

# Tekoa SCHOOL TALK

Spring 2017 - Volume 14, Number 3

*Hagan grant spurs growth*

## Educational technology rises to a new level

Ask Tekoa students what they think about the technology grant the district received from the Hagan Foundation of Spokane.

They may not answer in words, but with squeals and smiles. Indeed, if a picture is worth a thousand words, as the old saying goes, two pictures with smiles – like the ones shown here – must be worth at least 2,000 words, right?

Suffice it to say the two-year Hagan grant has been a home run of epic proportions. With the award, the district has purchased Chromebook computers and interactive whiteboards for grades 3-6 and will follow next year with similar purchases for grades K-2.

The \$55,000 Hagan grant ultimately will result in the purchase of 100 Chromebook computers, charging stations and seven whiteboards.

The new equipment is a boon to learning, says 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Kim Schulz. “For many, the computers provide motivation through their interactivity.” She says the benefits in reading and composition have been particularly strong.



*Fourth-graders Maddex Strobel and Raelin Beebee make good use of their laptops in reading and writing exercises.*



*Third-graders Toby Monroy and Morgan Hare show off a PowerPoint presentation on weather and climate.*

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, teacher Danielle Crossett has students using the computers to create Google Sheets – spreadsheets for making calendars, budgets, to-do lists, team rosters and more. Her students also are comfortable users of PowerPoint, which they use for classroom presentations and reports.

While the new technology has enhanced learning, teachers say the benefits do not stop there. They also appreciate the efficiency that allows them to maximize every minute of class time.

Rather than march to the school computer lab, jockeying for time with other classes, students can now work on their own laptops, in their own classrooms. Precious minutes are saved in every room transition avoided.

The district extends its heartfelt thanks to the Hagan Foundation for both its generosity and commitment to small schools. The impact has been significant. The proof can be seen in the smiles.

**Volume 14, Number 3**  
**Spring 2017**

**Board of Directors**

Michael McHargue, Chair  
At-Large

Robert Wilkins, Vice Chair  
District 1

Mary Marsh  
District 2

Shane Monroy  
District 3

Brandon VanDalsen  
At-Large

**Superintendent**  
Connie Klierer

**Tekoa School District #265**

135 N. College Street  
Tekoa, WA 99033-0869  
tekoasd.org

Phone: (509) 284-3281  
Fax: (509) 284-2045

## Tekoa awarded coveted Gold Star

Since its creation by the Legislature in 2007, the state has encouraged school districts to enroll students in the College Bound Scholarship program.

College Bound is a financial aid program paying college tuition and other costs for income-eligible students. The program is intended to spur attendance by those who might not consider college because of the cost.

Students enroll in the program during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. Those meeting academic and other requirements then receive college scholarships following high school graduation.

Schools also receive recognition for enrolling high numbers of eligible students. Tekoa's most recent sign up rate, for the graduating class of 2020, was 75 percent. Just how good is 75 percent? Good enough to beat the state average, regional average (seven counties), Whitman County average and neighboring Spokane County average.

Inside counselor Scott Eaton's office lies the proof of success— a Gold Star trophy recognizing the district for an exemplary sign-up rate.



*Counselor Scott Eaton and Superintendent Connie Klierer proudly display the district's Gold Star award.*

A decade of evidence shows the College Bound program paying dividends beyond dollars. The dividends are seen in immediate student performance, with enrollees achieving higher on-time high school graduation rates than peers who do not enroll. Similarly, participants enroll in college at a higher rate than the state average.

Kudos to the Tekoa students who enrolled in College Bound and to the staff who assisted and encouraged them. It was a Gold Star performance all the way around.

## Tekoa welcomes Tillie Torpey

Tekoa did not have to go far in search of an outstanding student teacher to assist this spring in Kim Schulz's 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. Tillie Torpey grew up in Plummer and is a student at WSU Spokane who will graduate in May.

Her impact has been tremendous, says Schulz. Her innovations include student creation of a Schitsu'umsh calendar. Schitsu'umsh, meaning "Those Who Were Found Here," is the ancient name of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Did you know that in the Schitsu'umsh culture, there are five seasons, not four, and that maps are oriented to the east, not north?

Why east? Tekoa 4<sup>th</sup> graders know the answer. Because that is where the sun rises.

In Tekoa, the rising sun now shines brighter. Thank you, Tillie.

## Healthy Tekoa Coalition leaves its mark in D.C.

Members of the Healthy Tekoa Coalition recently traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the national Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) convention. Local participants included student assistance specialist Jimmy Schofield, Tekoa Medical clinic receptionist Angelica Schneider, Tekoa High School senior TaShanna Schneider and coalition coordinator Diane Harp.

It was a three-day conference focused on prevention of alcohol, prescription, marijuana and other drug use. TaShanna was a strong representative for Tekoa in meetings with Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. TaShanna discussed the community's success with the prescription drug box at the Tekoa Pharmacy (emptied of 21 pounds of medications last year) and also encouraged the senators to continue prevention funding in our state.

Congratulations to TaShanna for a job well done.



*Denali Chase, student teacher Tillie Torpey, Ariel Disney and Emma Fuchs display their Schitsu'umsh calendar.*

# The hatching of fish; the hatching of dreams

It's a little known fact, but right here in Tekoa, in the middle of wheat country, lies a fish hatchery. That's right. It's been around for seven years.

It is understandable if you didn't know about it because it's a seasonal hatchery – just winter-spring – and there is no road sign pointing to it. You have to know where it is.

Give up? The hatchery is a 100-gallon aquarium in teacher Tammy Mendoza's 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom at Tekoa Elementary School. Since January, her students have been raising 150 trout. They arrived as unhatched eggs and will leave as fry eventually bound for Liberty Lake near Spokane.

"Between the support of Stacey Selcho, who runs the Spokane Conservation District's educational outreach, and the donations made by Trout Unlimited, this wonderful program brings both trout and curriculum to our classroom," says Mendoza.

Curriculum covers the raising of trout from eggs to fry, monitoring the tank for water quality, engaging students in stream habitat, learning to appreciate water resources, fostering conservation ethics and growing and understanding ecosystems.

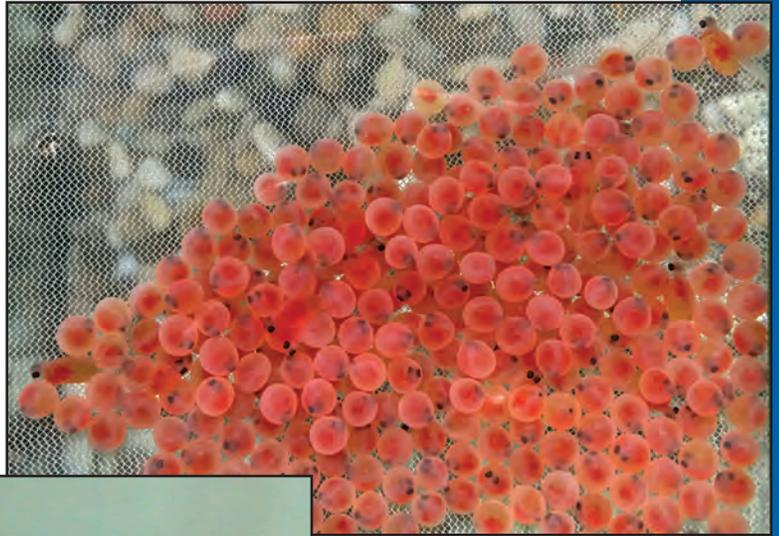
The exercise will conclude later this spring when the class buses to Liberty Lake to transplant the fish to their permanent home. That in itself will be a learning process, as the safe transport of fish requires precise conditions and timing.

The fish must be carefully netted (but not too soon), placed in a bucket of cold water (a precise 50 degrees to maximize dissolved oxygen), then placed in a cooler of ice. A thermometer and portable air pump will be attached and water conditions will be continually monitored on the bus.

"As soon as we arrive we will say goodbye to our fish and make sure that they are released in an area that provides a little more protection, allowing for more development," says Mendoza.

In time, the fish will grow into a full-sized rainbow trout, known for the distinctive pink stripe running the length of their bodies. Three-inch fry released this year may reach 10 inches by next spring.

The trout project continues Mendoza's long history of environmental education – innovations that earned her regional



*From eggs, to fry to full-grown fish, these little ones may one day grow to Liberty Lake lunkers.*

Teacher of the Year honors in 2008. Through the years, her students have conducted tree-planting and water-testing exercises that have been widely replicated in other districts.

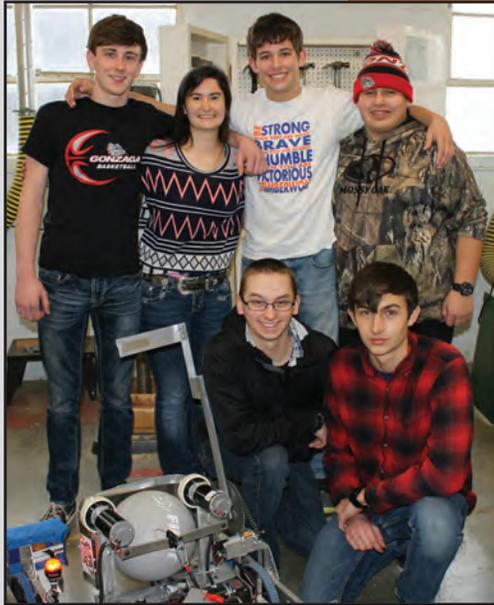
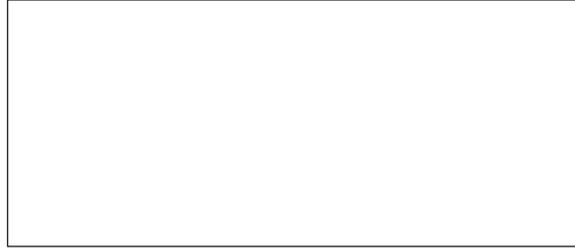
Soon, the hatchery will be closed for the season. When it re-opens next January, the process will begin anew, with Mendoza telling new students about their exciting science project. The students will think it's all about fish.

In fact, it's really about them – cultivating their interest in outdoor stewardship and potential environmental careers. The hatching of fish is just the catalyst for the hatching of dreams.

## *Next stop: Nashville*

The Tekoa Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter earned two majors awards during the recent state competition in Kennewick. Our Culinary team of Dylan Eaton, Jayden Norwood and Sarina Hill

received gold. Madison Kalmes presented an Illustrated Talk entitled, "Dare To Be Different." She received gold as well. All will compete at the national level in Nashville, July 2-6.



Robotics team members include, in front: Ben Zimmerman, Josef Nocker. Back: Mike Graybeck, TaShanna Schneider, Dawson Strobel and Cody Peone.

## Let the games begin

Every year, when the calendar turns to January, a whole new sports season begins at Tekoa High School. OK, it's not really a sport in the sense of wearing a school uniform and breaking a sweat through physical exertion.

But, on the other hand, it really is a sport because it involves interscholastic competition known to cause a sweat through mental exertion.

Welcome to robotics.

Tekoa takes part in the FIRST Robotics Competition, an annual international event challenging teams of high school students and mentors to build a game-playing robot. Teams have only six weeks to build their 'bot and there are strict limits on the materials and money they may expend.

Robots must meet size and weight specifications and a typical competition will require construction of a multi-dimensional device that can move, lift and throw. To say the instructions are precise is an understatement. For the 2017 season, competitors were presented a 133-page manual filled with instructions, definitions and requirements.

For the 2017 game, teams must install gears to engage rotors, climb a wall, toss balls and prepare an airship for flight. Competition begins locally – for Tekoa, at West Valley High School in Spokane – and then progresses to the state level.

Under the tutelage of teacher Ryan Burtchett, Tekoa has enjoyed success in prior seasons and looks forward to scaling new heights (and walls) in 2017.



For Ignacio Mendoza, floor cleaning is now fast and efficient.

## Seeing is believing: The difference will floor you

Walk in the front door at Tekoa High School and the difference is dramatic. The multi-purpose room looks different, better and shinier than ever, or at least the shiniest it's been in the last 30 years.

That's because the former floor covering, a 30-year-old carpet, is gone. In its place is a modern rubber tile surface that is both pleasing to the eye and strong enough to withstand the daily pounding of heavy foot traffic, wheeled carts and constantly moving tables and chairs.

While the carpet's longevity was a tribute to 30 years of custodial magic, the time had come for a replacement said Ignacio Mendoza, the man whose studious care stretched extra years out of the old surface.

For him, clean-up is now a breeze. Spilled milk? No problem. It wipes up. No stain; no smell; no evidence it ever happened.

Thirty years of spilled milk on carpet? Well, let's just say the carpet probably weighed more going out than it did going in.

The new surface was financed through local levy dollars, through the same measure that included replacement of the high school gym bleachers. With both upgrades, students and visitors alike enjoy a better, safer, more modern environment.

Thank you to our loyal patrons who made it all possible.