



## What's Up for March? Take a Look Inside...

### A2:

- Spread the Word to End the Word
- Breakfast in Schools

### A3:

- Teen CERT

### A4 & A5:

- Feature Photo Pages

### A6:

- Cobbler Caring Garden
- Opt Out Resolution

## East Middle School Teacher Honored as Educator of the Year

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

Bjorg Remmers-Seymour always knew she was going to be a teacher, deep down, even if she initially tried to fight the inevitable. Remmers-Seymour, eighth-grade math teacher at East Middle School, was recently honored for being named the Educator of the Year.

Coming from a line of educators, Remmers-Seymour used to play school while growing up and use closet doors as chalkboards. As the economy shifted through the years, her father discouraged her from becoming a teacher and encouraged her to pursue a career in science or medicine. After going to school for a year for medicine, she knew that was not for her. She told her husband that even though she knew she wasn't going to make much money, she wanted to be a teacher.



"I really view teaching as the opportunity to change the world," she said. "Maybe not change the whole world, but change a child's world. My job really is to teach them that they matter and their thoughts are valued."

Remmers-Seymour has been teaching in the Rapid City Area School District for 10 years and this is her third year at East Middle School. Prior to coming to RCAS, Remmers-Seymour taught two years in Hot Springs and taught high school math in the Department of Corrections for one year.

"I'm always looking for something new and fun to do," she said. "But I think this is my home (at East), I will stay here for a while."

Remmers-Seymour said a lot of what her job consists of is teaching interpersonal-

*Jump to A2: Educator*



## Students Take Bullying into their Own Hands

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

Bullying is something that is not tolerated in schools. Which is why three fifth graders at Robbinsdale Elementary took matters into their own hands to create a solution. The girls put together a presentation that they showed to each classroom in the school to help put an end to bullying at the school.

"We've all been bullied and we heard a lot of other people have been bullied and a lot of other people have hurt themselves,"

Addison Brown said. "A lot of people here make fun of a lot of people who are different and there is a lot of gossiping in the school."

Brown and her fellow classmates, Emma Berg and Abigail Andersen, said their teacher Alexandra Norton showed them a video about bullying and they came up with the idea to do something about bullying in their schools.

"We thought we could make a difference," Berg said. "We wanted to show that it is

*Jump to A3: Bullying*

Cont. from A1: Educator



al skills such as how to work together, how to disagree on a cognitive level and various life skills that are important in a high demand world.

“Realistically it’s this surreal thing,” she said on being honored as the Educator of the Year. “There’s a lot of people who know me and have seen my teaching. This is my job, this is what I do every day. It really is special, definitely an honor.”

Remmers-Seymour’s nominator said “Bjorg works magic. She encourages a classroom culture that values student discourse, persistence and effort, and participation and engagement for all students.”

She will now be eligible for consideration as the Region 7 Teacher of the Year.

## Students Take the Pledge to Stop Using the R-Word

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

Words can be a very powerful thing, used to build people up and used to tear them down. One group of students at Central High School are working to eliminate the use of one of the words used to tear people down. The Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign was held this month to encourage people to use a different word than the r-word.



spread the word that they are not retarded, they are talented, special, and smart, so different words should be used. They also set up a table in the cafeteria to get people to pledge to stop using the r-word, while handing out bracelets to serve as a reminder to use different words. This

year’s pledge day was an official Special Olympics event.

“They love our video,” Heuston said. “They know it’s important and they know they’re on it so they want people to see it.”

The message they are trying to send is an important one, said

student Shane Rose.

“The r-word hurts,” he said, telling about a time his brother got called a retard at practice. “It hurts my family. My mom and brother were sad.”

For more information on the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign and to pledge to stop saying the r-word, visit [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org).

## Fuel Greatness Event Celebrates Importance of Breakfast in Schools

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

While breakfast may get skipped over quite often, Midwest Dairy Council, Fuel Up to Play 60, and Rapid City Area Schools teamed up to celebrate the importance of eating breakfast daily. A breakfast celebration was held at General Beadle Elementary School complete with Lakota Dancers who performed and spoke to classrooms.

Research has shown that students who eat breakfast daily have improved physical



activity and improved academic performance. However, 60 percent of students do not eat breakfast daily.

“Kids who eat breakfast do better in the classroom but we know a lot of kids don’t eat breakfast,” Whitney Jerman with Midwest Dairy Council said. “We want to get them to know how important it is to eat breakfast.”

General Beadle hosted the Fuel Greatness event to help show what they do to implement Breakfast in the Classroom on a daily basis to ensure that students start the day with the fuel that they need. According to Food Service Director Janelle Peterson, schools offer breakfast to students that always include grain, fruit and a dairy item so that they can teach students what a proper breakfast looks like.

“We want them eating Monday through Friday, but also on the weekends, so this

way they know what a good breakfast looks like and they can still get a good meal in with easy to access items,” Peterson said. “They know that they need to get all of the components.”

Lakota dancers performed for students while they ate their breakfast at the Fuel Greatness event and later visited select classrooms to share with them what they do and the importance of a good breakfast each morning.



# Teens Learn How to Respond in Case of Emergency

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

Nobody hopes to be in a disaster situation where they have to serve as first responders until the first responders get there. But some teenagers are equipping themselves for such a situation, just in case. The Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class is offered for teenagers to learn how to properly respond in an emergency situation, such as a car crash, flood, etc.

The concept of CERT is neighbor helping neighbor prior to professional emergency services arriving on scene.

“The people in the Midwest are good at that,” Director of Emergency Manage-

ment Dustin Willett said. “We want to help our neighbor.”

It is important that people know how to properly help in certain situations, or else people will be put in trouble or danger, Willett said. The class focuses on giving students the basic skill sets to help them properly assist those in need during emergencies such as tornadoes or active assailants that may happen during the school day.

“Kids are the most protected aspect in our community and when they’re hurt, the community is hurt,” Willett said. “Teen CERT gives them a level of training that turns them from what is viewed as a liability and turns them to an asset. It makes them a part of a solution and uses them as

a resource to solve any problem.”

Willett said there is a level of emotional maturity that is required, so teaching middle school students can be difficult and he said it is important to be cognizant of what they are expecting a child to handle emotionally during an emergency. But also a huge part of that is not underestimating what they are capable of.

The course runs four weeks and ends with an all-day event where a mock disaster is staged and students have to practice what they learned throughout the course.

“The question is to respond,” Willett said. “It is not a pass fail course and the training does not obligate you to act. You just know now how to make the situation better and not worse.”



## Cont. from A1: Bullying

not cool to bully and that one little idea can lead to something big.”

The girls put together an interactive presentation to show to classrooms and also created coloring sheets for the younger students, and bracelets with inspirational messages on them to hand out to the older students to remind them that bullying is not cool. They interviewed one teacher from each grade level and included their input in how they put together their presentation and will write a paper about their findings as well.

“We can make a difference,” Andersen said. “We want people to stop it while

they have the chance.”

The girls hope to take their message to other schools as well to end the cycle of bullying.

“It breaks my heart that people are doing bad things to other people,” Berg said. “When other people bully, then they hurt other people who then bully other people. It’s a cycle.”

Norton said that hurt they felt turned into something that helped impact other people, which she was very proud of.

“I was extremely proud of them,” she said. “I was touched and inspired by their em-

pathy, and impressed by their ability to connect the hurt they had experienced in their own life because of bullying to the hurt of others around them.”

The presentation has already made a huge difference in the school, according to Norton.

“Because of what the girls accomplished, bullying has become a school-wide conversation for the last few weeks,” she said. “Awareness has grown. The biggest change I’ve witnessed is in my 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are now actively working to reach out to other who feel left out. This is a tremendous accomplishment.”



Get online with us at all of our web and social media sites! Watch for school postings on Facebook, Twitter & Nixle; browse photos on Instagram; watch quick videos on Vine and longer videos on Vimeo!

# Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!

## Dr. Seuss Day



(Left and right) Students in Amy Heuston's class at Central High School performed in a talent show. The group danced to the One Direction song, "You Don't Know You're Beautiful."



**Teachers:** Have a student who wrote something awesome, took a great photo, or made an amazing art project? Share it with the rest of us by emailing it to [RapidCityDistrictCommunications@k12.sd.us](mailto:RapidCityDistrictCommunications@k12.sd.us) and it could be featured in an upcoming issue of *The Reporter!*



(Top left and right) The Annual Central High School Capers Talent Show brought in various performance pieces for the public's enjoyment.



(Left) The February Character Counts! Stars of the Month at Valley View Elementary.

# Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!



West Middle School 8th Grader Jessica Benson was presented with the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for her work sending cards to veterans and active military members.



Knollwood Elementary 1st Grade Teacher, Mallory Spoelstra won the 1+1 Award from News Center 1 and First Interstate Bank.



Lorna and Mary White Butterfly, Tyra Black Elk, Trinity Valendra, and Orlando Thompson, all from Horace Mann, won the He Sapa Hand Game Championships held at Southwest.



Over 450 RCAS middle school choir students and 100 high school advanced singers performed in the United in Song Choir Festival.

(Right) Congratulations to Central High School's AD, Darren Paulson on his SDHSAA Distinguished Service Award and to David Dolan, head Track Coach for his 25-year Officials Award!



## Black Hawk Literacy Night



# Cobbler Caring Garden Idea Begins to Sprout

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

The ever popular idea of a community garden has planted itself at Central High School and a plan has sprouted. The Cobbler Caring Garden idea was presented to the school board and plans have been made for the garden, which will be located near the trees on the west side of the football practice field. The garden is a collaborative project with the Agriscience, Landscape Design, Beyond the Books Internship and Special Ed classrooms taking the lead.

The garden design was created by Lisa Steinken's Landscape Design classes and the final design was selected by the Garden's adult advisory group. Steinken said they wanted the project to be meaningful and purposeful.

"We wanted the project to be purposeful," she said. "Our goal is to make it a service

learning project that is relevant to all of the curriculum in high school, provide a food source for an at risk population, and create a meaningful work experience."

The garden will have raised garden beds in the shape of Cs to represent the Central Cobblers with a rose stone walkway for easy access. There will be a perpetual fountain at the center of the Cs in order to create a focal point. Various vegetables, perennials, and fall harvest will be planted throughout the garden. There will be a total of close to 800 square feet of growing space. Fencing will be created out of pallets because of its ease to work with, its low cost, and in order to create more planting area. The students are hoping to make the garden deer proof as well.

Funds for the Cobbler Caring Garden were donated through the RCAS Civil Discourse project, as well as grants from State Farm, SDSU Extension, and Annie's Garden.

"The RCAS Civil Discourse Project, funded by the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, supports a diverse group of students collaborating and cooperating with their peers as well as adults in a project based learning experience," Chris Heacock, Civil Discourse Project Coordinator, said. "These students have done an amazing job of using their critical and creative thinking skills in designing the garden space and are learning lessons that will benefit them as they pursue careers and positively impact their communities."

Steinken said this project would not have been possible without the help of their partners.

"Without that support, we can't do this project, and these are the fun projects to do," she said.

Ground will be broken on the Cobbler Caring Garden in the spring.

# School Board Approves \$6 Million Opt Out Resolution

The Rapid City Area School District Board of Education voted in a 7-0 vote at a special meeting Tuesday night to adopt a \$6 million opt out resolution over the course of five years. This resolution vote comes after months of board meetings, town hall meeting, public input, and restructuring of the budget.

The opt out resolution may be referred to a vote of the people upon a petition signed by at least five percent of the registered voters in the district (2,986 signatures) and filed with the governing body within 20 days of the first publication of the decision.

Unless the action is referred to a vote and reversed by such a vote, this resolution authorizes the county auditor to spread an excess levy to raise tax dollars in the amount of \$6 million over the course of five years. If there is a year where the district does not need to collect all \$6 million, it will not collect it. The opt out would take effect in April 2016 and would be payable to the district for the 2016-2017 school year budget.

"We have identified over and over again, the current state funding system does not supply enough resources for us to

do what we need to do in the Rapid City Area Schools to be successful," Superintendent Dr. Tim Mitchell said. "I can't continue, we can't continue to do more with less and be the same school district we've had in the past and be proud of our accomplishments because we'll continue to deteriorate if we continue to move down this path."

For an owner-occupied house, the owner would pay an additional \$72 per year per \$100,000 in assessed value or an additional \$6 per month. For agriculture, the owner would pay an additional \$30 per year per \$100,000 in assessed value or an additional \$2.50 per month. For non-agricultural, the owner would pay an additional \$150 per year per \$100,000 in assessed value, or an additional \$12.50 per month.

The opt out will aim to help support and maintain the current academic and instructional programming, maintain current class sizes, maintain current student transportation program, maintain current extra and co-curricular programming, provide students a high quality educational program, and maintain a high quality teacher for every student.



## Did You Know?

### \$6 million opt out



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*The Reporter?*

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