



NEWS

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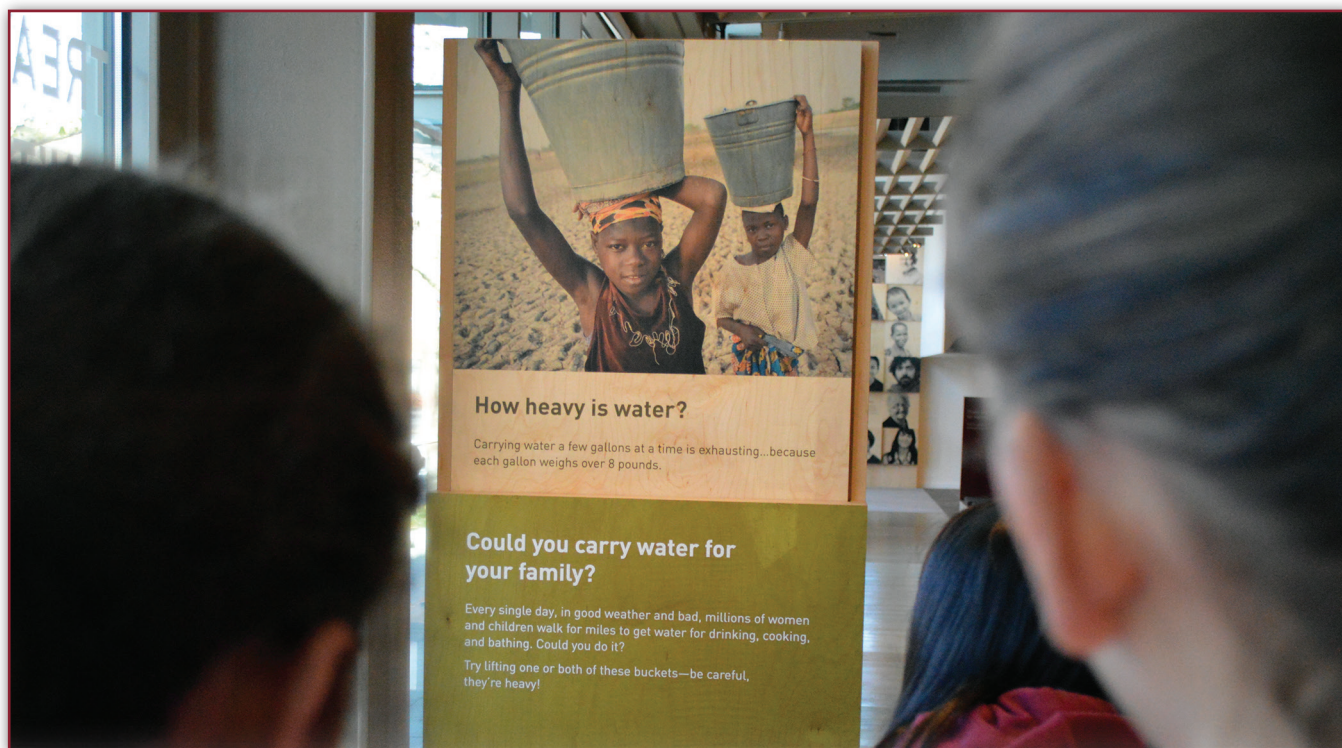
MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

VISION 2020: STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATION

BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE AT WEST MERCER ELEMENTARY

**ISLANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP CLASS:
BRINGING A SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED OUTLOOK TO GLOBAL ISSUES**

FIVE CLASS OF 2014 GRADUATES NAMED VALEDICTORIANS



Islander Middle School Global Citizenship class: Bringing a solutions-oriented outlook to global issues

This year, the Gates Foundation Visitor Center hosted 20 students from Jan Brousseau's Global Citizenship class. Global awareness is critical to student learning as communication technology platforms make the world smaller and any innovator from any part of the world can impact the economy. At Islander Middle School, Brousseau's class proactively engages with global issues to promote that awareness.

"This trip is about inspiring

our students," said Brousseau. "Once their eyes are opened to the ways local people are making a global impact, they start thinking about how they are going to do it."

The field trip included a visit from two Mercer Island parents who work at the Gates Foundation. Dr. Salif Sow, originally from Senegal, and Dr. Ibrahim Khalil, originally from Egypt, introduced students to the work done by the Gates Foundation as well as their specialties.

Sow works in the infectious diseases program. He guided students in a discussion about the global impact of the polio vaccine and the global development program. Students had clearly prepared, quickly naming the three countries impacted most by polio.

Khalil worked for a pharmaceutical company before moving to Mercer Island and working for the Gates Foundation. He specializes in enteric and diarrheal diseases,

including rotavirus, which causes severe diarrhea and disproportionately affects children.

“Rotavirus is a truly democratic virus,” said Khalil, meaning that it can impact people from any socioeconomic class and in any part of the world.

Students were then led on an interactive tour of the visitor center demonstrating the global and local work of the foundation, showing many of the career possibilities in life sciences or program development here in the United States and around the world. As they learned about each foundation project, students were asked to think about problems with a solutions-driven outlook and becoming a part of something larger than themselves through hard work and a commitment to making the world better.

Walking the walk, Brousseau’s students raised funds for three service projects with the goal of attending *We Day* in Seattle in March, a goal they achieved. Tickets for *We Day* cannot be purchased – they must be earned through service, including a local service



Mercer Island students view a digital, global map of Gates Foundation projects

project and a global one. In their local project, the students sponsored two families during the Mercer Island Youth and Family Services food drive, and in the global project they raised funds to provide clean water for a rural village overseas, help build schools and provide educational materials for them. ■



See more photos of the trip at Facebook.com/EngageMercerIslandSchools

Five named class of 2014 valedictorians

This spring Mercer Island High School announced five valedictorians for the class of 2014.

Shalva Kohen, Devina Kumar, Peter Litzow, Rachel Van Gelder and Mary Wingerson shared a single speech at the June 12 commencement ceremony for graduating seniors. These seniors earned a 4.0 grade-point average throughout their four years at MIHS.

“Being named a valedictorian is a great honor bestowed upon a high school student,” said Mercer Island School District Superintendent Dr. Gary Plano. “These five students model the core values of this school district and of the Mercer Island community. We are extremely proud of the passion, perseverance and inspiration they have demonstrated for learning and the success they have had. I’m excited to see what they have in store in the future.”

Van Gelder, who will attend Dartmouth College in the fall, says, “The Mercer Island community has been uniquely supportive in helping me reach my goals by providing the resources necessary for my success, but not pushing me in any specific direction. This has allowed me to take charge of my education and personalize it without being punished for taking risks.” She hopes to pursue a career in global health or international medicine.

“Every adult in my life has been extremely supportive. My parents started reading to me before I could talk,” said Wingerson, who has attended Lakeridge Elementary, West Mercer Elementary, IMS and MIHS. “They inspired my love of learning and my teachers nourished it.” Wingerson will attend Yale University in the fall and hopes to help bring quality healthcare to developing nations.

Performing in RENT last spring and marching in the Rose Parade with the band his sophomore year were

two of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences for Litzow, who will be attending Stanford University. He said, “My math teachers attend all of my plays and the principals come to every band concert. I am truly grateful for all of their support.”



Peter Litzow, Devina Kumar, Rachel Van Gelder, Mary Wingerson and Shalva Kohen (not pictured) named class of 2014 valedictorians

Seventeen-year-old Kohen said, “I plan to study computer engineering at Columbia University. Eventually I want to work in robotics and build machines that will better the world. My parents have always made education a priority. They would always help me with my homework and tirelessly explain difficult to understand concepts. My teachers likewise have always gone above and beyond to help me learn.”

“The school district and Mercer Island community are absolutely incredible. Every single opportunity I have received because of this community has helped me grow both as a person and a student,” said Kumar. “Every day, I am especially astounded by how incredible my teachers are. They are passionate about teaching and are truly dedicated to my learning.” Kumar started at Lakeridge Elementary then attended West Mercer Elementary, IMS and MIHS and will attend Dartmouth College. ■

Sophomore competes in national monologue competition in New York

On May 6, Mercer Island High School sophomore Josiah Townsend competed in the national August Wilson Monologue Competition at the prestigious August Wilson Theatre in New York on Broadway. The event featured high school students from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Pittsburgh and Seattle performing monologues by the late, legendary American playwright.

The theatre in New York is less than a mile away from where Townsend hopes to attend college, at Juilliard. “I connect with Wilson’s work because every character he introduces in his plays reminds me of a real character I have met in my life,” said Townsend.

Actor Denzel Washington was in the audience for the competition and made a point of introducing himself to Townsend shortly after the monologue competition concluded.

In February, three MIHS students competed with about 60 others from the Puget Sound in the regional competition at the Seattle Repertory Theatre. The top three from each region were invited to compete in



Josiah Townsend with actor Denzel Washington at the August Wilson Monologue Competition in New York

New York. Townsend said, “I am proud to say I am an Islander and that community supports me with love and encouragement.”

“This was a wonderful accomplishment for Josiah and a celebration of the work of August Wilson,” said MIHS Principal Vicki Puckett. ■

District names three 2013-14 teachers of the year

The 2013-14 teachers of the year are Mercer Island High School special education teacher Sue Jobe, Islander Middle School world language and global studies teacher Jan Brousseau and Island Park Elementary kindergarten teacher Jeanne Berkshire.

“Aside from being outstanding educators, these three teachers have also demonstrated their commitment to their continued professional growth, community involvement and strengthening the teaching profession,” said Mercer Island School District Superintendent Dr. Plano. “I’m proud to be presenting these three for this esteemed recognition.”



Sue Jobe



Jeanne Berkshire



Jan Brousseau

Bringing history to life at West Mercer Elementary

They weren't wearing powdered wigs, waistcoats or knee breeches, but honorable delegates representing 12 of the 13 American colonies convened at West Mercer Elementary this year. Their agenda? To debate trade policy and manage colonial response to the passage of the Intolerable Acts imposed by the British Parliament.

Each student in Julie Langley's fifth-grade class was asked to characterize a member of the delegation, who were appointed by the legislatures of each colony except for Georgia, which did not participate. They represented northern, middle and southern colonies, and were divided into factions of Patriots, Loyalists and Neutralists.



The original delegates may have met at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, but this year Julie Langley's fifth-grade classroom at West Mercer was the setting for students to re-enact and learn about the American Revolution

Mercer Island School District retirements

Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the students in the Mercer Island School District!

Carol Bain, hired 9-4-91; retired 1-15-14

Ramona Behnke, hired 9-1-98; retired 9-30-14

Jim Berrington, hired 3-25-08; retired 1-31-14

Terry Hart, hired 9-27-79; retired 6-30-14

Cyndy Jensen, hired 9-3-91; retired 6-30-14

Jan Kentnor, hired 8-24-78; retired 6-30-14

Marcia LeVeque, hired 8-31-98; retired 6-30-14

Patty Lewis, hired 8-30-00; retired 6-30-14

Hoanh Nguyen, hired 8-22-95; retired 3-31-14

Craig Olson, hired 8-15-94; retired 12-31-13

Dave Segadelli, hired 8-30-00; retired 6-30-14

Patty Shipman, hired 6-2-04; retired 6-30-14

Students researched their historical characters so they could make arguments based on the character's true leanings. "They have to provide proof for their arguments on behalf of the characters, even if they personally disagree with those arguments," said Langley.

There is a cognitive process each student must go through to accurately portray and advocate on behalf of their character. They also practice public speaking skills as they debate with one another over several proposals, including whether there will be outright opposition and resistance to the Intolerable Acts, whether to form an association to refuse trade with Great Britain, Ireland and the West Indies, or to accept the Galloway Plan of Union, thereby creating an American colonial parliament to act with the British Parliament.

Regarding the Galloway Plan of Union, which would give each parliament veto power over its counterpart's decisions relating to the colonies, the student portraying Robert Morris vigorously argued that "If we pass this nothing is ever going to get done."

Students also had to learn parliamentary procedure, which improved noticeably over time. Langley said, "It's



amazing how the students can make this language of the Grand Council work."

But even in such an academic process, kids will be kids.

After some taunting, Langley had to remind one student that "If John Adams goes on to be president, you're going to be really sorry you embarrassed him." In another situation, Patriot Samuel Chase of Maryland was "arrested" by the opposition for taunting Loyalists the day before a crucial import/export vote. As a result, he was unable to vote and what would have been a victory for Patriots became a tie and no trade restrictions were imposed.

Langley said the students really strive to understand the motivations of the various delegates, which brings our history to life for them. ■



SUMMER DISTRICT NEWS

Mercer Island School District

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MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Notice of Nondiscrimination & Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB). The district shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, religion, age, veteran or military status, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability or non-program-related physical, sensory or mental disabilities. District programs and activities shall be free from sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination. In addition, the District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The district is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and patrons that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

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