

LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Raschio Receives Teacher of the Year

Grant School District 3 is proud to announce that Sena Raschio, kindergarten teacher at Humbolt Elementary School, has been selected as the Regional Teacher of the Year for the 2025-26 school year!

Each year, the Oregon Department of Education, in partnership with the Oregon Lottery, honors 17 educators statewide with this prestigious award.

The nominating letter included the following: “Sena brings an unmatched level of creativity and delight to her teaching. Her ability to make learning both rigorous and exciting keeps students engaged and eager to participate. Every day in her classroom is dynamic, joyful and filled with purposeful learning.”

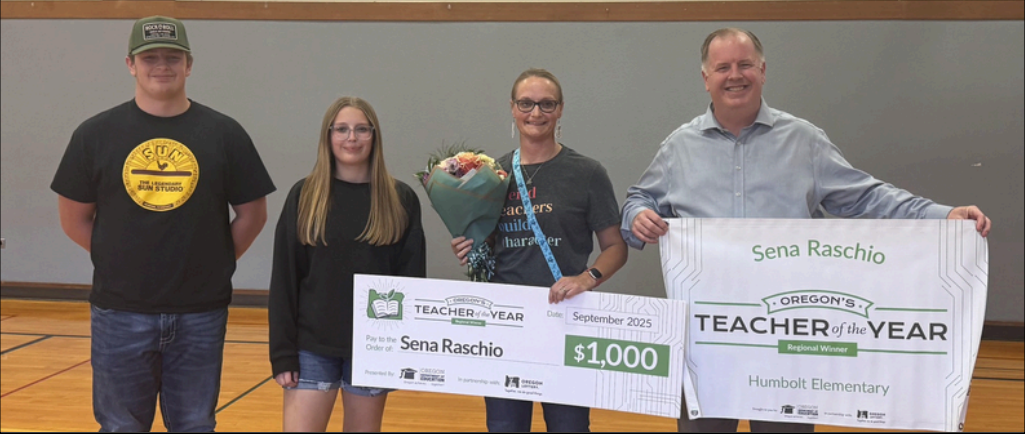
Beyond her classroom, Sena has strengthened her school and district by co-developing a teacher mentoring program, leading curriculum adoption committees, and guiding literacy initiatives. She also

fosters community connection through events like the Kindergarten Gold Rush, Donuts with Grownups, and Mother’s Day Tea.

“Sena is an exemplary educator, mentor, and leader,” said principal Janine Attlesperger. “Her dedication lifts students, colleagues, and families across our community.”

Superintendent Mark Witty stated, “We are incredibly fortunate to have Sena Raschio as part of the Grant School District #3 team. Her unwavering dedication to students, unmatched passion for education, and contagious enthusiasm make her a standout in our schools. Sena truly embodies the very best of the teaching profession.”

As Regional Teacher of the Year, Sena will now be considered for the Oregon Teacher of the Year award. It’s a great day to be a Little Prospector!



Humbolt Elementary kindergarten teacher Sena Raschio, pictured above with her husband Rob, son Vincent, and daughter Annabelle, after the surprise announcement at a recent all-school assembly. Congratulations Mrs. Raschio!



PROSPECTOR PRIDE



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Volume 3 Issue 2



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Durych Applies CNA License

As a child, Lily Durych dreamed of helping people, but she wasn’t sure what she wanted to be when she grew up. She often considered being a hairdresser, a real estate agent, or a Veterinarian. “Usually a Veterinarian,” Durych laughs.

During her sophomore year of high school, Durych was introduced to career ideas in different healthcare fields through a health class with Grant Union Jr/Sr High School teacher Sylvia Ross. That summer, she attended a MedQuest Camp at Crane High School, receiving the opportunity to job shadow many different careers in healthcare, including surgery, post-op, and nursing. She decided to pursue a career in radiology, specifically as an ultrasound technician.

In her junior year, Durych began taking college classes through Grant Union and Eastern Oregon University. To gain more experience in the medical field and better prepare for nursing school, Durych enrolled in a CNA course through Treasure Valley Community College, completing her 72 hours of coursework online and her 40 clinical hours at Harney District Hospital. After completing the three-month course, Durych and her mother travelled to Gresham so she could complete her online knowledge test and hands-on skills test—both of which she passed on the first try. “Which was exciting,” she exclaims, “because I was really nervous.” She received her certification, accepting a job at the Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City.

She worked full-time throughout the summer with three 12-hour shifts per week. Although the work can be tiring and takes a toll on her, she loves working with the residents and finds the work rewarding. While most of

her day includes caring for a resident’s basic needs; she also enjoys the relationships. Durych shared that her favorite time this summer was taking the residents to the Grant County Fair, where they met up with various family members, toured the fairgrounds and pavilion, and ate lunch together. “I really like spending time with the residents.”

Now that school has started, Durych has found her schedule a little fuller. She attends Grant Union full-time, with her coursework including a dual-enrollment Medical Terminology class with Blue Mountain Community College and additional college-level classes through EOU. Busy with school and the soccer team, Durych continues to work a sixteen-hour shift on Sundays.

After graduation, Durych plans to complete her pre-requisite classes and apply to nursing school. Although radiology is not out of the question, she now hopes to gain experience in different areas of nursing, including the Emergency Room, Intensive Care Unit, and Labor and Delivery. “I really enjoy the patient interaction,” she said. She adds that every student would benefit from taking CNA classes because “they give you perspective and help you see people’s everyday lives and what they have going on.” She feels incredibly thankful for each daily task she can complete for herself, and that drives her to help others. Whatever career Lily Durych decides on, she will be a cheerful blessing to everyone around her.

Two programs are currently available for CNA certification: the TVCC program outlined above and a program offered locally through Blue Mountain Hospital District with clinicals at the Blue Mountain Care Home. Both of these programs are available throughout the year and have been beneficial to Grant Union students. Several of Lily’s classmates have also become board-certified CNAs. In fact, over the past two years, Grant Union has helped eight students complete their CNA courses and become board certified during high school. One graduate is currently in nursing school, while the others are working as CNA’s while completing their high school or college coursework. The CNA program is one of many paths students are taking to unlock their future. It’s a great day to be a Prospector!



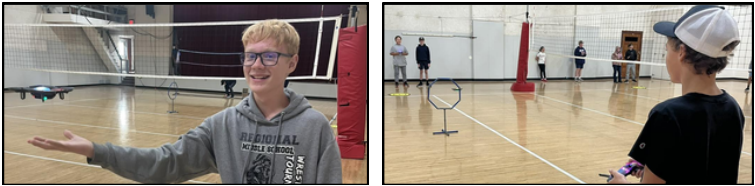
In this Issue:

- Page 1 - Durych Applies CNA License
- Page 2 - Shout Outs
- Page 3 - 2025-26 Student Leadership
- Page 4 & 5 - Alumni Focus: Alma Sproul Mattocks
- Page 6 - Strategic Plan, Summer Jump Start
- Page 7 - Board Members Tour Building Projects
Seneca Students Extend History
- Page 8 - Raschio Receives Teacher of the Year

Shout-Out to Kalli Wilson & Team!
Congratulations on the launch of the new district-wide website! I absolutely love it—it’s beautiful, easy to navigate, and truly reflects the heart of our schools. It’s clear that a lot of time, effort, and creativity went into making it happen, and it really shows. Fantastic job—you all knocked it out of the park!
-Stacy Durych, Seneca K-6/Head Teacher

Shout Out to Mr. Matt Jones!
I want to recognize Mr. Jones for always going above and beyond to make sure every student is successful. Recently, my son Zeke had a knee injury and wasn’t able to go upstairs for a while. Since Zeke has two classes with Mr. Jones, we reached out to see if he could get notes and assignments for the next few weeks. But Mr. Jones wasn’t going to let him miss out! Instead of just sending work, he moved his entire 2nd-period class to the commons and set up his projector so all of his students could continue learning together. That’s the kind of teacher he is—no kid left behind. I am so thankful that Mr. Jones is here and still the same amazing teacher I remember from 23 years ago! His passion for teaching and his commitment to empowering every student is truly inspiring. We can all learn something from the way he makes sure every student is prepared and ready for the world.
-Heather Rookstool, Parent & GU Commons

EOU Teaches Math Through Drones
Thank you to Eastern Oregon University’s GO-STEM (Greater Oregon Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program for spending the day with our Math students. Our 7th, 8th, and 9th graders learned about various uses for drones in agriculture, honing their skills and becoming accurate enough to fly them through obstacle courses.
-Anna Field, GU Math Teacher



Mr. Hunt Supports Math Education
Robert Hunt supports students across many levels of math throughout his day, helping them to grow and find success while holding high expectations and building lasting relationships.
-Andrea Combs & Marissa Smith, GU SPED Teachers



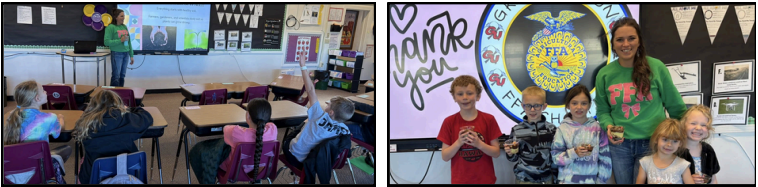
Oct. 2, 2025

School Custodial Workers
Recognition Day

Thank you, Custodians!

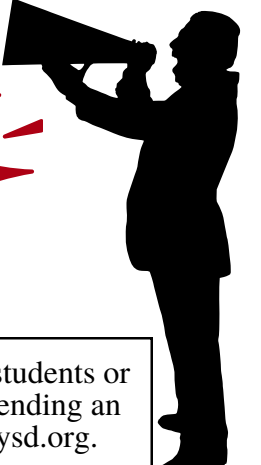
Larkin Goes Above Expectations
Tammy Larkin helped clean and set up classrooms before school. This lifted a huge weight from Marissa's and my shoulders because we had not been able to get into our rooms until Friday of in-service week due to the windows being replaced. Thank you, Tammy!!!
-Andrea Combs & Marissa Smith, GU SPED Teachers

Agricultural Education at Seneca
Thank you to Mrs. Oliver, Grant Union FFA/Ag teacher, for visiting Seneca Elementary. We loved learning about how your job connects to agriculture and just how important soil is. Students especially enjoyed creating edible soil horizons to see the layers in action (and taste them too!).
-Raney Anderson, Seneca K-6/Science/PE Teacher



Thank you, Mrs. Copenhaver!
Cammi Copenhaver is doing an outstanding job supporting students as they take classes that support their post-high school goals. She engages in their learning with them, helping them to be successful as they work towards their future!
-Andrea Combs & Marissa Smith, GU SPED Teachers

6th Grade Outdoor School a Success
A heartfelt THANK YOU to Marci Judd, Andrea Ashley, Amanda Gibbs, Jordan Hall, Shanley Cobb, Kabrina Vardanega, Dixon Apostol, Jesse Gosnell, and the entire Lake Creek Youth Camp staff for providing an outstanding Outdoor School experience for our Humbolt and Seneca 6th-grade students! Your dedication, energy, and support created a meaningful and memorable learning opportunity that our students will carry with them for years to come. We appreciate all the hard work and care you put into making this experience so special!
-Janine Attlesperger, Elementary Principal/
Special Services Director



Shout
Outs

Send a shout out to staff, students or community members, by sending an email to shoutout@johndaysd.org.

Grant Union Student Leadership 2025-26



Senior Class: Emmalyn Northway, Maddie Underwood, Aaliyah Judd, Lily Durych, and Vincent Raschio



Junior Class: Saturn Laidlaw, Gracee Hueckman, Ember Dutcher, and Addison Hatley



Sophomore Class: Morgan Cole, Jhett Williams, and Cosette Klusmier



Freshman Class: Ivy LaFramboise, Emmie Saul, and Rhyanna Wyllie



8th Grade: Lane Bailey, Jaxyn Huerta, Thomas Shaw, and Paislee Hueckman



7th Grade: Sam Bailey, Shayann Gosnell, Cooper Cobb, and Wyatt Lieuallen



Student Body Officers:
President: Taylor Gosnell
Vice-President: Rhyis Conn
Secretary: Erin Donathan
Treasurer: Aly Qual



President: Morgan Cole, Vice: Jhett Williams, Treasurer: Taylor Gosnell, Secretary: Keira Stiner, Parliamentarian: Cosette Klusmeir, Historian: Abril Ceja, Media: Ganesa Ledbetter, Officer Coach (and State Officer): Eliza Bailey



Aly Qual and Brooke Taynton, 2025-26 FFA Co-Presidents

Prospector Power Camp Gives Jr High Students a Jump Start

By Dennise Blevins and Anna Field

This past summer, we launched a new jump-start program for Grant Union 7th and 8th graders: Prospector Power Camp. The camp was designed to give students a softer start to the school year, support incoming 7th graders in their transition, and remind everyone that learning can be fun. Over three weeks, students explored museums, studied water systems, and even built a bat habitat right on campus.

Week 1 focused on water. Students carried heavy buckets to imagine life in Sudan without easy access, studied watersheds, snorkeled, and worked alongside fish biologists from CTWS and ODFW to explore the Middle Fork ecosystem.

Week 2 brought history to life. Students visited Kam Wah Chung, the Grant County Historical Museum, and the Sumpter Valley Railroad Trail, learning how the local

people and places shaped our community. Thanks to our partners in the Blue Mountain Ranger District, Oregon Parks and Recreation, and Grant County Historical Museum, history became a hands-on adventure.

Week 3 turned the spotlight on wildlife. With guidance from local biologists and community members, students learned about Oregon’s bat species and ended camp by installing a bat box near the river, leaving a lasting mark on campus.

Each week also featured cooking lessons with Bonni Booth from the Grant ESD SNAP-ed program. Students made smoothies, protein bites, and ranch dressing—gaining kitchen confidence and a willingness to experiment until they got it just right.

We’re excited to keep building on the success of Prospector Power Camp and can’t wait to see where it takes our students next.

Alumni Focus: Alma (Sproul) Mattocks, Class of 2000 Seneca Elementary School and Grant Union High School

I was born and raised in Grant County. My parents are Jim and Jo Sproul, and I am the youngest of six children: Ben Brandt, Bill Sproul, Andrea (Brandt) Combs, Jamie (Sproul) Thomas, and Wendy (Sproul) Ballou. I grew up in Bear Valley for most of my childhood, but moved to Canyon City while I was in high school. Growing up in Bear Valley, we all attended Seneca Elementary School until the eighth grade and then went on to attend Grant Union High School.

There are so many teachers throughout my elementary and high school years who I absolutely loved and taught me so much. Every single teacher and staff member at Seneca Elementary played a vital role in my education and my growth as a person; some of my favorites included Mrs. Zick and Mrs. Beal (who was also at Grant Union when I was there!). Mr. Olson was my piano teacher for years, and he was instrumental in teaching me to always strive to do better. In high school, I absolutely loved Mr. Ediger. His inquisitive spirit and zest for life were something I truly admired.

Some of my favorite memories from school came from the activities I was involved in. I remember in high school getting opportunities for field trips and travel, and I was able to see what life was like outside of Grant County. I think those initial trips piqued my curiosity to want to travel and learn more about the world. I will also never forget being crowned Homecoming Queen my senior year and getting to ride around the track on the back of a convertible. As a young girl, I remember going to Homecoming football games and seeing the girls who were on the homecoming court and wishing that it would be me someday. I will never forget the day my childhood dream came true.

I tried to stay involved in lots of activities throughout middle school and high school. I started with volleyball and basketball, but switched to cheerleading halfway through high school. 4-H was another big part of my life, and I was a member of the Izee Livestock group. I was also involved in student government, serving as the Student Body President my senior year.



Although sometimes graduation does not feel like it was that long ago, so much has happened in my life since that time. After graduation, I went on to get my bachelor's degree in Athletic Training at Linfield College. I then took a year off and worked before I realized that if I wanted to get to my goal of working as an Athletic Trainer in a collegiate setting, I would need to get my master's degree. I went to Oregon State University for my master's degree, and that is where I really started to flourish in my personal and professional life. I fell in love with running as a hobby and met my future husband.

After graduating from Oregon State University, I became an Athletic Trainer at Pacific University. My husband and I lived in the Hillsboro area for almost seven years, during which time I started running more and completed several marathons, enjoying all the Pacific Northwest has to offer. My husband worked in professional baseball, requiring an extensive amount of travel, so eventually we moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where I could be closer to him year-round. After moving to Louisville, I found my way into higher education, helping to start a Master of Science in Athletic Training program at Spalding University.

Just as I was getting settled into that role, my husband received a promotion, our son was born, and we moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. At that point, I realized I wanted to continue my career in higher education, and I knew that meant getting a doctorate. One of my greatest achievements in life was completing my PhD at Bellarmine University while working full-time with a young child at home and a husband who traveled often for work. I have also completed 11 marathons and one ultra-marathon since high school, and coming from someone who never thought of herself as a runner, I know that is a huge accomplishment.

My son is now 9, and we have shifted to following my career. I currently serve as the Division Chairperson for the Division of Athletic Training at West Virginia University. When I was graduating from High School, I

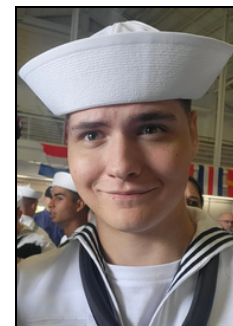


would have never imagined that 25 years later I would have a doctorate and a great academic job in West Virginia. I am so thankful for the educators early on who taught me the value of lifelong learning and continuing to grow.

Oregon will always be my home, and my hope is that one day we will live there again, even if it is in retirement. I am so thankful for all the teachers and administrators in the Grant School District, as each one of them played a special role in creating an educational environment that allowed me to constantly grow and learn. As a mother and an educator in higher education, I know how important it is to be part of a good school system. I consider myself lucky to have grown up where

so many people truly cared about my learning and invested their time and effort to ensure my success as a student. For any future graduates, I know it sounds cliché, but dream big! I remember the Jostens rep telling us that high school would be the best four years of our lives, but I have realized that couldn't be further from the truth! Yes, there will be hardships, but life just keeps getting better, and it is what you make of it. One of my favorite quotes that I try to live by is, "Do the best you can, until you know better, then do better." Sometimes you must have failures and go through challenges to see what you are made of and be able to really shine. Always try to learn something new, and be a good person, and you will do great things!

Congratulations Joshua Shockley GU Class of 2025



United States Navy

Prospector Fund Saves for Facilities and Equipment

Thanks to the generous donation of our local gate sponsors: 1st Choice Auto Body, Edward Jones, Gardner Enterprises, Inc., Debbie Hale & Family, Robin Herburger & Family, Hueckman Contracting, LLC, Len's Pharmacy, Les Schwab Tires, Outpost Pizza Pub & Grill, Prospector Booster Club, Raschio Family, Rodeo Patch, S&C Electric, Solutions CPA's, Subway, and Thadd's Place!

We appreciate the generosity of our community and their Prospector Pride. Any additional donations to athletic events go directly to the Prospector Fund which will be earmarked for special projects to improve our facilities and equipment for our athletes. Thanks again and GO PROSPECTORS!



PROJECT GOALS:

- Relocate the flags to an area of prominence inside the track (this will avoid tangles and damage to the flags while flying as well as during the raising and lowering of the flags)
- Improve the gravel area with grass and patios to create an outdoor space for school and community gatherings
- Commemorate 3 Flags Field for future generations through signage and information.

Where are you now? We would love to hear from all of our alumni! Reach out to us by e-mail at shoutout@grantesd.org or call the district office at 541-575-1280.

Strategic Plan Implemented in Schools

At Grant School District 3, we are proud of the progress being made as we continue to implement the strategic plan. This year, the staff are working on building a culture of respect, improving communication, and strengthening partnerships within the community. These priorities are shaping the daily experiences of students and staff, and making a positive impact on school culture.

One of the most visible changes has been in the area of student respect. At Grant Union Jr/Sr High School, an updated student handbook, the staff's focus on presenting consistent expectations, and the staff's commitment to model and reinforce respectful behavior, have made a difference. "We are already seeing more positive interactions in classrooms and hallways," Principal Shanna Northway says. "Teachers report that students are responding well to Prospector Pride cards and shout-outs, which highlight respectful actions and build pride in our shared school values." The staff's focus on the Standards of Excellence has created a common language for respect, accountability, and high expectations.

The staff at Humbolt Elementary School are also focusing on communicating clear and consistent expectations to students. They are creating a buddy class program, which will expand their student buddy program, pairing older classrooms with younger classrooms. The self-manager system for 2nd through 6th-graders will continue this year, along with the addition of a 5th and 6th-grade ambassador program to encourage student leadership opportunities.

At Seneca Elementary, students buddy together on a regular basis with older students often reading and helping the younger students. It is also common for the entire school to take field trips together, such as their trip to Lake Creek Youth Camp to drop the 6th-graders off for Outdoor School and their spontaneous trip to John Day in September for an agricultural soil lesson and lunch at the park when the school unexpectedly experienced a power outage.

The schools are also making major strides in communication with both staff and families. Grant Union has launched the Red Binder site, which has streamlined staff access to important information, while new budgeting systems have increased transparency and efficiency. For families, the expanded use of SchoolMessenger has made it easier to stay informed about events, updates, and opportunities. Parents are receiving more positive messages about their students' successes, which helps strengthen the home-to-school connection and creates a stronger sense of community.

A small change that is making a big difference at Humbolt Elementary School is an earlier release time for students, who now catch the bus at 3:10 pm. This helps get kids home earlier and prevents overcrowding on buses, dropping them off before heading to the junior/senior high school. This change also provides staff more opportunities for communication and collaboration, allowing time to check in with each other and reset for the next day.

At Seneca Elementary, communication is everywhere. Head Teacher Stacy Durych sends a weekly newsletter, The Seneca Way, through e-mail, along with an increased presence on social media. When the class experienced their surprise field trip due to a power outage, parent/guardian permission was obtained through individual phone calls and in-person requests when the bus stopped by their home. On the drive through Canyon City, the students passed a new billboard with their picture and the message "Seneca Strong."

The schools also report their partnerships with the community continue to grow in meaningful ways. Junior high students are benefitting from monthly trips to the county library, which not only supports literacy but also encourages community use of the library. The CTE and woodshop programs are providing hands-on learning that directly supports local projects, while Grant Union's role in hosting the first annual Safety Summit for Grant ESD brought educators and first responders together to strengthen school safety. These partnerships have created new opportunities for students and strengthened Grant Union's role in the community.

Humbolt Elementary is excited to encourage agricultural education in the classroom with the addition of the greenhouse, bringing regular visits from Grant Union FFA/Ag Instructor Kailee Oliver and her students. The staff are also excited to strengthen their relationship with Grant County OSU Extension, SNAP Ed, John Day Senior Center, and so many other great community partners!

The Seneca Elementary staff are excited to continue their relationship with the Burns Piute tribe, local ranchers, and the Forest Service. These students are preparing for the future by learning their history through relationships, art, and language.

As a result of these efforts, our schools are seeing stronger student engagement, improved collaboration, and deeper connections between school and community. The strategic plan is more than a document—it is shaping the way we teach, learn, and work together. We are excited to continue this journey and grateful for the support of families and community partners in making Grant School District 3 a place where every Prospector is known, empowered, and ready for the world.



Junior high students at the Grant County Library

Board Members Tour of Building Projects

While summer may seem quiet without students on campus, it is the perfect opportunity to complete capital improvement projects. On Wednesday, August 20, 2025, the Grant School District 3 school board members toured the Grant Union Jr/Sr High School and Humbolt Elementary School buildings with Superintendent Mark Witty and Project Manager Aaron Lieuallen to see the many building projects recently completed.

One of the biggest changes at Grant Union Jr/Sr High School is the addition of a new HVAC system, allowing effective heating and air conditioning for each of the classrooms. The process took "a lot of communication and people working together," according to Lieuallen, who worked closely with the CB Construction crew, Tye Parsons of S&C Electric, and several engineers. The

project included the removal of the old boiler from Grant Union and the addition of mini-split units in each classroom. Billy Moon with American Lawn Service LLC built beautiful fencing to disguise units at the front of the building, adding curb appeal to complete the project. This HVAC upgrade complements the ongoing project of systematically replacing windows with more energy-efficient windows.

At Humbolt Elementary School, an HVAC system was installed by CB Construction, the greenhouse was completed by Hitz Contracting and Hueckman Contracting, and new landscaping was completed with the help of Brad Armstrong of Fields Tree Service and Harney Lawn and Irrigation. Its a great day to be a Prospector!



Board Members tour (left to right) Grant Union Jr/Sr High School, Humbolt Elementary and the new Greenhouse.

Seneca Students Extend History Through Art and Language

By Stacy Durych, Head Teacher at Seneca Elementary

Seneca Elementary is proud to announce an exciting new project that will bring our school's historical timeline into the present day. Thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Juniper Arts Council, along with \$1,500 from the Seneca PTA for artist-in-residence support, students now have \$4,500 to extend the painted canvas timeline that lines the school hallway.

The existing timeline depicts events from the 1800s through the year 2000. With the new funding, students will research and paint canvases that carry the timeline forward from 2000 to 2025, wrapping around to the opposite hallway. Research is already underway: students are using Chromebooks with guided research packets, visiting local libraries, touring the Blue Mountain Eagle newspaper, and preparing to interview long-time residents about events that shaped Seneca over the last 25 years.

Seneca Elementary has also applied for a second grant to add a cultural layer to the project by incorporating Paiute language. Each historical canvas would be paired with an appropriate Paiute word—such as one for "fire," "snowfall," or "celebration." Placards will include QR codes linking to recordings of Paiute elders and students speaking the words aloud, creating a living language connection between past and present.

To strengthen this work, Mrs. Durych will attend the Carrying Our Ancestral Languages Forward summit in Arizona, hosted by AILDI and the WR-Native American Language Resource Center. In preparation, students are

learning four new Paiute words each week and reviewing them daily in class.

The project will culminate in a community event at the end of the school year. Families, residents, and Paiute community members will be invited to walk through the completed timeline, view the artwork, hear the language recordings, and enjoy student-led presentations with refreshments. For Seneca's six sixth-graders, this will be a meaningful capstone project in their final year—a legacy they leave behind for future students.

Seneca Elementary is proud to celebrate creativity, culture, and community pride through this unique endeavor.



Seneca Elementary students will be adding art and language to extend the existing historical timeline.