

Echoes of Excellence Student of the Week

BY DONNA RHODES
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Rory Stephens

At first glance Rory Stephens, a junior at Winnisquam Regional High School, seems like a fairly laid back individual but those who know him know he's a determined young man with a lot of drive and ambition. It's those qualities that helped earn him the honor of being the school's first male Student of the Month for the 2010-11 academic year.

"I always work as hard as I can," he said.

Besides the distinction of being an honors student and a State Scholar, Rory is actively involved in sports. During last year's baseball season Stephens was named captain of the junior varsity team and later tapped for a berth on the varsity squad where they went on to become WRHS's first Class M Championship baseball team.

"That was great. It was just unbelievable, something that doesn't happen very often and we did it," said Stephens.

Fall sports find him involved in soccer, giving it his all once more as he plays sweeper, stopper and center mid positions on the field. He said the team hasn't had the most successful season so far this season but he seemed sure there were more wins to come for



Rory Stephens

the Bears.

"Our team has all the skills we need. We just need to put the pieces of the puzzle together," Stephens said.

When winter hits central New Hampshire Stephens heads to the slopes to enjoy his favorite sport of all: snow boarding. That love for the freedom of the open slopes translates into wakeboarding behind his family's boat on Lake Winnisquam in the summer months, he said.

In his younger days Stephens was a member of a local 4-H group. Through that organization he had the opportunity to work with animals and they performed a lot of community service. Each year he participated in the annual Belknap County 4-H fair in Belmont entering craft items he made as well as fundraising.

"That was fun. We made root beer from scratch and then sold our own root beer floats at the fair to raise money for our club."

In the classroom

Stephens said mathematics is his favorite subject because of the challenges it presents. He feels that will also help him in his future goal of working in computer design.

"Math will be helpful for me I think. You have to know that kind of stuff in computer work like that," he said.

In order to fulfill that goal Stephens hopes to attend the University of California-Irvine. Gaining entry to UC-I is challenging, he acknowledged, but something he is working hard toward achieving. Just in case that dream doesn't come true, his backup plan is to apply to Colorado Mountain College as well.

"I'd especially like to go there because I'd be able to keep snow boarding," he said.

At WRHS Stephens credits teacher Denise Lessard with being a great help when he needs some. Stephens said he finds her to be one of the easiest people to talk to at school and someone he can trust. At home he looks up to his father for their similar childhood sports involvements and for the determination and good examples his dad has set through the years.

"He was going through some (challenges) at work for awhile and he showed how he could work hard to get through them. That means a lot," Stephens said.

Stephens resides in Sanbornton with his mom, dad and older sister Carlee.

Leading by example, faculty and staff teach value of volunteerism

BY DONNA RHODES
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TILTON — Teachers and staff of Winnisquam Regional High School were living up to their district wide motto "We're all in this together and we're on the move" last Thursday afternoon as they spread out across the community for a series of clean-up projects to give back to the towns that support them.

Superintendent Dr. Tammy Davis, one of the 40-plus volunteers, said it was only one example of SAU 59's objective to let people know schools care about performing well not just in the class but in the community as a whole.

"We've been working hard to be on the move in the schools within the district in all we do. This is all a part of how we're reaching out and trying to give back to the community as well," she said.

When the final bell rang at 2:30 last Thursday, faculty and staff donned their tee shirts and comfy shoes and headed out on assignment.

A dozen staff and teachers drove to Riverfront Park in Tilton and took part in a clean up organized by fellow teacher and a new member of the Tilton Parks Commission.

"We were looking for ways we could help and I knew this was something that needed to be done, so I'm sort of killing two birds with one stone today," said math teacher Peter Fogg.

The work crew, all sporting bright blue tee shirts with the district motto, got right to work shoveling up grass that had grown into walkways along the riverfront. Fogg said he hoped the



PHOTO BY DONNA RHODES

Winnisquam High School teachers Amy Dutton, Peter Fogg, Kirk Young and Kevin Dame spent a few hours outdoors at River Front Park as they cleaned up walkways and trimmed grass last Thursday.

commission would be able to follow up with gravel or stone dust to keep the paths weed-free in the future for visitors to the popular park.

Soccer coach Amy Dutton was one of many who lugged away the unwanted weeds and dirt that had silted into the pathways. She said community and schools go hand in hand and therefore it was great to get out and do something to benefit everyone.

Meanwhile out on Route 132 another dozen or so volunteers were walking the roadside, at times climbing into bushes and shrubs to pick up trash. Organized by Principal Dr. Ronna Cadarette, the group spread out along two miles of the road in their bright blue shirts and safety vests. Students on their way home from school tooted their horns and cheered them on as they passed by. Cadarette said the Tilton-Northfield Rotary normally cleans that stretch of road and she felt it would be a nice way to help the organization.

"I'm a member myself so I brought a few of my friends along to help do something for them," she said.

Cadarette said it was important for students to see teachers involved in the community.

"We're an environmentally-minded school and this is one way to show them what we mean about giving back," said Cadarette.

In Sanbornton yet another crew was busy pulling dead plants from the Town Garden, filling four new garden boxes for next year and

preparing the beds for winter. Janet Rosequist of the Agricultural Center lead the team as they got down and dirty in the soil. Removing old tomato plants is important in preventing blight from wintering over and harming the next summer's crop, she explained. The last of the summer's green tomatoes were taken to the pantry to ripen for families in the town. Karen Ober, a master gardener who helped establish the Town Garden, said the help was greatly appreciated.

"When we started this garden we wanted to get the community involved, so having a group like this come to help out is exactly what we had hoped for," she said.

Davis said the day was one of a variety of community events and projects district employees have been involved in recently. Southwick and Union-Sanborn schools held a breakfast for dads last year and the Middle School held a "green" fair where local businesses came to the school to educate the students and community on environmentally-friendly products, practices and services.

"We're brainstorming all the time on new ideas and skills to bring to the communities that support us," Davis said.

Throughout the day teachers and staff handed out Uno's Dough Raiser coupons. Patrons of Uno's Chicago Grill Restaurant from 4:30 until closing time that day turned in the coupons to donate a portion of their bill to the school. Cadarette said the school in turn will be giving the money they raised to the Tilton-Northfield Rotary's scholarship program.

"It's just another way for us to give back. The Rotary does so much for students in Winnisquam and the community as a whole and now we can help them, too."

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