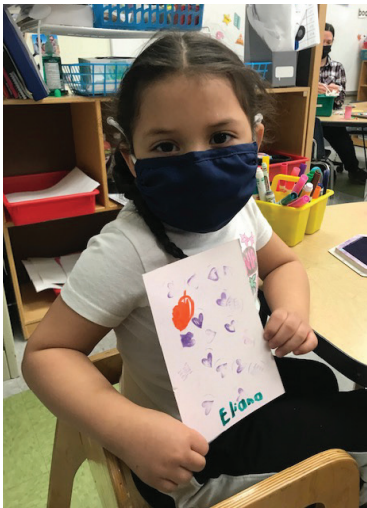
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Community Ed



Early Learning Center Kindness Cards for the Community

Students from the Early Learning Center made kindness cards for people in our community. Preschool Teacher Jennifer Meisinger organized the event and shared, "We made cards recognizing kind friends in our classroom, family members at home, grandparents in the community living at nursing homes and making cards thanking teachers and custodians. Together, five preschool classes participated in making cards to share kindness, and they were delivered to the Southview Senior Living and Saint Therese Transitional Care Services to show our elderly community friends kindness.



Summer Youth Swim Lessons at the Aquatics Center

School District 197 is excited to continue our summer youth swim lessons, ranging from Parent & Tot classes, Preschool 1-2 and Levels 1-5. We have had a busy start, but do have limited openings left in the July 25-Aug 4 session. Sign up for the waitlist as we do get cancellations. To register, visit isd197.org/community/aquatics.

TPAC Builds Community for Older Adults

Did you know that the Thompson Park Activity Center (TPAC) in West St. Paul offers clubs and activities for older adults? In partnership with Dakota County, the City of West St. Paul, and School District 197, we're able to help serve adults age 55+ with educational, social and recreational classes and activities. And for the third year in a row, TPAC has been awarded Best of St. Paul for Senior Citizen Services. That lands us in the St. Paul Business Hall of Fame!

