

News and information for residents of Parkway School District Fall 2010

### Accredited with Distinction



### A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

### Making College Affordable



With a 4.0 GPA and near-perfect attendance, South High junior Esther Dunlop qualifies for the A+ Schools program, in which the state pays her first two years of college tuition.



ginning this year, high school juniors who qualify for the state's A+ Schools program receive two years of free tuition to any public community college or career technical school in Missouri. "We're really

excited Parkway students have this new opportunity," says Jennifer Stanfill, Parkway's A+ coordinator.

Parkway became a participant in the A+ Schools program

aying for college just got easier for Parkway students. Beginning this year, high school juniors the first eligible students for A+. In order to qualify

> for the A+ program, a Parkway student must:

• Graduate with at least a 2.5 GPA;

Maintain a good record of citizenship;Keep up with good attendance; and

• Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring to other students in the district.

For South High junior Esther Dunlop, the news about A+ couldn't have come at a better time. A trumpet player in the school's marching band, Esther is a disciplined student who studies several hours each night and currently has about a 4.0 GPA. But even with her outstanding academic record, the cost of college looms large in her house. Esther's dad

switched from a fulltime job with benefits to contract work two years ago. And Esther's mom has not been able to find a full-time teaching job, though she has a teaching certificate and a master's degree. (See story, page eight.) So college tuition is a big deal, as it is for many Parkway families.

"I knew I wanted to qualify for A+ even if I decide not to use it later," says Esther who may study math in college.

"Math has a certain logic, requiring you to think differently. It relates concepts to real life. I love that practical application," she says.

To fulfill the tutoring requirement of A+, Esther plans to stay after school with South High teacher Scott Degitz, tutoring students in math classes that lead up to Algebra II with Trigonometry. She may even

become a math teacher in the future. An associate's degree from St. Louis Community College at Meramec would enable her to complete her first step toward that goal.

Another benefit of A+ is that students have four years to use it after graduating from high school. Consider, for instance, a student who attends the University of Missouri-Columbia on a track scholarship right after high school. A knee injury in the student's second year prevents her from running, so she loses the track scholarship. As part of the A+ program, that student would still be able to receive free tuition for two years at a public Missouri community college or technical school. The student would need to maintain the 2.5 GPA through college, of course.

Overall, nearly 20 percent of Parkway students attend a community college or technical school after high school.

"We hope A+ will also encourage kids to think of careers they hadn't thought of before," says Desi Kirchhofer, assistant superintendent of secondary education at Parkway. The St. Louis Community College system, for instance, has laudable programs in culinary arts and nursing. "Our goal is to present our students with as many options as possible," says Kirchhofer. For more information on the A+ program, visit: www.parkwayschools.net/ avlus.



## superintendent's Cornei

### **No Place Like Home!**

#### **Dear Parkway Community:**

It is exciting for me to be back in Parkway. I spent 25 years of my career in Parkway, and for seven of those years I served as superintendent. Then and



#### Interim Superintendent Don Senti

now, Parkway holds a special place in my heart. As interim superintendent for this school year, I look forward to continuing Parkway's tradition of excellence.

I promise you our students will have everything they need to succeed as the board searches for a permanent superintendent. I am also glad to be back so I can help the school board select Parkway's next leader.

We are fortunate to have a high level of community in-

volvement in the superintendent selection process so far.

Nearly 2,000 residents have participated in focus groups and filled out online surveys, identifying their top priorities for Parkway's future leader.

From their thoughtful answers, our search firm has been busy developing a leadership profile that will be used to screen and interview candidates. The interview process should begin by early November.

For more information on the superintendent search, please see the superintendent search story on page nine and visit the Parkway website, *www.parkwayschools.net/* search/index.cfm.

As an administrator and former English teacher, my top priority is our students. That's why I am also committed to moving forward with Parkway's long-range strategic planning process called Project Parkway. This important effort is designed to raise the academic bar and standards for all students and staff. Parkway holds a special place in my heart.

For more information about Project Parkway, I invite you to visit the Project Parkway website: www.parkwayschools.net/ projectparkway.

Please feel free to contact me at any time over the next year. I look forward to hearing your ideas, and I value your input. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Don Senti

### Another Perfect Score for Parkway

Parkway once again earned a perfect score on its Annual Performance Report from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Parkway met all 14 performance standards measured by the state, and once again qualified for the state's "Annual Distinction in Performance Award." Parkway has received this prestigious distinction each year since the award's inception – 10 consecutive years. The Annual Performance Report is based on multiple measures of student achievement—the MAP test, the ACT college entrance exam, the percentage of graduates going on to college, etc.

Parkway showed improvement in the MAP Index Score for every grade level between 2009 and 2010.

For more information about DESE's Annual Performance Report and the "Distinction in Performance Award," visit the DESE website, *www.dese.mo.gov/schooldata/index.html*.



As learners, boys benefit from movement about every 20 minutes, according to research studies. Julie Roy's first-grade, singlegender classroom at Ross Elementary features lots of intentional activity for boys and books that focus on their individual interests.

### Single–Gender Classrooms Tested



arkway has joined a growing number of public schools across the country to offer single-gender classrooms as an option for parents. The gender separation began at Carman Trails Elementary three years ago and was so successful that Ross Elementary introduced some separate classrooms for each gender in both first and second grades this year.

Participation is voluntary at both schools and requires parental permission. And the program does not separate the genders completely; boys and girls in the classes have recess, gym and lunch together as well as other activities throughout the week.

"The curriculum is the same for boys and girls," notes Lisa Greenstein, Ross Elementary principal. "But the presentation is different."

For instance, both boys and girls learn to read, but boys and girls may prefer different genres of books.

When learning math, girls need a story to connect to the numbers, whereas boys prefer to get the numbers first, then tie those numbers to a story.

Does splitting the girls and boys promote gender stereotyping? "We try very hard to promote just the opposite, freedom to be who they are as individual kids," Chris Raeker, a former Carman Trails principal, told a national audience on the NBC "Today Show" last year.

Many parents love the separate classrooms, pointing out that girls gain more confidence and boys become more engaged in reading and writing.

Some national evidence also suggests test scores improve with single-gender classrooms, though it is too early to tell whether that is the case at Carman Trails and Ross Elementary.

In fact, the single-gender program at Carman Trails and Ross began after both principals noticed some boys resisted reading and writing. Once boys were allowed to write about stories that interested them, and once they realized they didn't have to write the long narratives that girls preferred, boys no longer complained about reading and writing.

"We collaborated extensively with each other and with parents before beginning the singlegender classrooms at Ross," says Greenstein.

Caroline Rooker, a second-grade Ross teacher, notes that boys currently enjoy "publishing parties" as much as girls. During the party, one author takes a chair and reads his story to the rest of the class, while everyone else listens.

"We have always differentiated learning to reach all students," she says. "Now, we've just started doing it by gender in some cases as well. And we bring our different strategies to mixed gender classrooms, so it helps everyone." "We try to promote freedom to be who they are as individual kids." - Carman Trails principal



### **New Science Wing** and Building at Central High

will serve as prototype for other Parkway high schools

entral High students are already enjoying the school's state-ofthe-art renovated science classrooms, above. For the first time this fall, they will also step into Central High's new science building (inset), which features an outdoor classroom and rain garden.

Strong community support for the 2008 bond issue made these facilities and a number of other renovations possible (see opposite page for more details).

At Central High, each science lab is equipped with 12 computers, a SMART Board, a traveling

media cart and safety features that include showers, eve washes and chemical and acid storage closets.

South High will be the next high school to undergo major renovations to its aging science facilities.

### THE WAY IT WAS AT CENTRAL HIGH



Old Storage Cabinets

Outdated Equipment



Small, Corroded Sinks

### 2008 Bond Issue at Work

### **Fixing Our Schools**



Highcroft Ridge Elementary, above, was one of the first schools in Parkway to be equipped with new SMART Boards. Eleven other elementary schools were outfitted with SMART Boards this summer, and all Parkway schools will have SMART Boards by December of 2012.



enerous community support for the 2008 bond issue allowed Parkway to complete a record amount of construction projects this summer. Thank you, Parkway voters! Nearly \$20 million was spent on projects ranging from roof replacements to technology upgrades.

Here are some of the larger summer projects:

- Installed SMART Boards at 11 elementary schools
- Replaced aging roofs and roof sections
- Replaced aging asphalt, pavement and curbs throughout the district
- Replaced old HVAC systems district-wide
- · Renovated aging tennis courts
- Renovated cafeterias at elementary and high schools
- Renovated two softball fields for high schools

This was the second summer in a five-year construction plan to complete all of the 2008 bond issue projects.

To view a complete list of bond issue projects and photos for each school, visit Parkway's bond issue progress website at: www.parkwayschools.net/bondprogress/index.cfm.

### **Before & After**





BEFOR



Mason Ridge Elementary roof after replacement



cracked court at

South High, typical of many in Parkway



A South High tennis court after renovation

AFTER

FTER





A damaged driveway at Central Middle, typical of many in Parkway

BEFOR

Central Middle driveway after renovation



▶ Four high school gymnasium floors, including this one at North High, were repaired and re-striped this summer.

Fall 2010 **Parkway Today** 

# **class** acts

Parkway students achieve ACT perfection and win top science, writing and scholarship awards.

### **A Perfect Seven**

These seven **Parkway students** recently earned a perfect score on the ACT college admissions exam. Roughly one-tenth of 1 percent of students nationwide who take the test receive a perfect score of 36.



Meghan Scanlon South High



Michael Zhao South High

Andrew Socha

North High



Joseph Dardick **Central High** 



Linda Du **Central High** 

**TARS Research** 

Six aspiring Parkway

scientists have won the

LMI Aerospace Inc./D3

Technologies Award for

Excellence in Research.

University of Missouri-

Students and Teachers

as Research Scientists

All six distinguished

themselves in the

St. Louis (UMSL)

Winners



Anisha Gururai **Central High** 



**Charles Qin Central High** 

(STARS) program. The STARS program pairs students and teachers with research mentors from universities and well-known science facilities. The six winners are: Dushyant Bhatnagar, Vikram Ponnusamy, and Hima Veeramachaneni of South High; Mrigank

Gupta, West High; Zach Weinstock, North High; and Emily Wilson, Central High.

#### **Young Scientist**

Suhani Goyal, Central High, participated in the Young Scientist program at Washington University this summer. She did research related to breast cancer.

#### **Writing Award**

William McWay of West High won the first-place prize of \$200 in an essay contest on Winston Churchill. The National Churchill Museum, located on the Westminster College campus, sponsors the contest.

#### **National Merit Semifinalists**

Twenty-one Parkway students have been named National Merit Semifinalists this year. They are: Henry Cao, Jonathan Daniels, Anupam Devkota, Linda Du, Anisha Gururaj, Alison Magruder, Alexander Maslev and Charles Qin of Central High; Benjamin Berson, Christopher Camie, Jodie Guller and Andrew Socha of North High; Ryan Egan, Meghan Scanlon and Michael Zhao of South High; Megan Arnell, Muriel Fogarty, Emily Itoku, Andrew Russell, Aditva Subbarao and Eileen Zhu of West High.

#### Team Neon Update



Space constraints in the last edition prevented naming these North High students who were awarded another \$15,000 in the Lexus Eco Challenge. From left, they are: Simon Nogin, Calvin Irwin, Jenny Koshner, David Goldfeld and Benjamin Weinstock (sitting).

### A New Chapter in Native American Literature

he first thing you notice about Mercedes Harrison, a North High junior, is that she is faithaired. That may not sound so unusual until you discover that she is Native American. "One of the biggest myths about Native Americans," she says, "is that we are all dark-haired."

When Mercedes moved to St. Louis three years ago from her home on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, she quickly realized how "unaware" people were of Native Americans.

So when Mercedes noticed an upcoming chapter on Native American Literature in her English III class, she asked teacher Dave Beck if three of her Native American friends, all affiliated with Washington University, could speak in class.

North High's Mercedes Harrison



"We are dual citizens of the U.S. and our native tribes."



"Mercedes' willingness to share her story speaks volumes of

her character."



"We don't celebrate Columbus Day." Beck, a young, awardwinning teacher, thought Mercedes' idea for a lesson held promise, so he brought it up with North High Principal Jenny Marquart, who gave her stamp of approval.

"I could tell that my classmates were nervous at first about asking questions, but I really liked it that they lost their fear as the lesson continued," says Mercedes. "Why is Pocahontas

"Why is Pocahontas considered a traitor by Native Americans?" asked one North High student, as the three speakers, Lakota, George and Shayne, brought up the faulty portrayal of Pocahontas. In history books and movies, she is portrayed as a sex icon or as a character

"People are surprised when I tell them I am a Native American."

who completely forsakes her Native American heritage.

"It's not that she's a traitor per se," answers Lakota, a student in social work at Washington University who is from the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. "But in the recent Disney movie of the same name, Pocahontas wears a short buckskin dress and is very busty. That's not accurate. In real life, she was only 12 at the time the movie supposedly takes place." Equally inaccurate is Columbus Day, adds Lakota. "We don't celebrate that

holiday because we don't believe Columbus discovered the new world. Native Americans were here before Columbus."

For Mercedes, life in St. Louis is much different from her former life on a cattle ranch, where the nearest shopping mall was 100 miles away. "It may sound strange to hear that I would hold calves down and put tags in their ears and castrate them, but that is the norm back home, and it is a lot of fun to work hard and get dirty with family and friends." The cowgirl mentality, she adds, was good for her.

At North High, she has more friends because her class is so large-- 400 students compared to a handful back home.

Along with her North High friends, Mercedes plans to attend college. Like her mom and Native American friends who moved specifically to St. Louis to attend Washington University, Mercedes wants to enroll in the Brown School of Social Work.

Continuing to dispel myths about Native Americans, she notes, "We don't get our education for free. There are programs for us, as there are for African Americans and other minorities. But our education is not free. And we don't all get money from casinos."

Eventually, she would like to use her social work degree to help the Native American community.

Meanwhile, Dave Beck feels as though she has already helped her North High peers.

"Bringing speakers into the classroom who are experts on a topic is extremely valuable in presenting students with living, breathing examples in our area of study. The fact that Mercedes could share her story, and not hide it, speaks volumes of her character. I hope this will inspire more students to embrace their heritage."

This is our third"Fresh Voices" feature about students who overcome obstacles to achieve their dreams. Please tell us about other students for "Fresh Voices." Submit their names to ParkwayToday@parkwayschools.net.

#### A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

### Esther's parents speak:

#### "We don't want Esther loaded with debt"



Barbara Dunlop, Esther's mom



or parents Mark and Barbara Dunlop, Parkway's participation hools program

in the A+ Schools program couldn't have come at a better time.

Although they strategically planned for college for their four children, Mark lost his solid income two years ago when the company he worked for discontinued the product he had been selling. Then Barbara needed two surgeries. Fortunately, Mark was able to find contract work out of town but with fewer benefits than his prior job. "Like job security, contract renewal is never certain," he says.

The A+ program, which provides free, state-paid tuition for the first two years at a public community college or technical school, may be the only option for their third child, Esther, a South High junior with



South High Principal Gary Mazzola, right, and Business Teacher Amy Belding, left, are excited that the A+ program offers all students, including Esther, more college options.

about a 4.0 GPA and a passion for math, band, robotics and education classes, who appears in the photo above.

"I told Esther to pray about her decision, and it would come clear," says Barbara Dunlop, a community college graduate herself, who also has a teaching certificate and a master's degree in reading.

Barbara is currently the music director at Zion Lutheran Church, and a music teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran Parents' Day Out and Zion Learning Center. She also does substitute teaching.

Even before the 2008 recession reduced their family income and assets, Barbara says she was an A+ advocate. "I was jealous that other schools had it, and Parkway didn't. It's so good that Parkway is now doing this." When Barbara attended community college in Wisconsin over 30 years ago, she says there was no such thing as A+. She worked at a bakery and played the organ and piano to help pay for college costs. "But I still had debt."

Like Mark, Barbara believes the A+ program will do a lot to help reduce the debt load students often carry to attend college. "It's a lot easier to pay off debt for two years of college instead of four years," they say.

Like most parents, Mark and Barbara want their daughter to have as many college options as possible. But they don't want to see her start her life after college loaded down with debt. Even before the recession reduced the family income and assets, Barbara Dunlop was an A+ advocate.

### Alumni Hall of Fame

This November, the Parkway Alumni Association will induct 19 outstanding graduates into the fourth Alumni Hall of Fame Class. These graduates have made significant contributions to the arts, medicine, entertainment, humanities and business. Many of the graduates credit their success to a special teacher or administrator who motivated them to do more. To read a full profile of each, visit www.parkwayalumni.org.



Norm Bafunno **Toyota Executive** North '79



Entrepreneur Central '91

Phil Davidson

West '78



**Brad Cohen** Teacher, Asst. Principal Central '92





Samantha Elliott

Terry Donnelly Businessman Rear Admiral U.S. Navy North '76

**Sarah Haskins** 

Kortuem

Triathlete

South '99



Teacher, Coach North '78



Victoria Dorr Oncologist and Hematologist West '83



Jason James **College Coach** West '96



Ioan (Snider) Strom-Millard (deceased) Pastor, Businesswoman West '70



Parkway is fortunate to have a community that values education. During the last few months, nearly 2,000 residents have participated in the superintendent selection process by completing online surveys and attending focus groups. Based upon the community's input, Parkway's superintendent search firm has developed a leadership profile outlining the characteristics the community desires in Parkway's next leader. The leadership profile is being used to help screen initial candidates.

#### **INTERVIEWS BEGIN**

Initial screenings have begun and a final list of qualified candidates will be presented to the board in late November. In December, the school board and a confidential committee of community members and staff will participate in a second round of finalist interviews.

#### SUPERINTENDENT SELECTED

Based on the input from the second round of finalist interviews, the board will select Parkway's next superintendent some time in December or January. The new superintendent will begin duties in Parkway on July 1, 2011. For more information on the superintendent search process, visit www.parkwayschools.net/search/ index.cfm.



Cindy (Owens) **Erickson** Am. Red Cross CEO West '85



**Forensic Analyst** Central '78



**Kimberly Templeton Orthopedic Surgeon** Central '80



Ahmed Ghouri

South '84

**Physician**, Inventor

Punillo Educator North '78



**Amy Stuart Wells** Professor West '80

Erin (Garrity) Rank CEO, Habitat for Humanity Central '82



**Parkway Today** Fall 2010

### **Parkway Schools to Get New Safety Devices**

#### **Med Sleds**

s part of Parkway's ongoing disastrous preparedness planning, this fall every Parkway school will receive "med sleds" to improve their readiness for emergency evacuations. Med sleds are simple devices that can help in situations requiring quick evacuation of students and staff.

The med sled enables individuals to transport non-ambulatory persons in any situation—even down a stairwell of a multifloor building. The device allows the use of a "roll and drag" method, which does not require heavy lifting and makes size immaterial. For example, a 120-pound person can effectively transport a 250-pound person with relative ease. Training to use the new device is planned throughout the district and should be completed by winter break.

#### Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Plans are also underway for every building to acquire an Automated External Defibrillator

(AED) by the end of the school year. An AED is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses potentially lifethreatening cardiac arrhythmia (heart attacks) and is able to **tr**at



them through defibrillation. Defibrillation is the application of electrical therapy which allows the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm.

AEDs are designed to be simple for the lay person to use, and AED training is included in first aid and life support CPR classes for staff.

### This is Parkway... at a glance

- "Accredited with Distinction" by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- Recognized for "Distinction in Performance" by DESE for 10 consecutive years
- 14 U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Awards
- ENROLLMENT Enrollment: 17,481 18 elementary schools Five middle schools Four high schools One non-traditional high school One early childhood center
- FINANCES 2010 Residential Tax Rate: \$3.57 per \$100 of assessed value
- EMPLOYEES Teacher Salaries: \$54,731 (Parkway Average) \$44,249 (Missouri Average)

 Percentage of certified staff with master's degree or above: Parkway: 68.1 % Missouri: 53.9%

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

- National Merit Scholars = 42 Semifinalists: 21 Commended: 21
- ACT Composite Test Score Parkway: 24.1 Missouri: 21.6 USA: 21.1
- SAT Combined Test Score Parkway: 1815 Missouri: 1779 USA: 1509



To view the 2010–11 budget, visit the Parkway Web site: <u>www.parkwayschools.net/finance/index.cfm</u>.



Showing fifth-grade students historical artifacts, Gail Kramer of McKelvey Elementary ties a napkin around her neck as she explains the origins of the idiom "tie one on." "The grant allows teachers to engage students in historical thinking," she says.

### **Enhancing the History Curriculum**

ver the next three years, a group of Parkway teachers will immerse themselves in the founding documents of America, and will take that knowledge back to their classrooms to share it with their students. Parkway has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that will be used to enhance the social studies curriculum in Parkway and help teachers focus on pivotal documents in American history.

"This grant allows us to use federal money to strengthen our American history curriculum," says Liz Morrison, Parkway's coordinator of staff development, who wrote the grant application. "Our goal is for students to develop a significant understanding and interest in American history."

The grant will enable history teachers to gain a deeper knowledge of the Charters of Freedom–Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States and Bill of Rights, and apply their knowledge at each grade level, promoting critical thinking skills. Each grade level will examine the Charters of Freedom through the lens of presidential power–focusing on George Washington in fifth grade, Andrew Jackson in eighth grade and Franklin Roosevelt in high school. Parkway teachers will have professional development experiences to study these critical documents in American history and the presidents who influenced their interpretation. "The teaching of American history is an essential component to ensure the success of our democracy," says Gail Kramer, a McKelvey fifth-grade teacher.

After gaining knowledge and accumulating materials, each elementary, middle and high school teacher will share that knowledge with his or her colleagues. Lesson plans will be developed for an open-source website enabling more teachers to benefit from the work. "It will help all of us better appreciate and understand the past, present and future of this great country," says Toby McQuerrey, Parkway social studies coordinator. "It will help all of us better appreciate the past, present and future of this great country."



7:30 p.m. on designated Wednesdays at Central Middle. For more information on board policies or meetings, which are also streamed live, please visit our website at: www.parkwayschools.net/ boe/boe.cfm.

Parkway Today Fall 2010



455 N. Woods Mill Rd. Chesterfield, MO 63017 www.parkwayschools.net



ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

### Calendar

www.parkwayschools.net/calendar/calendars.cfm

### November 24–26 Thanksgiving holiday

(No school)

### **December 23**

Winter break begins (No school)

Please Note: Because Parkway mails this publication by carrier route to save postage costs, some individuals who do not live in Parkway may receive this mailing.

*Parkway Today* is published three times annually by the Communications Department.

Parkway School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. If an otherwise qualified individual with a disability needs accommodations to attend or participate in a school or district activity, please contact the staff member responsible for that event at least four (4) business days in advance. Questions, concerns, or requests for information/assistance can also be directed to the designated district coordinator for each applicable federal law or by calling (314) 415-8100.



Since Parkway began posting school closings and late-breaking news on Facebook and Twitter more than a year ago, we have kept count of those who like us and follow us. The numbers climb each week.

As of late October, Parkway had more than 3,000 people on Facebook who said they "liked us" and more than 500 Twitter followers.

So it's our turn to thank our growing numbers of followers. Each one of you is responsible for uniting the Parkway community!