

# Greendale School Connection

Volume 17 Issue 3—Summer 2013



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## Working to Continue Tradition of Excellence After Great First Year

By John Tharp, Ed.D, Superintendent

My first school year as Greendale Schools’ superintendent has been great! I’m surprised at how quickly the time passed. Our students learned a lot this year, and I did, too. I now know first hand how the Greendale community values its schools, has high expectations for them, and is proud of our tradition of excellence. Greendale’s culture is one of acceptance and a sense of caring for one another and for the common well being of our village. My family and I are happy to be a part of this.



The Greendale High School Class of 2013 has been successfully sent off to college or on a career pathway. Graduation reminds us all of how critical it is to work together to prepare each of our students for their future. We continue to work as a team -- community members, school administrators, and educators from our schools -- to ensure we are doing just that. Part of this work, as highlighted in the District’s Strategic Plan, is to identify the attributes of a Greendale graduate. Work is underway to determine these important qualities and to ensure the programs and services we offer will develop those attributes in our students.

Our Strategic Plan defines and guides our path as we go about educating students. The five priority areas of the Greendale plan help us to align our work in fully educating each student. Personalizing learning, understanding the needs of

our diverse student population, ensuring all students access to technology that enhances their education, and being good stewards of your taxpayer dollars are principles that help to direct us.

Planning is in high gear as we prepare for the new school year with all of the promises and possibilities that it will bring. We look forward to seeing all of our happy students and teachers in a little over a month from now.

Enjoy a safe and relaxing summer.

P.S. I’d like to invite you to visit the “Superintendent’s Message” page on the Greendale School’s website to read my weekly column and to learn more about how faculty and staff will work together to help each student find success.

**The 2013-14 School Calendar is now posted on the District website**  
[www.greendale.k12.wi.us](http://www.greendale.k12.wi.us)

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## Greendale's 75-Year Tradition of High Academic Achievement Still Going Strong Today

By Joe Crapitto, President, Board of Education

As Greendale readies itself for its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, it is only appropriate to reflect on how the legacy and tradition of Greendale Schools is carried on today. High academic achievement has always been an expectation for Greendale students. Our community takes great pride in this tradition, and this year has been no exception. Once again, Greendale High School is ranked among the top U.S. schools by the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*. This year, we had a high school junior earn the top score on her ACT exam, a feat achieved by less than one-tenth of 1 percent of students.

As we look ahead, Greendale School's staff are studying ways to ensure the rigor of our curriculum as expectations of what students should learn increase with the Common Core State Standards for literacy and mathematics. These higher benchmarks are in line with what students across the U.S. and the world are learning, and are what our students must attain to ensure an educated workforce for tomorrow that competes in a global economy.

The coursework offered to Greendale students today reflects the changing world of work. While home economics was a standard class to previous generations, today's students are engaged in Greendale High School's Culinary Arts programs. In order to prepare for a career in business, GHS students this year competed with FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) and placed eighth out of 179 schools in the state. And Project Lead The Way classes continue to gain in popularity, offering students project-based learning in engineering and biomedical sciences.

Greendale schools have been fortunate to have had strong leaders like John Ambruster, Dr. William Knapp, and Dr. Bill Hughes, who have served our schools and communi-

ties well, and are key reasons for the solid reputation that our schools enjoy. And rather than rest on these laurels, we now confidently look to Superintendent Dr. John Tharp to lead our schools by accelerating academic achievement, ensuring equity and excellence in programming for our diverse student population, and navigating the district through the various educational reforms at the state and national level.

Over the years, Greendale's student athletes have competed successfully at all levels. They learn teamwork, commitment, discipline, and sacrifice on the fields and courts. Banners in our field house proclaim championship seasons for our teams through the years. This summer, work will begin to upgrade our baseball diamond to ensure future students an opportunity to play on a renovated baseball field. New this year, Greendale students competed in Special Olympics, ensuring that all of our students, regardless of ability, have an opportunity to participate.

So let's use Greendale's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary to reconnect with alumni from all 75 years of Greendale's graduating classes and to celebrate the positive impact that Greendale schools have on our community. Go to the Greendale Celebrations website, [greendalecelebrations.org](http://greendalecelebrations.org), and register for the alumni village tent. And while we look to the past and reminisce about how we got to today, it is important to recall the words of Lewis Carroll, "I can't go back to yesterday – because I was a different person then." Greendale's schools are built on a solid foundation with strong traditions, and our strategic plan will guide us going forward.



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## My Ear Hurts? What Do I Do?

By Sharon Solomon RN, FNP, School Nurse GMS & GHS,  
District Nurse Practitioner

Ear pain can be a very common occurrence in children and adults. Ear pain has many causes. One of the most common causes of ear pain is fluid in the middle ear causing congestion and pressure on the ear drum.

**What causes fluid in the middle ear to build up?** When someone has a viral cold or allergies, the middle ear makes fluid just as the nose does – it just doesn't run out as easily from the middle ear. The Eustachian tube, which helps to drain this fluid, may be swollen. This makes it difficult for the fluid to drain properly.

**What should I do?** If your health care provider has identified that you

have fluid in the middle ear, the best thing to do is to wait and monitor the symptoms. Since fluid in the middle ear rarely causes problems, it is best to let it go away on its own. You may need to see your health care provider again in a few months to be sure the fluid is gone. Follow up immediately with these symptoms: fever greater than 100 degrees, drainage coming from the ear canal and severe pain.

Another common cause of ear pain, especially in the summer months, is Swimmer's Ear, which is an external infection of the ear canal.

*Continued on p. 3.*

## Reflections on Park and Recreation Department, School Safety

By Erin Green, Director of Business Services

An important part of the mission of the school district is to bring recreational and educational opportunities to all ages in our village. We do this by operating the Park and Recreation (Park and Rec) Department, headed by our able and energetic director, Jackie Schweitzer.

A recent review of our sports programs compared to those offered by Shorewood, Franklin, Muskego, Whitefish Bay, Greenfield, West Allis, and Wauwatosa reveals that Greendale's programs are every bit as extensive as those offered in these larger communities. This important benchmarking helps



us to ensure that we are offering the best programming possible within our fiscal limits, especially in this era of reduced public funding.

The recent Park and Recreation report to the School Board highlighted these points you may not be aware of:

- Park and Rec coordinated the effort to return the ice rink to the Village

and provides the operational oversight of the rink. Donations have provided the funding for the manpower needed to create and maintain the rink.

- Park and Rec oversees the use of our facilities by many outside groups. We rent our auditorium, pool, stadium/field, classrooms, etc. This provides many benefits to all, as well as revenue to the district in the amount of about \$70,000 per year.
- It operates Camp Shriver, a summer recreational/educational experience offered to children with disabilities. (See photo at left.)
- Many families depend on the quality child care provided with our before- and after-school and wrap-around 4-year-old Kindergarten care, as well as summer Adventure Club day care.
- Park and Rec operates the Village Education Center. It brings a variety of opportunities, including everything from classes to a winter open market.
- The Community Learning Center (CLC) has become a reality this year. Housed under one roof, the Greendale Park and Recreation Department, the Public Library, and the Health Department, offer a facility

where residents can obtain multiple services in one location. Educational opportunities for all ages will be expanded in the facility. Increased technology will be available. The school district and CLC may be able to share some staff to increase services and hours to residents and students, reducing costs and making it a true learning environment open to all. A remodeling project is currently underway and is funded by the Village, the Library Board, and the Greendale School District. Look for completion sometime in June. This is one example of the collaboration that is needed in these times to continue to enhance services while controlling costs.

- Park and Recreation has spearheaded and overseen the makeover of the Village playgrounds. The most recent project is 84<sup>th</sup> and Grange, scheduled for an upgrade this summer. The funding for of all of the playground renovations has come from donations and fundraising, under Jackie Schweitzer's capable leadership.
- Greendale's Summer Open Market is operated by the Park and Rec. It brings fresh produce and products out in the open air to residents in a festive atmosphere on Broad St.

*Continued on p. 4.*

## My Ear Hurts? What Do I Do?

*Continued from p. 2.*

### What is an external ear infection?

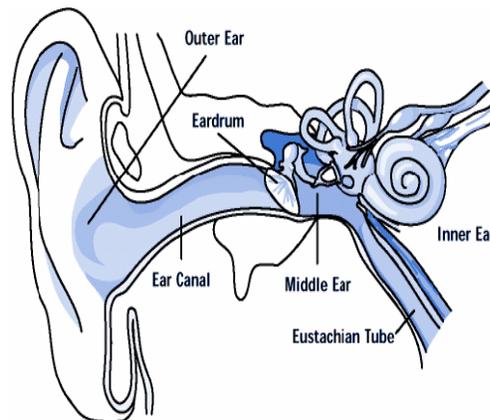
An external ear infection is an infection and inflammation of the external ear canal, the opening of your ear that leads inward to the eardrum. External ear infections are sometimes called "Swimmer's Ear" because bacteria can grow when the ear canal stays moist after swimming or bathing. Using cotton swabs to remove earwax is another common cause of external ear infections.

**What are the symptoms of an external ear infection?** The symptoms

include ear pain and itching, a feeling of fullness in the ear and drainage from ear.

**How is an external ear infection treated?** Prescription ear drops are commonly used to treat most external ear infections.

*Sharon Solomon RN, NP*



## Reflections on Park and Recreation Department and School Safety *Continued from p. 3.*

- Park and Recreation coordinates the use of all the Village athletic fields. This involves a delicate balance of opening up access to many users and groups and making sure all get equal opportunities.
- Park and Recreation operates the community use of the Greendale High School pool.
- Overall, 3,786 households are in the Park and Recreation database as users of our programs. This is a majority of Greendale households.
- Park and Rec operates the Community Theater Program bringing Broadway-quality shows to our doorstep, such as “Beauty and the Beast,” “Hairspray,” “Rent,” “Aida” and more! “Next to Normal”, a musical addressing mental illness, raised \$1,827 for the Rogers Hospital Foundation and provided an outstanding show to citizens. Don’t miss “Les Miserables” this summer, running July 25-28, 31 and August 1-3, 2013.
- Park and Recreation operates Golden Agers, a club for area seniors.

It is safe to say that Park and Rec is an invaluable asset to our community, led by Director Jackie Schweitzer and Assistant Alex Gates. It is operated in a fiscally sound manner, with no assistance from the School District or Village. In fact, the program subsidizes the District in the amount of \$45,000 per year. Its annual budget tops \$850,000, making it a substantial and important program of GSD.

Next time you see your Park and Recreation staffers in the new Community Learning Center (formerly the library), please thank them for all they do.

### Security 101

This has been a concerning year in the U.S. with regard to safety, with the various shootings in Wisconsin, Newtown Schools, and now the Boston Marathon bombings. Following the Newtown incident, Greendale Schools engaged the Greendale Police Department to conduct a thorough review of all of our facilities,

with an eye to any further improvements available to us to protect our precious cargo, the students and staff of the District. *(See photo below.)*

Greendale School District has had a very comprehensive plan in place for over a decade. Our staff is well trained to handle incidents, and our plan has been tested with various but rare situations over the years. The Police Department found that our security in place is excellent.

There are a number of facility improvements planned for this summer to further enhance security, like additional cameras, safety glass, new doors and locks and alarms at some locations, and radios for communication. The District has just completed its comprehensive Safety Plan, in compliance with Act 309, a State statute requirement. Our crisis plans are tested with students present during the school year, so that everyone is comfortable and trained. Protocols are changing as incidents throughout the country point out better ways to handle situations.

We work hand-in-hand with our liability carrier, Community Insurance Corporation, and their excellent safety managers to plan and operate proactively and in a “prevention” mindset. We will continue to use our communication tool to parents, SchoolMessenger, to update you via phone and email of any situation of importance to the District.

Part of operating in a “prevention”

mode is building and continuing a culture of “safety” and comfortable surroundings for all. To this end, GSD has engaged a task force this year to continue to build that culture, and review possible actions to avoid bullying behavior. Bullying “hotlines” are in place, as well as many programs and education in each school.

Working in concert with community groups, such as Greendale Against Bullying Now, we continue to build a supportive culture so that no student need feel out of place or experience these behaviors. GSD does an outstanding job of providing a range of opportunities for student involvement, so that no student is left out. However, we are not complacent and continue to build on these opportunities and improve our culture.

Regarding our overall safety record, GSD has one of the lowest incidents of employee injury and liability claims possible, and due to our diligence, pays less than many schools for Workers Compensation and Liability insurances. We think proactively, manage proactively, and maintain a positive culture.

*Erin Green*

*[Erin Green is the Past President of the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association, an organization of 300 school districts to promote school safety, and Brian Koffarnus, the Buildings and Grounds/Food Service Director, is a current Board member. Greendale leads the way in safety and has*



## Greendale High School Offers Diverse Academic Co-Curriculars

By Steve Lodes, Principal, and Co-Curricular Advisors, Greendale High School

One sign of a high-expectations, responsive high school is its commitment to continuously improving the educational opportunities for all of its students. In addition to our rigorous academic program and opportunities to which our students have access, many of our students appropriately decide to participate in the academically-based clubs offered through our co-curricular program.

Although the academic-strand of these opportunities may not receive as much recognition as other activities, they provide experiences that are beneficial to students and enhance their total school experience. Transcripts and ACT scores play a big role in determining college admissions but academic co-curriculars can help students stand out from the crowd. These clubs are a great way to show your individuality and demonstrate key qualities that college admissions boards want to see, like motivation, interests, and time-management. Here are some of these offerings at GHS:

### Forensics

The Forensics Team competes in a wide array of different speaking categories. From formal speeches to comedic play-acting, from impromptu speeches to poetry recitation, and more, students develop skills related to the complicated practice that is public speaking. English Teacher Zakary Heimerl leads the team around the state, competing at a variety of schools and in many categories. Since reinstating the program two years ago, the students have done well, making it all the way to the state competition at the UW-Madison campus both years, earning medals and a number of perfect scores.

### Math Club

Math Club starts out each year by inviting ALL Greendale High School students to join. This year, Math Club had over 400 members. Math Club holds monthly contests, and then picks competition teams based upon those results. This year, the Math Club competed in the Wisconsin Math League (WML) and Continental Math League (CML), Wisconsin State Math Competition, American Mathematics Contest, the Purple Comet Contest and SIAM Moody Math Challenge. The culminating event of the year is the Woodland Conference Math Meet where our JV Team took first place and our Varsity Team took third place. For any interested students, the Math Club advisors are Amy Helfenbein and Sarah Schultz, both GHS Math teachers.

### Model United Nations

Over 25 students on the Greendale High School Model UN team competed at the Carthage College Model UN Conference in November and the Wisconsin High School Model UN Conference (WHSMUN) in March at UW-Milwaukee. Students represented the nations of Norway, Congo, Laos, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Chile, Jamaica, Egypt, Indonesia, Haiti, and Costa Rica in a number of simulations, including the International Court of Justice, Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly. The team prepared by completing exhaustive research on their nations, as well as their stances on a number



of global issues, including The Arab Spring, Access to Drinking Water, and International Migrant Workers. Representatives then worked with students from other high schools to pass resolutions that resolve and propose solutions to these issues. (See photo above.) At the WHSMUN Conference, Britta Carloni and Peter Crapitto won an award for their research for the 3rd Main Committee representing Haiti, and Burgoyne Hughes won an award for his research on the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was a separate simulation played out in the Joint Crisis Committee. For any interested students, the Model UN advisor is GHS Social Studies Teacher Ben Hubing.

### Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

FBLA is a national student association for students who are interested in business or business education careers. Benefits of FBLA membership are business proficiencies, community and civic responsibility, leadership skills, self-confidence and personal responsibility. FBLA provides students with the skills to successfully compete in the job market, pursue post-secondary education, and build leadership and teamwork skills. Members learn these skills by engaging in practical problem-solving and decision-making activities including competitions, field trips, and community events. Any high school student interested in a career in business and has taken or is currently enrolled in at least one business course can contact the advisor, Business Teacher Renee Albrecht.

### Health Occupational Students of America (HOSA)

The Health Occupational Students of America (HOSA) Club at Greendale High School is a club for students who are interested in biomedical sciences and careers in the biomedical field. Students in the HOSA club have the opportunity to participate in volunteer activities and design public health campaigns. HOSA also provides the opportunity for students to learn about biomedical careers by attending presentations by career speakers and visiting facilities like microbiology labs, clinics, colleges, and hospitals. Advisors for HOSA are Russell Craze and Claire Waldhart, GHS Science teachers and Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences instructors.

*Steve Lodes*

## Learning Continues Year Round in Greendale

By Kim Amidzich, Director of Assessment and Learning

This summer, 625 elementary and middle school students and over 300 high school students will engage in summer school courses. Over the last five years, summer opportunities have grown and are a continuation of learning. Like the students, teachers and professional staff value their own learning and growth.

Teachers have the chance to extend their learning beyond the professional development required during the school year. The delivery method of professional development shifted in 2010, providing teachers opportunities to lead and take ownership of their own learning. Teachers apply to participate in a cohort, similar to a book study group, to focus on a specific area of study. (See photo at right.) The professional learning is selected by a group of teachers and focuses on answering a question about student learning.

This summer, study topics include: literacy instruction, inquiry and research strategies, grading practices, use of technology, building character, sustainable practices in our schools, and more. Each cohort selects one professional book to read/discuss. All cohort members participate in a blended learning environment that includes online learning tools and face-to-face meetings/trainings determined by the cohort group. Beyond the face-to-face learning, cohort members engage in independent reading, online discussions, and development of instructional tools and resources. The learning documented in previous years within the online learning environment was deep, and



teachers felt a sense of pride and excitement about their summer learning. Each of the groups identifies tools to measure some level of impact on student performance.

Workshops are also developed for all teachers to provide training in a variety of learning strategies and digital tools for the classroom. In August, approximately 25 workshop topics and 70 workshop sessions are provided by teachers for teachers. All teachers are required to participate in at least one full day of workshops, but many choose to engage in many others for their own professional growth.

Learning for students and for our professional staff did not end on June 14. Learning is a year-round activity. Greendale Schools provides a plethora of opportunities to continue learning and building a culture of excitement about summer learning.

*Kim Amidzich*

## Fostering the Arts in Elementary School

By Kerry Owens-Burr, Principal, College Park Elementary

While our first priority in schools is academic achievement and success, we realize the importance of fostering creativity and the arts in our school programs. Students in our schools have opportunities to expand their thinking and learning through physical education, music, world language and visual arts classes. Several years ago, we saw a need to offer additional opportunities for students in art exploration and the idea of an after-school "Art Club" was implemented.

Elementary Art Teachers Becky Lowe and Kris Bertling worked with our Gifted and Talented coordinator to develop this program to foster student creativity in the arts. Elementary Art Clubs have grown each year. The clubs expose students to new art forms and allow them to

view art in new settings, and to create high quality works of art under the direction of their art teachers and guest artists.

Art Clubs meet after school over a period of five weeks. All students in grades three, four and five are welcome to join. Two pieces of art are created, which are displayed in a gallery setting or art show. The Art Club projects are also displayed at the TADA (Traditional and Digital Arts) Festival each spring. Art pieces have included: acrylic paintings on canvas, jewelry, pottery, rain sticks and a mural displayed at Children's Hospital.

The Clubs also include opportunities to experience art outside of the school environment or work with a guest artist. Trips have been made to the Milwaukee Art Museum and Creative Outlet Clay

Studio in Delafield. Pieces of art viewed on the trips are often the inspiration for new techniques used in Art Club projects.

This year, students created mosaic tiles to be added to decorative planters at Highland View and on benches created for College Park and Canterbury. These collaboratively designed art pieces will be lasting reminders of the talents of our students and their work in the Art Clubs.

Art Clubs have become an important addition to our school learning opportunities, and one that students look forward to and enjoy. We are happy to offer this creative outlet to our students.

*Kerry Owens-Burr*

## Students Are Taking an Inquiry Approach to Learning

By Canterbury Elementary Staff



Students at Canterbury have been learning how to take an inquiry approach to learning. Inquiry learning involves student voice and small group collaboration that focuses on essential questions, strategic thinking, student responsibility, and cross-disciplinary studies. Inquiry learning also allows students to create their own knowledge by utilizing multiple resources through authentic investigations. The following are examples of inquiry learning from each grade level:

One of the inquiry projects in Kindergarten was a Non-Fiction Animal Unit in Literacy and Writing. The students chose an animal they were interested in and used non-fiction texts to find out more about their animal. Students used their reading strategies to compile facts. Each child took their list of facts and turned it into a non-fiction story, which was illustrated and combined into a published hardcover book.

First grade students worked on an

inquiry project during their Non-Fiction Writing Unit. Each student chose an arctic animal and then researched general information about it. The students then came up with questions about their animal. They researched books and websites, and conducted interviews to find answers to their questions. Students then created books, posters, and reports about their arctic animal.

In second grade, students used inquiry circles to invite curiosity and build knowledge on Economics. They chose a question on Economics to further investigate and research in groups with similar interests. Students worked collaboratively to go public with their findings to demonstrate learning and understanding through a variety of media, which they presented to their peers.

This year, third grade's inquiry project involved endangered animals. Students looked through books, magazine articles and online information. Collaboration in research groups allowed them to plan, make a list of jobs and a calendar of when those jobs would be done, and to determine the format of their final project. They ranged from pamphlets and reports to tri-fold boards and Keynote presentations.

Groups of fourth graders worked in inquiry circles this year. (See photo on this page.) These particular groups of students worked with a partner to choose a topic based on genuine curiosity. They

came up with essential questions to help them dig deeply into their topics. The students researched anything from soccer to whales. The students then had an opportunity to put together a project to share their findings like a Keynote, a poster or an e-pub. This type of project gave the students a chance to synthesize ideas and acquire knowledge.

This year, our fifth grade students developed inquiry circles pertaining to their Historical Fiction Book Clubs. They formed groups according to a book they chose. Each group had a different historical topic for inquiry. They came up with essential questions they wanted to research. The events included Valley Forge, the Civil War, and Native Americans. Each group had to tie in the facts from the book and apply them to their findings. Each group chose a project to present. Some of their projects were plays, Keynotes or displays.

One of the greatest benefits of inquiry learning is the increase in student engagement. Our School Museum is a perfect example of how student ownership and voice in the learning process can motivate students to play an active role in their education. We are looking to expand our use of inquiry learning next year to reach even higher levels of student engagement.

*Canterbury Staff*

## Introducing KidBoosters

By Greendale Education Foundation

To look at the important work being done in the Village for our kids, you need not look far. The Greendale Education Foundation and its KidBoosters Program is a great example. The KidBoosters Program was founded by Judy Fons and Bill Hughes in the summer of 2012. It is their collective vision that the fund advocates for all Greendale children, regardless of their circumstances, to develop to their full potential.

The fund began in response to the increasing number of Greendale children living in tough circumstances. It is also their vision that it will be a means to advocate on behalf of children and young people who need a boost. Up to 30% of Greendale children now live in poverty and have less than adequate access to simple but critical things like reading books at home, healthy foods, a place to play and exercise, being able to go on a field trip, attending a park and recreation program or camp, or having a new coat or shoes.

**KidBoosters is a fluid program that is designed to evolve as needs arise in Greendale. It can:**

- provide basic needs such as clothing and food;
- help fund school supplies not otherwise provided for;
- help with interventions that may be necessary but families do not have the resources to provide for (tutoring, health-related issues, extra family support);
- provide collaboration to help support and engage others to help meet the needs of families; and
- help provide funds for children who cannot attend special events (symphony, live theater, etc.).

Your financial support and involvement in programs like KidBoosters make Greendale the one-of-a-kind community that it is. To learn more about the foundation and all of its good work, please visit its website: [www.efgreendale.org](http://www.efgreendale.org).

## History Day Competition Motivates and Engages Students

By Erin McCarthy, Greendale Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher

McDonalds. Titanic. Walt Disney. Pearl Harbor. Vicksburg. WNBA. When eighth grade students are allowed to choose any turning point in United States history as their topic for the National History Day (NHD) competition, Abraham Lincoln stands next to Snow White and McDonald's golden arches loom over a miniature Brandenburg Gate. When every eighth grade student participated in National History Day for the first time at Greendale Middle School this year, each project was driven by student choice. Students chose not only their topics but also whether they created a 10-minute documentary, a website, an exhibit, a written paper or a dramatic performance.

National History Day is really a full-year experience. According to NHD in Wisconsin, "NHD allows students to apply research, analysis, critical thinking, and presentation skills in a meaningful way. Students are engaged in thinking critically about a subject as they bring together history content knowledge with skills of investigation and interpretation. This rich learning experience motivates and engages students as they think critically about their research topic and the discipline of history."

Eighth grade students are introduced to NHD by a presentation from the Wisconsin Historical Society. They then develop research skills while narrowing down a topic to fit the year's theme. This year's theme was "Turning Points in History." Next year's theme is "Rights and Responsibilities." Once their topics are approved, students prepare a thesis and begin research.

The culmination of their hard work and passion is the GMS History Fair in early February. The top three winners in

each category are invited to participate in the regional competition at UW-Milwaukee. This year over 20 students participated in the regional competition. Two teams advanced from the regional competition to the state competition held in Madison in May. At each level of competition, students present and discuss their research with a panel of judges. Based on feedback, participants revise and improve their projects after each competition.

For our first year participating in the National History Day program, our school did quite well. Sam Schultz and Lauren Yanisch competed in the group website category and Rubie Rowe and Madison Clopper competed in the group exhibit category. Both teams gained valuable experience speaking to judges and defending their work while sharing their passion. Next year, we hope to send a team to the National finals in Washington D.C.

*Erin McCarthy*



## Fifth Graders Bringing New Life to the Pod

By Emma B., Student, Highland View Elementary

*Fifth graders have been working on ecosystems and how we interact with nature. Who better to share the experience than a fifth grader who has completed the process. Please enjoy Emma's article on studying and creating an ecosystem.*



If you walked through the fifth grade classrooms at Highland View this spring, you would have noticed a fun new and exciting project. Students in 5th grade were learning all about ecosystems and how species are interdependent and the importance of their habitats.

The students collaborated in groups of three and, by recycling old soda bottles, created and nurtured their own "eco-columns." (See photo above.) By observing these eco-columns, students learned how species depend on each other and the class learned how fragile the eco-columns

were and the importance of maintaining their delicate balance. After daily observations, students made necessary adjustments to maintain the sustainability of their ecosystems.

Our eco-columns were both a terrarium and an aquarium. The terrarium contained grass, alfalfa and mustard plant. After awhile, isopods and crickets were added. The aquariums contained mosquito fish, elodea algae, duckweed plant, and snails.

The students were excited to have their eco-columns on display at Open House. The students also worked on a separate project where they chose an ecosystem around the world to study and make a small replica of their chosen ecosystem on paper. Not only did 5th graders present these projects at Open House, but shared them with 1st graders since they were learning about ecosystems for their last science unit.

To cap off this rigorous journey, students took a field trip to an ecosystem in the community: Scout Lake. The students studied the biodiversity, cleaned up trash, and brought water samples to the High School to be examined under microscopes. This has been extremely fascinating project for all 5th graders.

*Emma B.*