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Senior Project Creates Buddy System

A senior project is one of the final requirements for a Grant Union student pursuing an Honors Diploma. Vincent Raschio has been working on his senior project all year, working to connect the senior class with the kindergarten class in a buddy system.

The idea took root over the past couple years as he watched the senior class complete their graduation walk through the Humbolt Elementary campus. This end of year tradition has been a highlight for the elementary students and a moment of recognition and gratitude for the teachers who have given so much time and attention to help these graduates succeed. Several years ago, kindergarten teacher Sena Raschio began pairing her graduating kindergarten class up with the high school seniors for the traditional walk, giving a visual representation of just how far (and how quickly) these students have successfully navigated the past twelve years of their education. When Vincent saw the rambunctious kindergarten students he knew and loved from his mother's class turn into shy, quiet kids because they didn't know the senior they were walking with, he wanted to change that. He created a plan, a schedule of events, and received approval for his senior project.

In September, Raschio led 27 of his classmates on a walk to Humbolt Elementary and introduced them to a buddy from the kindergarten class. The students met in the gym, presenting their buddies with gifts of cookies and Grant Union hats with both graduation years 2026 and 2038 on the back. A few of the seniors requested buddies they already knew, like Mathew Delano who

was paired with his nephew. Many of the students were introduced to a partner they had never met before. "My buddy was shy at first," said senior Maddie Underwood. Her friend Emma Northway joined in, "Yeah, but then the more time we spent with them the more they opened up."



In November, the seniors walked over to Humbolt to help the students with their art class. They each paired off with their buddies, helping them create turkeys out of a painted handprint. "I never could have done a project like that without their help," said teacher Sena Raschio. When the class completed their turkeys, many of the kindergarteners helped their senior buddies paint their own handprints! The students returned again in December to help the students create ornaments as gifts for their families.

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