

Press Clippings 07/15/2019

---Daily Herald---07/14/2019

Elgin Woman's Club awards two scholarships

Submitted by: Elgin Woman's Club

The Elgin Woman's Club has awarded two \$1,500 scholarships to graduating students from Elgin Area School District U-46's Bartlett and South Elgin high schools who are pursuing careers in the field of health occupations.

The 132-year-old organization continues its emphasis on education with the scholarships as it has for many years.

The scholarship recipient from Bartlett High School is graduating senior Anna Monson. She will attend the University of Connecticut where she plans to major in pre-pharmacy.

Stacy Thorson is the club scholarship recipient from South Elgin High School and plans to attend Illinois State University, where she will pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Rita Corbett, scholarship chairwoman, was pleased with the number of U-46 senior applicants.

"We were delighted to be able to once again award scholarships to two very well qualified students in order to help as they begin their college education."

The scholarship committee, in addition to Corbett, includes club members Rebecca Lee Larsen, Audrey Gilbert and Georgia Ross.

Scholarship funds are raised during the year by club members through a variety of fundraising efforts, including an annual luncheon featuring interesting programs.

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Strides encourage U46 educators

Officials and advocates heartened by the school district's one-year improvement

By: Rafael Guerrero

Only 16% of U46 kindergartners were ready for grade level work last fall, according to the latest Kindergarten Individual Development Survey, but some educators see a silver lining in that figure.

Just 10% of U46 kindergartners were considered ready in fall 2017, data from last summer showed.

While both percentages are below the state average, early childhood learning officials and advocates welcomed the one-year improvement. Communitywide pledges to expand early learning resources in Elgin through the distribution of thousands of books, launching literacy programs in laundromats and clinics, and other efforts may be contributing to the improvement.

“That data (from last summer) was staggering, but it was an opportunity for us to grow,” said Amber Peters, executive director for the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning. “It helps us understand why we need to lean into this and get people involved. Sometimes you have to have something so critical to come out to get people moving.”

Students take the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey, or KIDS, in the first 40 days of the school year.

The most recent survey reported 16% of U46 kindergartners were ready in three developmental areas: social and emotional development, language and literacy development, and math. Another 15% were ready in two of three areas, 19% in one area, while the remaining 50% were not ready in any of the three.

Statewide, 26% of kindergartners met all three areas and were considered kindergarten ready. By comparison, 14% of kindergartners in neighboring School District 301 were kindergarten ready, 30% of kindergartners in School District 300 were ready, and 24% in St. Charles School District 303 were deemed ready.

Peggy Ondera, U46’s director of early learning, said the improvement reflects more on what is happening outside the schools.

“Based on this data, it does look like it’s moving in the right direction,” Ondera said. However, she added that there is “still a lot of room for improvement.”

U46 received much of the blame last summer when the first KIDS results showed low numbers of kindergarten-ready children. Nancy Coleman, the executive director for the Elgin area Alignment Collaborative for Education, said the blame was unfair, as the kindergartners were observed and measured on the three developmental areas too early into the school year. Some students were in a classroom setting for the first time when tested, she said.

The results put U46, Coleman and the alignment collaborative, and other groups and organizations on alert.

“None of us are pleased at the state or local levels, but I think we’re all trying to do something about it,” Coleman said.

This year, the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning began seeking “2,000-day commitment” pledges from Elgin-area businesses, organizations, and individuals. The 2,000 number refers to the approximate number of days it takes a child to go from birth to kindergarten.

The pledge asks participants to encourage children and their families to read, write, do basic math, and learn as early as possible. For instance, the “call to arms” this spring distributed some children’s book baskets to various businesses.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning’s “Language in the Laundromat” program installed bookcases, books, and storytime at two Elgin laundromats. Peters said she is talking with other laundromats to expand the program. A similar program is underway for clinics and doctor offices called “While You Wait.”

In the spring, the partnership won a \$70,000 grant to purchase more than 22,000 books to be distributed to children in low-income families.

On Wednesday, the Northern Illinois Food Bank, the City of Elgin, Elgin Township, and the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning are hosting a mobile food pantry distribution at Gifford Park that extends beyond food. Children's books will be distributed for free, Gail Borden's Bookmobile will make an appearance, and officials will be on hand to provide information on preschool, ESL classes, and food stamps.

Peters believes the community-wide efforts to encourage early learning and expand resources is working, but it's too early to say they are the only reason for the year-to-year kindergarten readiness growth. It will take years before conclusions can be made.

Coleman said grant dollars will fund the installation of signage around Festival Park providing families and children tips on how to make a visit to the park a learning experience. .



Outreach programs have taken place at Elgin parks to better reach younger children and their families to provide books and resources.

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Kane County Fair board awards 4-H scholarships

Submitted by: Pat Szpekowski



Meredith Abbs



Noa Greenfeld



Brooke Wackerlin

Meredith Abbs, Noa Greenfeld, and Brooke Wackerlin were named the 2019 Kane County Fair 4-H scholarship recipients.

The Kane County Fair board of directors has named Meredith Abbs, Noa Greenfeld, and Brooke Wackerlin as its 2019 scholarship recipients.

Each student, who is an active member of a local 4-H Club, will receive \$750 per year for four years, or a cumulative total of \$3,000, as they continue and complete their higher education.

"We are pleased to continue the tradition of awarding scholarships to worthy young students in our 4-H community," said Larry Breon, chairman of the Kane County Fair board of directors.

"It's an honor for us to award monetary assistance to these three outstanding students who have achieved academic excellence, given back to their communities, and set high goals for future success."

- Meredith Abbs of St. Charles is graduating from St. Charles East High School with a cumulative GPA of 4.531. A passionate conservationist, Meredith plans to attend the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point to study forestry and to pursue her passion of becoming a ranger in a national park.

A lifelong lover of animals and nature, Meredith has cultivated this over the years through volunteer service with the Chicago Zoological Society as a King Conservation Scholar; the Fox Valley Wildlife Center; and exhibiting as part of Kane County Fantastics 4-H.

Abbs' 2018 4-H wildlife project on bison and their journey back from the brink of near extinction was awarded Kane County Fair Grand Champion and earned a Superior ribbon at the 2018 Illinois State Fair.

Abbs was part of her high school's Gamer's Club and a local theater group (Marquee Youth Stage).

- Noa Greenfeld of Elgin is ranked in the top 2% of students at Larkin High School in Elgin. She has been involved in 4-H her entire life and is an independent member of the Westdel 4-H Club.

Throughout her 4-H career, Greenfeld has participated in sewing and construction, visual arts, foods and nutrition, theater arts, and child development. At Larkin, Greenfeld was heavily involved in the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, National Spanish Honor Society, plus volunteering in her school and the community. She was part of the Big Brother, Big Sister mentor program helping underclassmen adjust to life at Larkin.

In her senior year, she was named captain of the cross country team, track team, and of the competitive dance team. She will attend the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance.

- Brooke Wackerlin of Waterman ranks third in a graduating class of 55 students at Indian Creek High School in Shabbona with a GPA of 4.02. She is a member of the Kane County Ambassadors and the Lincoln Highway 4-H Club. Wackerlin is vice president of Future Farmers of America, president of her 4-H Club, and president of the National Honor Society. She is involved with the Youth Environmental Program, community service, and other school activities, in addition to working on her family farm with livestock.

Wackerlin will pursue animal science and pre-pharmacy when she attends the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in the fall.

Since the launching of its Kane County Fair 4-H scholarship program more than 10 years ago, many Kane County area 4-H students have been awarded financial assistance to further their education.

For more information, contact the Kane County Fair at (630) 584-6926.

SPORTS

---The Courier-News---07/12/2019

Team in the running to be named year's best

Elgin High School girls basketball squad to learn Friday if they're Sky's pick

By: Rafael Guerrero



The Elgin High School girls basketball team is one of nine high school basketball teams that are finalists for the Chicago Sky's High School Team of the Year.

Elgin High School's girls basketball team is in the running to be the Chicago Sky's top team of 2019.

The team is one of nine finalists for the WNBA franchise's annual High School Team of the Year award. The winner will be announced at Friday's game between the Sky and the New York Liberty at DePaul University's Wintrust Arena in Chicago.

The winning team will get a basketball clinic featuring some Sky staff and players. Online voting will determine who wins the recognition.

"It's a great honor for our basketball program," Elgin Head Coach Nick Bumbales said.

The girls squad was one of the Sky's teams of the week earlier in the year, qualifying them for contention for Team of the Year.

The team of the week, sponsored by Robert Morris University Illinois and the Illinois Bone and Joint Institute, recognizes high school teams that have had a great impact both on and off the court in their respective communities, said Jacob Pnakovich, manager of sponsorship activations for the Sky.

Elgin and the Chicago Sky have had a good relationship over the years, with some Elgin players having a chance to attend Sky games, meet Sky players and be acknowledged for their work in the community, Bumbales said.

“The Sky demonstrate everything that we strive to be,” he said. “They’ve always been good stewards of the community, they’re always striving for their highest potential.”

In its profile of the school, the Sky cited the Elgin team as being one of the largest in the state, with 75 to 80 on its various rosters last season. They were recognized for the diversity of the team, both culturally and socioeconomically.

Among other things, the involvement of some team members with the Best Buddies Program was lauded. Co-captain Emily Graves founded a local chapter of Best Buddies, which has students connect one-on-one with students dealing with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Bumbales said.

“The team wants to be remembered for the positive impact that it has made in our school and in the community as a whole,” according to the team’s biography in the contest. “They firmly believe that they are positive role models for all students in our school and our community.”

Also up for the honor is another team in the Fox Valley, East Aurora High School’s girls basketball team. In their nomination, the Sky recognized their regular season performance and accomplishments in the classroom and community.

“This unique group of players work hard in the classroom (players have all-conference academic honors), in the gym, and in the community (great number of volunteer work),” according to the nomination.

The other teams in contention are Kenwood Academy, Lake Community, Libertyville, Maine West, Rich South, U-High Chicago, and Providence St. Mel.

The winner will be announced during halftime of Friday’s game.