

Local Schools



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The Mule Shack Teaches Valuable Life Skills

DECEMBER 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

The Mule Shack Teaches Valuable Life Skills

The recently opened Mule Shack is serving multiple functions at Poplar Bluff Junior High—in addition to serving customers—including teaching students business math, organization and social interaction.

“Every piece of the store is a teachable moment,” said Courtney Rutledge, the instructor over the life skills class, which runs the operation under teacher supervision.

After several months of planning, a ribbon cutting for the new store was held on Oct. 13. The Mule Shack sells snacks, school spirit items and other supplies during lunch every Friday next to the cafeteria. Proceeds go toward enhancing the life skills classroom, which is currently in the market for a stove to show students some basics on how to cook.

Over the summer, the district renovated the classroom, installing plumbing, sinks, countertops and cabinets so students—grades 7-8—can obtain practical knowledge that will help them manage the demands of everyday life beyond the school day. Students cleaned and painted the room, previously used as a storage space for gym equipment, and back in the day a place where students could get malts, according to Principal Candace Warren.

Before and after lunch, students gather at the service window to make their purchases. Seventh grader Nickolas Gallamore says he is saving up to one day buy a foam finger designed for sporting events. He had been anticipating opening day for quite some time.

“Finally, here’s the day,” Nickolas recalled thinking. He gave his early review of the store. “They have all the stuff people like... music, plus the name is catchy,” he exclaimed. “It’s sure to have success.”

The name of the store was chosen by incoming Junior High students at the end of last school year. The Parent Teacher Organization helped supply the initial inventory, along with donations from businesses. The plan is for the shop to eventually become self-sustaining once it achieves profitability.

Asked what his favorite part of working at the Mule Shack is, cashier Labron Thomas of the seventh grade replied: “What I like about the store is getting to know people, and [seeing] how they’re doing.”

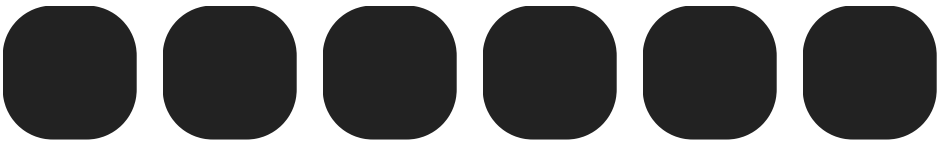
Pictured: Life skills students man the Mule Shack under the direction of faculty during lunchtime.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Students Taught Electrical Safety

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Students Taught Electrical Safety

In light of its 100th anniversary, Poplar Bluff Municipal Utilities put on a live line demonstration at several of the schools within the R-I district last week, teaching students about the hazards of electricity.

The demonstration opened on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at O’Neal Elementary, with Mark Baker—representative for the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—asking second graders what they already understood about electricity.

Students variously yelled out: “It stings you.” “It’s dangerous.” “It turns on your TV.”

City linemen showed what happens when a bird decoy, a tree branch and a Mylar balloon crosses power lines. They also cooked a hotdog from the inside out with high and low voltage, revealing what the meat looks like afterward. Lastly, they used a Tonka Truck and an action figure to demonstrate what to do if a vehicle comes in contact with live electrical wires.

“All electricity wants to go back into the ground,” Baker said, noting that it is safer to stay in the car unless it is on the verge of catching on fire, then “hop out like a bunny” away from the vehicle since the currents are generated from the center, weakening as the ripples travel further.

There are different types of electricity, Baker shared, explaining that direct current is what is found in batteries, alternating current is in power lines and static electricity is caused by friction, the most powerful form of which can be seen in lightning.

Municipal Utilities, a city-owned electric company, reportedly first went online in 1917 after residents passed a bond issue to construct and operate a power plant. The city recently held a celebration at the Black River Coliseum, offering visitors rides in a bucket truck, among other activities.

Pictured: Union representative Mark Baker shows students a hotdog cooked for two seconds with high voltage that appears uncooked on the surface but is blackened inside.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Graduation Center Students Become Work-Ready Certified

DECEMBER 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Graduation Center Students Become Work-Ready Certified

Over a dozen students graduated and two scholarships were awarded during the Gateway 2 Jobs commencement on Wednesday, Oct. 25, at Poplar Bluff High School.

Founded by the Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce, the program gives students at the Graduation Center an opportunity to learn insider tips from local industry professionals about gaining employment. Business leaders visited the class throughout the month to share about topics such as resume writing and job interviewing.

“We are blessed in this community to have folks who could be sitting in the office making more money but take the time out of their day because they care about these kids getting a job in the workforce,” said Steve Halter, chamber president.

The program began seven years ago as the brainchild of Halter and businesswoman Sharon Kissinger of Kissinger & Kirkman Investment Centre, who felt there was a need for a work-readiness program, and have a soft spot for students working on credit recovery due to various life circumstances.

In addition to participating in a series of lectures in order to earn certificates of completion, students had to complete volunteer work in the community, maintain a GPA above passing and have no discipline referrals.

“Finish what you start, take some risks, have a plan but be willing to adjust, dream big and put steps in place to achieve those goals,” advised regional director Jomo Castro of AT&T Missouri, which was one of several business sponsors. The contacts that students made throughout the course of the program will continue to be resources for them in the community, Castro noted.

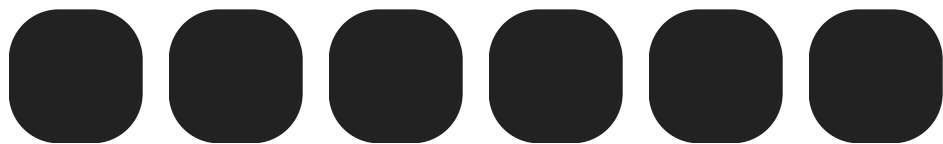
Kissinger, along with the Three Rivers Endowment Trust, awarded students Michaela Swift and Jerry Faughn with \$500 scholarships respectively to the community college based on essays submitted. Mayor Ed DeGaris was present for the ceremony to personally congratulate the graduates.

Pictured are students display their certificates with program supporters. Graduates were (in alphabetical order) Richard Anderson, Brian Battles, Kyle Blanchard, Jordan Brown, Dakota Carlton, Jerry Faughn, Krista Johnson, Corey Lashley, Laquarious Marshall, Floyd Ray, Michael Simpson and Deamario Thomas. Not present was Michaela Swift.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Three Rivers College Student Receives Achievement Scholarship

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Three Rivers College Student Receives Achievement Scholarship

Three Rivers College student and Oran resident Katy Wondel was awarded the Three Rivers Endowment Trust's Achievement Scholarship. The Achievement Scholarship is awarded to a student in Three Rivers College's Nursing or Business programs.

The Achievement Scholarship is administered by the Three Rivers Endowment Trust. To learn more about investing in Three Rivers College students through scholarships, contact Director of Development Michelle Reynolds at 573-840-9077 or michellereynolds@trcc.edu.

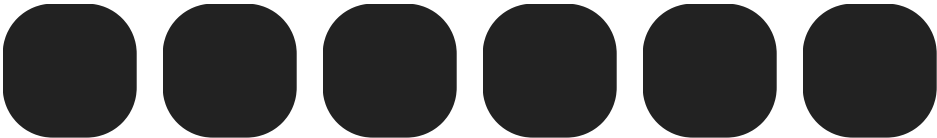
Pictured are from left to right: Allen Brooks, Three Rivers Endowment Trust Board Member; Mark Stidham, Three Rivers Endowment Trust Board Member; Katy Wondel,

scholarship recipient; Dr. Wesley Payne, President of Three Rivers College; and Eric Schalk, Chair of the Three Rivers College Board of Trustees.

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District-Wide Public Speaking Contest Winner

DECEMBER 19TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

District-Wide Public Speaking Contest Winner

Poplar Bluff High School senior Logan Dunlap won the Southeast District speaking portion of the 2017 Missouri Sheep Producers State FFA contest earlier this month at Osage Beach, later placing fourth at state.

The contest is designed to develop individual public speaking skills and to promote interest in and awareness of the many different aspects of the sheep industry, according to a press release issued by the organization. Logan’s speech topic was sheep production in Missouri.

Logan is a senior FFA officer at PBHS with plans of running for state office, according to his sponsor Kathryn Clark, agriculture teacher. Last spring, he earned a group one rating at the state competition for extemporaneous speaking.

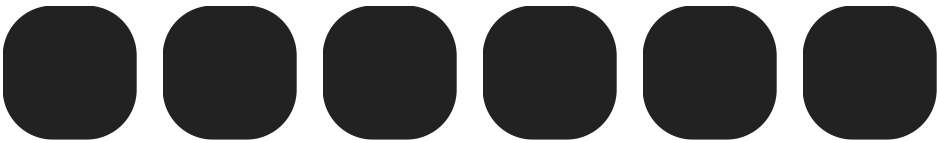
Pictured: Logan Dunlap (far left), along with the other district-wide winners, were presented awards and \$50 checks on Sunday, Dec. 3, at the Tan-Tar-A Resort.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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