



## Bullying awareness forum: *A way to start finding answers*

By Jennifer Cousineau

“Every student has the right to go to school, feeling safe and comfortable.”

This was the opening statement from Marty Wood, NCS D Student Support/Safe Schools director, at November’s bullying awareness public forum. Wood was joined by eight other panel members who shared his sentiments: Capt. Chris Walsh (Casper Police Department), Charlie Powell (psychologist and manager of Central Wyoming Counseling Center), Judy Shepard (the late Matthew Shepard’s mother), Dr. Joel Dvorak (NCS D superintendent), Mayor Bill Brauer, Don Benson (counselor and executive director of Three Trails Employee Family Assistance Program), Payden Coleman (Roosevelt High School student and



*The bullying awareness forum, held in November, drew a large crowd of community members and students who voiced their concerns and directed their questions to panel members.*

representative for Cindy Hill), and Donna Mathern (retired NCS D elementary principal).

The forum brought together not only the above-mentioned panel members, but a city hall full of concerned students and community members, leaving standing room only. For more

than two hours, those who have been bullied or who have witnessed acts of bullying spoke of their worries, suggested ideas and demanded steps be taken to put an end to this issue.

“The school system needs to take responsibility of those teaching the kids,” one community member said, citing examples of teachers bullying students.

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## FIND JOY, PURPOSE IN WORK WITH DISTRICT

“This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.” — George Bernard Shaw

At this time of year, regardless of our beliefs, we hear a lot about joy. We think of songs. We think of the happiness that comes with being surrounded by loved ones, or perhaps from giving and receiving gifts. We think of gentle snow, warm fires, good food and good company. We think of celebration and holidays.

But joy isn't reserved for the holiday season. As one of our organization's values, joy is a principle we should be living daily.

So what does that mean? Does it mean that we're supposed to be happy, cheerful, bouncing off the walls with excitement at every moment? No.

I believe there is a difference between happiness and joyfulness. Happiness is the brief sensation we get when something good happens, when we get something we want, when someone says something nice. It is a great feeling, but it is fleeting and often dependent on external factors.

Joy, on the other hand, is deep, lasting and intrinsic. It is the sense that we are loved, that we belong, that we have a place and a purpose in our world. Joy is something that we can bring to our work, and something that our work can help

bring to us.

I hope that each of you feels that you belong in this organization. I hope that you feel included and cared for in your work team. I also hope that you feel you have purpose, that your work makes a difference.

In our recent employee engagement survey, most of you said you felt supported at work. More of you felt a lack of purpose. Many of you said that you aren't sure what you are paid to do; you are unsure of your broader purpose.

In the next several weeks, we all will be considering that question. As you answer, think about what brings you joy. What gives you a sense of satisfaction and pride in your work? What do you want to contribute to the world, and how can you do so in your job? What is your deeper purpose for being a member of the Natrona County School District?

If you're a teacher, are you paid to teach? I would say no. At the heart of it, your job — your purpose — is to help ensure that children learn. If you are a custodian, are you paid to clean? No. Your purpose is to maintain safe environments where children can learn.

We talk about being a child-focused organization, but we don't always live that philosophy. I



encourage you to think about how your job supports our district's mission to empower and encourage all learners. Think beyond the individual tasks you complete daily and focus instead on how those tasks serve children and contribute to a greater purpose.

In doing so, I think you will find the answer to the question about what you are paid to do. And, I think you will like the answer a lot more than if you just listed the tasks you are expected to complete.

I hope you will find an answer that helps you feel meaningful, that helps you see your place and purpose in this organization, this community, and this world. I hope that you find an answer that helps bring you joy.

## FORUM, continued from page 1

“The district will take the lead in making sure kids are safe coming to school,” Dvorak assured her. “But we need the help of everyone in this room.

“Where did the kids learn the bullying?” Dvorak asked. “I am my daughters' best teacher. It is my job to teach them not to bully and not to be a bystander of bullying. The strong are supposed to take care of the weak.”

Brauer, who went to school in Natrona County, said this isn't a new problem, though there are new issues, such as sexting and cyberbullying, as well as the spotlight on once “hush-hush” issues like homosexuality.

“It's like a culture that happens,” Benson said, who talks with both bullies and those who are bullied. “Some don't grow out of bullying. I'm very interested in how we can change the culture.”

Wood assured the community that the school district is working very hard to put the kibosh on this issue; it recently partnered with children's author Andre Lewis, who designed and wrote a book to make the policy more understandable; NCTV has created awareness videos; the Kelly Walsh dance team has piloted the Bullying Hurts program at five elementary schools; and \$2 million has gone toward staffing and tools for a social and emotional curriculum, which teaches students how to interact with one another.

“We're doing a lot but it's more than we can handle,” Wood said. “We'll take the lead, but this is a community issue.”

“What is a bully's greatest weapon?” Dvorak asked the crowd. “Fear. How do you combat it? Courage, which doesn't mean violence. We need to give children the tools [to have courage].”

Dvorak and other panel members agreed that bystanders who respond — whether in school hallways or by leaving comments on Facebook — are one of these important tools.

Wood and Dvorak began following up on comments and concerns the day after the forum, and they are considering a similar, future event.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, you can contact Wood's office at 253-5325 or e-mail him at Marty\_Wood@natronaschools.org.

## Online school requests open in January

By Jenni Luckett

Materials for the January online school request period will be sent to all NCS D families in the week following Christmas.

The open enrollment period will be Jan. 4 to 28. All families who are new to the district or whose children will change schools in 2011-12 will be asked to complete the process. Students who are staying in the same school do not need to complete the online process. (The exception is preschool students. Students who attend a district preschool DO need to complete the online school request process. They are not automatically enrolled in that school's kindergarten.)

The online enrollment period is NOT first-come, first-served. Families may go online anytime from Jan. 4 to Jan. 28 to complete the process. Families are strongly encouraged to attend school open houses during the month of January to help make their decisions.

The information packet sent to all families with currently enrolled children will include a school catalog, an instruction letter, and open house information. Families with preschool children also will receive a booklet about kindergarten readiness. All materials are available in English and Spanish, and families who are identified in Infinite Campus as speaking Spanish will automatically receive a Spanish catalog. Additional materials will be sent to schools and community locations, such as daycares and doctors' offices.

The documents also will be online at [www.natronaschools.org](http://www.natronaschools.org) before the winter break.

For more information about the online request process, please call Marty Wood in Student Support/ Safe Schools at 253-5325.

# MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

Meet your board members whose offices were not up for re-election this year.

**Name:** Steve Degenfelder

**What drew you to the school board?**

I had three kids in the public schools and wanted to be more involved. I was not pleased with the dropout rate and vocational/career training offered by the district. Since being on the board, I have also come to realize that literacy is probably our biggest problem and, once solved, will be the biggest attribute to success in the district.

**What would your ideal educational experience include?**

The ideal education experience has to start with something the child enjoys and looks forward to participating in. Making someone do something only achieves obedient compliance. At an early age we need to help our kids learn to read because that opens the door to everything else. Finally, we need to help students learn how to solve a problem. From that point, their imaginations and minds will quickly out-pace any standard test we can think of.

**What is a positive memory from your own schooling?** The friendships

I made are still with me today. I also established the ability to set goals and achieve them. I think because I had positive memories of school, I conveyed that to my kids and they gained an appreciation for school as something that we get to do rather than something we are made to do.

**How can constituents contact you?** You can contact me at my e-mail address of sdegenfelder@qwestoffice.net or I am in the phonebook.

**Name:** Elizabeth Horsch

**What drew you to the school board?**

Having spent 30 years as a teacher in NCSD and 10 subsequent years as a research associate with a nationally recognized educational evaluation firm, I imagined that I knew something about school systems and had expertise to share. None of this, however, adequately prepared me for the challenge and complexity of the educational and financial issues this school board routinely faces.

**What would your ideal educational experience include?** We need to rethink the shape of teaching and learning in schools. We have a structure that belongs in yesterday and it simply is not adequate to meet the needs and accomplishments of the

students and teachers of today. We need to judge the success of students, teachers and schools with measures that go far beyond the limitations of testing.

**What is a positive memory from your own schooling?** I was fortunate to have extraordinarily strong, talented and compelling teachers — from my high school English teacher who forcefully introduced me to Shakespeare to my college chemistry professor who almost amputated her right hand in a weekend accident and on Monday could write legibly with her left hand. They placed a high value on hard work and achievement and insisted that as students we did likewise.

**How can constituents contact you?** My e-mail address is ehorsch@wyoming.com.

**What is one of your favorite fiction books or characters?** Fox News

**Name:** Todd Ingram

**What drew you to the school board?** First

and foremost, a desire to serve the community. The school board is maligned by many, and I felt up for the challenge. I intended to bring something meaningful to the table. I hope I have so far. Second,

my parents were educators. I saw how they changed lives. I wanted to be a small part of that here in Natrona County. Third, my son will be entering school soon. I wanted to learn as much as I could so I could help him K through 12.

**What would your ideal educational experience include?** Laughter

**What is a positive memory from your own schooling?** In no particular order: friends, athletics, good grades, winning a “boom box” for selling the most magazine subscriptions, summer.

**How can constituents contact you?** Phone: 259-6933

**What is one of your favorite fiction books or characters?** “The Stand” by Stephen King

**Name:** Rita Walsh

**What drew you to the school board?** I have

been an educator at the elementary and the university levels and, upon retirement, still wanted to be involved and give back to a system that truly has given so much to me. As a practitioner in education, I believe I have a background of knowledge that will benefit the board and our students.

**What would your ideal**

**educational experience include?**

Speaking ideally, with money no object, I would have flexible start times for the school day, dismantle the grade structures based on age and ensure that every child had an advocate at the school. We must make education a priority and provide our teachers with the tools and time they need to meet individual needs as they are working with our most valuable asset.

**What is a positive memory from your own schooling?** I loved going to school, from elementary through post-graduate. I had great teachers and made forever friends.

**How can constituents contact you?** My phone number is 235-3587 and e-mail is rwalsh@bresnan.net.

**What is one of your favorite fiction books or characters?** A historical fiction I really enjoyed is “The Other Boleyn Girl” by Philippa Gregory.

*Donn McCall was unable to submit his answers prior to News Zone going to press. However, after 18 years serving on the NCSD Board of Trustees, his answers shouldn't be a mystery to us!*

*Thanks to all of our board members for their dedication and service to the students of Natrona County!*



*Start the new year off well*

*By Rachel Trujillo-Myers*

Start the new year off right by joining a refreshing yoga class! The new session will begin Jan. 10 and run through May 18. Punch cards are 10 classes for \$40. You are welcome to drop in any time and try a class ... you won't regret it! Lorraine Reed is the instructor and is awesome! Class meets from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the CSF-McKinley Annex (1044 Foster Rd.).

Also, sign up for an upcoming CPR/first aid/AED class:

- ◆ Jan. 11, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Jan. 18, 8:30-11:30 a.m.
- ◆ Jan. 25, 8:30-11:30 a.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Feb. 8, 8:30-11:30 a.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Feb. 22, 8:30-11:30 a.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.

All classes are held in the Westwood Room at the Central Services Facility. If your employment contract states that you are required to be CPR/first aid and AED certified, you have 30 days from your start date with the district to register for a class. The \$5 card fee is waived for employees required to obtain the certification, according to job certification.

To enroll in classes, contact Rachel Trujillo-Myers at 253-5228 or Rachel\_Trujillo-Myers@natronaschools.org.

## SOME INSURANCE COMPONENTS TO CHANGE JAN. 1

By Arlene Steward

The following state of Wyoming Employees' Group Insurance changes will take effect Jan. 1:

◆ Prescription program: **The state encourages the use of generic medications.** If the patient or medical provider requests a brand name prescription (listed as "preferred" or "dispense as written") when a generic equivalent is available, the patient will be charged the higher brand copay plus 100 percent retail cost of the difference between the generic and the brand-name medication. There are no exceptions to this policy.

◆ Preventive care benefit: The annual dollar maximums for preventive services will be eliminated; therefore, those charges should be considered and paid at 100 percent by Great-West/CIGNA. Please keep in mind that if the provider is out of the network the patient will be responsible for the charges that are over "usual and customary." Some of the preventive charges include, but are not limited to, physical examinations, immunizations, mammograms and blood screenings.

◆ Wyoming Health Fairs: Wyoming Health Fairs provide one blood chemical screening and

a body mass index (BMI) test per calendar year at no charge to the patient (paid by the state). The patient must present his or her Great-West/CIGNA ID card at the time of service. The patient must pay up-front and request an itemized bill at the time of visit for other blood screenings, then file a health claim for reimbursement.

◆ New ID cards and booklet: New medical ID cards and booklets with CIGNA's logo will be issued this month. The new ID cards will become effective Jan. 1, 2011. Please present your new ID cards to your health care providers at the time of service.

## STUDENTS, STAFF REACH OUT TO COMMUNITY DURING HOLIDAYS

By Jenni Luckett

LEGO models, games, sports equipment, even a bike. These gifts are going under Christmas trees throughout Natrona County this year, thanks to the generous work of third-graders at Manor Heights Elementary School.

On Dec. 6, students from Manor Heights visited the eastside Wal-Mart with cash in hand, setting out to fill the wishes of other kids in their community. Armed with an adult chaperone, a giving tree tag from the Salvation Army and a little mental arithmetic to stay within budget, they scoured the aisles of the store, looking for gifts for their new, nameless friends.

See *HOLIDAYS*, page 8



Manor Heights Elementary School third-graders shop for presents for the Salvation Army's giving tree Dec. 6 at the eastside Wal-Mart.

## POSTAL SERVICE CRACKS DOWN ON MAIL RULES

By Jenni Luckett

You probably learned how to write your address in kindergarten. But as technology changes, so do the rules.

The U.S. Postal Service reminds the district of the need to follow proper procedures to ensure mail gets delivered accurately on time.

### ADDRESSES

The Postal Service uses machines to scan addresses on envelopes as they are sorted for delivery. Those machines need you to write clearly (all caps is preferred) and to address your envelopes properly.

Return addresses should be in the top left corner of the envelope. The "to" address should be roughly in the center of the envelope, slightly toward the right. Be sure to leave at least 5/8-inch of margin at the bottom of the envelope for postal use.

Addresses should be written as follows:

- First line: Name or company
- Second line: Street address or post office box
- Third line: City, state and zip code

The machines used by the post office read from the bottom up. That means if you include both a street address and post office box you must put the P.O. box LOWER than the street address.

Also, be sure to only abbreviate appropriate words. (Street is St., avenue is Ave., and boulevard is Blvd. Few other things should be abbreviated.)

And, make sure you are using the proper two-letter state abbreviation.

### ENVELOPES

To keep mailing

costs down, try to keep to standard commercial-size envelopes when possible. A #10 envelope is a standard business envelope at 9.5 inches by 4.125 inches. A #9 envelope is typical for a self-addressed stamped envelope at 8.875- by 3.875-inches. A 6-by-9 envelope also is acceptable at "letter" rates. Be careful: A 6.5-by-9.5 envelope is a "flat," not a letter.

If you need to go up to a manila envelope, 9-by-12 and 10-by-13 are acceptable sizes. No 10-by-15 envelopes are accepted.

Also, be sure that there are NO clasps on your envelopes. The NCS D mail room and the post office will reject these, as they tear up mailing equipment. If you have a supply of clasp envelopes that you need to use, tear the clasp off before mailing or use for in-district mail.

### ASK QUESTIONS

Remember, the district's Multimedia Services Department offers a wide range of services from printing and copying to audiovisual equipment checkout to folding, inserting and mailing.

If you have a project coming up, call in advance to get help making your project as cost- and time-efficient as possible.

**Return address**  
Print or type your address in the upper left corner on the front of the envelope.

YOUR NAME  
123 MAIN ST  
CASPER, WY 82601

**Postage**  
Use a stamp, postage meter or PC Postage to affix the correct amount.

**Delivery Address**  
Clearly print the delivery address parallel to the longest side of the envelope. Do not use commas or periods. Leave a 5/8" margin at bottom of envelope. Put c/o above firm name. Put post office box below street address if using both.

C/O JOHN DOE  
NATRONA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
970 N GLENN RD STE 16  
CASPER WY 82601

**City, state, zip**  
Be sure to spell the city name correctly. Use the capitalized, two-letter abbreviation for the state. Use the USPS online zip code locator to ensure your zip code is correct.

1/2" minimum margin

5/8" minimum margin

1/2" minimum margin

**MEDALLION NOMINATIONS  
NOW OPEN**

Medallion nominations are due Jan. 21.

Medallion of Excellence Awards nomination packets now are available in all schools. Packets also are available online at [www.natronaschools.org](http://www.natronaschools.org), by clicking on Departments>Human Resources>Employee Recognition, or simply searching for "Medallion of Excellence."

The Medallion of Excellence Awards recognize outstanding Natrona County School District employees. Nominate a coworker today! Packets are due to Human Resources Services by Jan. 21, and winners will be announced shortly thereafter.

All winners will be recognized at the annual Medallion of Excellence ceremony Feb. 15 at the Casper Events Center.

For more information, contact Kathi Hawley by FirstClass e-mail or at 253-5231.

**TALLY IN: NCS D RAISES \$56,426.30  
FOR UNITED WAY**

Thanks to everyone who donated to the United Way of Natrona County. Every dollar will help change the life of those in our very own community. What a wonderful place in which to live and work!

*HOLIDAYS, continued from page 6*

It has become an annual tradition for the third-grade classes at Manor Heights to sell raffle tickets in an effort to raise money for those in need during the holiday season. Teacher Sherrie Litzinger explains that the effort fits well into the season, as well as the grade level's social studies curriculum, helping students connect to their community.

This year, the students held a 25/25/50 raffle. Two winners each received 25 percent of the raffle proceeds, leaving 50 percent for kids to shop for presents. (One of this year's winners donated her earnings back to the cause.) Businesses also poured in with donations, netting a total of \$5,205 for the shopping effort.

And Manor Heights wasn't the only school doing some giving this holiday season. Elsewhere in the district, students and staff are collecting food, coats, gifts and more to help the entire community have a happy and safe winter.

Kelly Walsh High School's Key Club hosted Turkey Bowling prior to Thanksgiving, collecting 150 turkeys and \$2,180 for the Salvation Army (and providing a rollicking good time for participants from KW, Sagewood and Woods at the same time). The KWHS Honor Society also is raising money to buy gifts for children this season.

At Sagewood Elementary, fourth-graders are participating in Pennies for Presents, bringing in coins only to collect money to buy presents, food and Christmas decorations for families in need. The Sagewood Student Council also is raising money to buy books for children with extended stays in hospitals and is gathering donations to send 50 care packages to troops in Iraq.

Also this month, staff members at the Central Services Facility are collecting non-perishable food. Food will be donated to the Salvation Army.

*NCS D Community Relations  
wishes you a happy and safe  
holiday! See you next year!*

