LEARNING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
A PATH TOWARD REWARDING CAREER

By Dominick Bonny

EJHS - Mr. Cody Molinar’s classroom is unusually silent. One rarely hears his students use their voices while they’re in his class, and he wouldn’t have it any other way.

That’s because his students are learning American Sign Language. ASL curriculum is a part of the Eastmont Career and Technical Education program, CTE for short, and is designed to teach students skills they can apply in their future careers.

Molinar is one of two ASL CTE educators in the district and he splits his teaching time between Eastmont Junior High and Eastmont High School.

Originally from Waterville, Molinar was born deaf. That didn’t stop him from becoming a standout basketball player though, and he played for the Shockers during his high school career. He went on to play college ball at an institute for the deaf in Texas. Afterward, he returned to the Wenatchee Valley and began volunteering with the school district before being hired full time.

“The main goal is for them to become fluent so that if they’re out in the community and come across a deaf person who has a language barrier, they can be an asset to them,” he said.

“And besides that, ASL is a beautiful language.”

Additional objectives of the ASL program include giving students the tools they need to figure out if ASL can fit into their life as a career choice. Students can become interpreters, teachers, audiologists and more using the ASL skills they learn through the CTE program.

District wide, there are three ASL I, two ASL II, and one ASL III classes currently, and two ASL educators between the Junior High and High School.

“Next year we’re hoping to

Cont. on page 7
By Dominick Bonny

**Clovis Point** - Mr. Sam Gilstrap took a less traditional path to military service. He didn’t enlist in the Army until he was 24, six years after graduating from Eastmont High School.

It had always been something of a calling for him though, ever since he was in the fourth grade. It was learning about his family’s history with the military that helped ignite his desire to serve in the military. Two great grandfathers served and most of his great uncles were in either the Army or the Navy.

So in 2012, he decided to follow in their footsteps.

“At 24, I was getting old,” Gilstrap said. “It was one of those things where if I’m going to do it I just gotta do it.”

He joined the Army and was placed in the 101 Airborne, 4th Brigade combat team, 320th field artillery regiment, which trained at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He said that being put into a unit made up of soldiers from all across the country was a big learning experience.

“It opened my eyes to what else is out there. The different cultures, not just overseas but also people from different states and countries in our military,” he said. “That was my biggest takeaway – that melting pot of different cultures that come in to do the same thing.”

He also cites self-discipline, empathy and organizational skills as a few other benefits he gained from his time serving in the Army. In 2013, he was deployed to Afghanistan and spent six months there. In 2015, he transitioned back into civilian life and returned to the area to raise a family with his wife Catherine, who is also an Eastmont alum.

Now he’s a substitute teacher and coach for the district, coaching high school basketball and 7th grade softball at Clovis Point Intermediate. He said he wanted to be a coach for the same reason he wants to teach.

“I like to see that ‘ah-ha’ moment,” he said. “It’s about watching them succeed, and learn from failure.”

Last year he spoke about his experiences in the military and as a veteran to a full assembly of students, staff and parents at Clovis Point. He said he did it because he thinks it’s important for students to hear real stories from actual vets.

“It’s one thing to hear your teacher say Veterans Day is this or that,” he said. “But to really get the meaning of Veterans Day, listen to a veteran and how they feel.”

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**Veterans Day Events Across Eastmont**

This is a list of Veterans Day events that were held across the Eastmont School District to honor those who served our country.

**Clovis Point:** Clovis held an all-school assembly in honor of Veterans Day on Friday Nov. 8 at 8:30 a.m. in the gym. The band and choir performed patriotic songs and a parent who is a Veteran spoke to students. ASB leaders presented the colors with VFW support.

**Lee Elementary:** Mr. Garcia ran an assembly and students sang. They also had an honored Vet from the VFW who lead the students in the flag salute.

**Cascade Elementary:** Patriotic songs were performed by Cascade 4th graders on Nov. 12 at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

**Sterling Intermediate:** On Nov. 8 at 10 a.m.

**EJHS:** Brunch was served from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. for veterans and their families and there was an assembly from 9:40 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. for veterans as well as students and staff.

**EHS:** There were choir and band performances, a photo slideshow and a few veterans who spoke to students at an assembly.

We’d also like to thank and honor other Eastmont staff members who served:

- Jason Sims, Army/National Guard
- Bob Gallaher, Army/National Guard
- John Whitehorn, Army
- Deborah Winter, Navy
- Dustin Johnson, Navy

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Mr. Sam Gilstrap speaks to Clovis Point students at a Veterans Day assembly on Nov. 9, 2018 about his experience as the member of the US Army serving in Afghanistan.

Mr. Gilstrap with his wife Catherine Gilstrap, who teaches 5th grade at Clovis, with their daughter Paisley and son Mason.

Scan the code to watch a video from a Veterans Day assembly at EJHS!
SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGES:

TURN DOWN THE PRESSURE TO BE PERFECT

BY GARN CHRISTENSEN

“Perfect is the enemy of good,” penned by Voltaire in the 1600s, still rings true today. Too often, I believe we as parents and grandparents strive for perfection with our children, teens, and sometimes other relationships when “good” needs to be our target.

This past spring, I watched a top high school student/athlete with several visits to state championship competitions turn down multiple college and university scholarship opportunities. This 4.0 student shared that she just wanted to be more of a normal college student. The caution in this story is the world our young people are growing up in is harder than ever before. Core K-12 academics are very rigorous. Behavior expectations in schools are high. In our effort to have safe campuses, we have cameras on corners and in halls as well as digital networks that capture every transmission. Student surveys indicate anxiety and stress for our young people is higher than ever before, as well as youth suicide.

My hope is that both immediate, extended, and community families will grant permission to our young people to be good enough and turn down the pressure for them to be perfect. Other educators and health professionals who study and work with youth agree that letting kids be kids who trip, fall, get scraped up, make mistakes, try new things they might not be good at, and do things they wish they wouldn’t, are all key parts of becoming a healthy and contributing adult.

If you have a child or teen in your life, get to know them. Communicate frequently with them that it is okay to not be perfect. Don’t hesitate to ask them what they enjoy, about their dreams and their fears. All people, especially children and teens, need to have these types of conversations with people who are interested and care about them. I hope you are one of those people in your family and in our community.

Facilities and Reconfiguration

An architect rendering of the proposed design of Rock Island Elementary School.

The construction project that was placed on hold after no bids were received in May will be out to bid again this month. Hopefully, a bid that is within our current budget will be received and these projects will get started Spring 2020. This project builds cafeterias at Cascade, Lee, Kenroy, and Rock Island. It also constructs a total of 20 additional classrooms divided out at Cascade, Grant, Kenroy, Lee, and Rock Island Elementary, as well as replaces the High School baseball restrooms. Our transportation center that will be located at the corner of Grant Road and Perry Ave will go to bid next summer with construction starting in the fall.

Reconfiguration of schools to better fit our existing facilities and reduce a transition was pushed back one year due to our construction delay. Please visit our website and click on the construction link for a timeline of grade level changes at each involved school.

Home Field and Opportunities Programs

After listening this past spring to parents, Eastmont is modifying our initiative to expand alternative programs. In addition to assisting homeschool parents with our new Home FIELD Program, we will also expand our current grade 10-12 Opportunities Program to serve a limited number of grade 7-9 students.

If you would like to know more, please watch the video and call administrator Katie Tucker at 509.884.7115, or email her at tuckerk@eastmont206.org for more information.

School Security and Student Safety

As your school district, our top priority is student and employee safety and we use a variety of activities and technologies to ensure best safety practices in this area. These include scheduled and unscheduled safety drills, limited access to campuses, SAFE Schools Reporting System, 300+ safety cameras, emergency text messaging, safety kits in all classrooms, unscheduled school security visits by Rotary volunteers, and regular safety meetings with community law and fire department leaders. We also provide 24/7 response to community emergencies.

If you as a parent or community member hear of a potential threat to school safety, please visit our website and click on the red stop sign link that reads STOP BULLYING AND SAFE SCHOOL ZONE. A concern reported through this system is instantly transmitted to several administrators who review and immediately assign it to the appropriate school administrator for investigation.

Facts about bullying:

- According to SafeSchools, most of the time when an adult bystander intervenes bullying stops.
- According to stopbullying.gov, between one in four and one in three U.S. students say they have been bullied.
- Bullying is not usually a simple interaction between a student who bullies and a student who is bullied. Instead, it often involves groups of students who support each other in bullying other students.
Kenroy - Before fall classes began, Eastmont School District closed out its 6th annual Migrant Summer Academy, comprised of 1st-6th grade students from all across the district. For two weeks, close to 120 students gathered on the Kenroy Elementary School campus to continue working on instructional skills with a focus in math. Teachers also integrated reading, writing, science, social studies, and language into the program with lots of fun, engaging, hands-on activities.

Fifth grade student Daneyda Alonzo-Mateo moved to East Wenatchee from Guatemala three years ago and has attended the program since moving here. She explained that when she first moved here, she was nervous and didn't know the language. Participating in Migrant Academy each summer has helped her learn more and gain confidence. When asked about why she looks forward to the program each summer, she said, “You'll be more confident and brave if you come here.”

Retired Eastmont High School teacher Terry Valdez has been with the program since the beginning and provides a daily art specialist for all students. When asked what keeps him coming back each summer, he had this to say: “It’s my favorite program I’ve ever worked with in terms of all kids getting art every day.” In addition to the joy of returning to reconnect with the district, he loves how supportive the teachers are in collaborating with him to incorporate a theme approach so that the art projects tie into the field trips.

The program also serves to provide new experiences and build background knowledge for students through field trips. Alonzo-Mateo and her classmate, Isabella Alvarez-Sanchez, loved their field trip to Grand Coulee Dam. Alonzo-Mateo said it was fun to visit a place she would probably never go if it were not for Migrant Academy. She said the long bus trips were also a great time for her to hang out and get to know her friends better. Alvarez-Sanchez's favorite part about the trip was learning about the history of how the dam was built. More specifically, she was amazed that people had to risk their own safety to build the dam.

The highlight of the program for Shannon Schmitten, a fifth grade teacher, was the trip to Grand Coulee. She commented that, “Seeing (and hearing) the pure joy when we were driving to Grand Coulee Dam was amazing. The kids were so impressed with the landscape and scenery along the way.”

The vision of the program is for it to feel more like a summer camp than traditional school. Fifth grade student Alvarez-Sanchez has attended Migrant Academy for the last three summers and summed up the two week program as, “a vacation with people who accept you wherever you are.”

Watch a video recap of the program by scanning the code!

Seeing (and hearing) the pure joy when we were driving to Grand Coulee Dam was amazing. The kids were so impressed with the landscape and scenery along the way.”

– Shannon Schmitten

In addition to learning from retired Eastmont art teacher Terry Valdez, the students went on a field trip to the Grand Coulee Dam.

IT’S SNOWING!
WILL SCHOOLS BE CLOSED?

Superintendent Garn Christensen and Transportation Director Troy Lucas will make a decision to have school start later or close schools by 6 a.m. or earlier. The decision is usually made the morning of school and not the evening before. This gives local road crews ample opportunity to clear roads and assess road safety. Please note: conditions vary greatly in Eastmont and what is being experienced on North Sunset Highway may be very different than Fancher Heights, Rock Island or over in Wenatchee.

No new information posted indicates schools are running on a regular schedule.

News of a school delay/closure will be posted immediately once the decision is made through the following channels:

District website: eastmont206.org
Facebook: @eastmontschools
Twitter: @eastmontschools
Weather Hotline: 888-1111
District Office: 884-7169

Regional Media Notified:
High winds pushed fire north through neighborhoods and orchards toward Eastmont schools Thursday and Friday, taking out power and internet services. Fire and law enforcement set up a defense line on the south side of each school, providing time for school staff to get themselves and their students to safety.

That was the scenario Eastmont principals responded to this week as part of the district’s evacuation and off-campus reunification drills. The exercises focused on tracking students and staff during an emergency, including getting them to a safe location and reuniting them with loved ones.

It’s easier said than done.

Tracking 1,300 high school students is no easy feat, let alone accounting for all teachers and staff on campus. The task gets a little easier with smaller schools and younger students, but it’s still a challenge.

“Adults are sometimes the hardest to find because they’re not in the same spot every day,” said David Woods, assistant superintendent for secondary education. He delivered the envelope containing the safety drill scenario to the junior high and high school principals, setting the drills in motion. Spencer Taylor, executive director for elementary education, did the same thing for the elementary schools. Six schools participated in the drill Thursday, with the other three on Friday.

The drill scenario, based on one provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was designed to practice evacuation and reunification procedures that would apply to natural disasters as well as bomb threats or active shooters.

“One of the focuses, he said, is getting the scenarios tailored for each school.”

The natural disaster scenario works as well, he said.

“Communication and organization are the big things,” Woods said.

The need for practice became evident following a bomb threat about seven years ago and from a more recent bus accident.

“We had a scare at the high school and had to move people to the junior high,” Woods said. “We found we weren’t very good at it. In fact, we were lousy at it.”

The district has stepped up its game since then, including meeting monthly with law enforcement personnel — East Wenatchee Police, Douglas County Sheriff’s Office and Washington State Patrol — and fire and emergency medical service officials to talk about logistics for emergency situations. Those meetings helped the district introduce systems, ranging from the color of vests identifying school administrators to using proper radio protocol, shared during a tutorial earlier this year by RiverCom emergency dispatchers.

During Friday’s drills at three different schools, two custodians and a physical therapy assistant went unaccounted for. At least one student at the high school didn’t get tagged as missing. All were those who had voluntarily gone into hiding to test the system. Others, though, were discovered during a sweep of the buildings.

“This is a learning opportunity,” Woods said, meant to identify weaknesses.

“That’s a good thing.

“One of the things that went right — or well, he said, is that the drills were conducted in a timely manner.”

The scenario varied from the standard fire drills, which added a complication.

“They usually evacuate to the football field,” he said of the high school students and staff who were asked to gather on the hill above the tennis courts. “This throws a curve, to see how fast they can get out.”

All the school principals know the drills are coming, but they don’t know all the details.

“They have to think on the fly. The teachers know, too, but they don’t know what it will be or what it will look like,” he said.

While the evacuations were underway, the district office sent text notifications to parents about the drills, simultaneously testing that system.

Students selected to participate in the extended “reunification” part of the drill then were bused to one of three community churches that opened their doors for the occasion. There, school officials practiced matching students with parents, which required checking parent identification and, in some cases, dealing with “angry and upset” parents, portrayed by volunteers, who didn’t want to follow the procedure.

The checkoffs were made more complicated because in the scenario, computers were not available to double-check student lists.

The district’s administrators were debriefed on Wednesday after the drills, looking for what went right and where to make improvements.

Some tweaks didn’t take that long. After Thursday’s round of drills, Woods brought an orange traffic cone with him Friday to serve as a tether of sorts for the “incident commander” — the school administrator in charge at the scene. The cone was a reminder to stay in one place and delegate assignments rather than trying to be in all places at once. It worked.

“You can tell they don’t like that. They want to go get involved in everything,” Woods said.

One of the things that went right — or was improved from previous drills — was the radio communication and use of school channels, he said.

Superintendent Garn Christensen said the drills will continue.

“We’ve come a long way. When we used to do an evacuation it would take 30 to 40 minutes to figure out where people were and where they weren’t. Every year we get a little better,” he said. “We learned that we need to practice this again and again so it’s like putting on a seat belt when you get in your car.”

One of the focuses, he said, is getting all the schools on the same page.

“We’ve tried to standardize our emergency charts so we see the same thing everywhere,” he said. “We should be able to go to any school and expect the same procedure.”
Cascade Gives Students an IDEA what it’s like Living with Disabilities

By Dominick Bonny

Cascade Elementary – In October the IDEA Project came to Cascade Elementary. For a week students got to experience what it’s like to live with a learning, cognitive or fine motor disability. IDEA is an acronym that stands for Interactive Disability Education Awareness in schools.

The week-long installation at Cascade was paid for by a grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Washington. The funds provided a coordinator and the materials needed to create the interactive disability education awareness program in the library of the school for a week. Using custom programs tailored to each grade level, the goal is to create understanding and empathy by educating students about differences and different abilities.

Throughout each 40-minute session, Cascade students would cycle through different stations designed to teach them what it’s like trying to learn when you’re hard of hearing, or blind, or if you have a fine motor disability that doesn’t let you pick up and hold things easily. Educators simulated that type of disability simply by having students put winter gloves on and then instructing them to zip up their coats and try to put change into a piggy bank.

At another station, instructors created a simulation that allowed students to experience what dyslexia is like by placing a mirror over a sheet of paper. Then they told students to write as they normally would but look only at the mirror so everything looked backward.

The IDEA Project was started by Allison Bureau, the mother of a child with special needs. When her son Wyatt, started elementary school, he used a tablet computer to help him communicate. After witnessing the other students’ confusion as to how to include Wyatt, Allison asked to come talk to Wyatt’s class about his differences. She spoke to students about differences and different abilities, showed a video of Wyatt doing things the other students might not think he could do, and led an activity that simulated what it is like to have speech difficulties. After observing the students’ improved understanding of Wyatt and his difficulties with speech, she decided to create a disability awareness program. After four years of research and input from speech, occupational and physical therapists around the Seattle area, Allison created the customized disability awareness program tailored to each grade level of school. Now, The IDEA Project fulfills the Washington State requirement for disability awareness assemblies per WAC 28A.230.158.

If you would like to learn more about the program, you can visit their website at theideaproject.org or by scanning the code below.

Learn more about the IDEA Project online by scanning the code.

First Trimester Sterling ASB Officers take office

ASB officers were chosen earlier this year through a combination of student-written essays and staff recommendations. In their essays, students described their leadership characteristics and their reasons for wanting to become a Sterling ASB officer. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. We are very proud of you! And a special thank you to the amazing Mrs. Neff for sharing her time and talents to lead this fantastic group of students!

– Sterling staff
Lee Elementary – Typically it’s presidents and prime ministers who are transported via police escort, but on Sept. 20, another very important person got the courtesy of that honor and she used it to get to school of all places! Rylan Cunningham was treated to a chauffeured ride to school courtesy of the Douglas County Sheriff’s Department. This was because out of all the student salespeople for the Lee Elementary School PTO fundraiser last spring she raised the most money. She got to choose between a variety of rewards. In the end, she decided she would take the police escort to school and pull in flashing the red and blue.

So on that sunny morning, a deputy with the Douglas County Sheriff’s Department brought Rylan to school and they handed out shield stickers to the throngs of children who gathered around excitedly and congratulated her on raising more than anyone else at Lee for the PTO. The purpose of a quality Parent Teacher Organization is to encourage parents to assist with various school activities, functions and services, provide financial assistance where needs are identified within the school, foster a community atmosphere, and support the mission and vision of the school and school district. Thank you, Rylan and the Cunningham family, for supporting the Lee PTO and your school!

EHS M.E.Ch.A. Club Makes A Difference

Members of Eastmont High School’s M.E.Ch.A. Club (which promotes Chicano unity and empowerment through organization and service) helped clean up the Valley View Cemetery with East Wenatchee Rotary Club during Wenatchee Valley Make A Difference Day on Saturday, Oct. 26, 2019.

ASL CTE Program Story Continued, from page 1

add an ASL IV class,” Molinar said.

There are other ways for students to get involved in ASL activities through the EHS ASL club as well. Stand out ASL students are selected to translate the EHS graduation ceremony each year, which is a great honor for them. They also hold an annual “Sign Idol” performance where members of the club sign lyrics to songs and raise funds for club activities.

Molinar focuses on the CTE curriculum and teaching the basics through.

“We teach fingerspelling and sign language in ASL I,” he said. “We teach them to use facial grammar and body language to teach the beginner side of ASL. They won’t be fluid and fast right away, but in time they will be.”

In time, they might even build a career on the foundations Mr. Molinar is helping them establish.

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Quality Education – A Community Commitment

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Focus On: Sports

CLOVIS POINT FOOTBALL FINDS A NEW ‘STAR’

By Dominick Bonny

Clovis Point – “Star” is a fitting nickname for Estrellia Perez, according to Coach Kyle Dockins. She and 38 boys made up the Clovis Point Intermediate football team this season. It’s the first time they’ve been led by a female quarterback.

While it wasn’t originally her idea, she rose to the challenge and led the team to a 5-1 record over the season.

“She didn’t try out for quarterback, but seeing her throw the football and her knowledge of the game made us think she would be the right fit,” Dockins said.

Although she’s average height and weight for a female seventh grader, she was not shy about being physical on the gridiron. That was probably due to a combination of experience playing youth football prior to Clovis Point as well as being a wrestler. But it was her mind and work ethic that gave her the edge.

“Perez did an excellent job of controlling the huddle and even fixing problems herself without needing a coach’s intervention. And she didn’t just hand off the ball all season either, she threw four of five touchdowns, he said.

Dockins said he was proud of her coming out everyday and working hard, setting a great example of what it means to be a student athlete for Eastmont. That means more than just athletic achievement. It also means performing well in the classroom.

He said the whole team matured and exceeded his expectations for the season. They had little disciplinary or academic issues and he thinks her leadership helped in that regard.

“They all grew up so much in our eight weeks together and that was so cool to see.”

SCHOOL CALENDAR

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - Veterans Day, No School
14 - Mid-Winter Break, No School
17 - Presidents’ Day, No School
20 - Martin Luther King Jr Day, No School
3 - Professional Development Day, No School