SCHOOL ZONE

Together we are better

River Hawks embrace 'The Leader in Me'

By JANE SCHMIDT
Educator

It is easy to spot a "Leader in Me" school – one just needs to read the inspirational sayings posted around the hallways, view the data charts monitoring how classes are achieving their goals, or read the WIGs (Wildly Important Goals) each teacher has posted for their own personal growth.

A "Leader in Me" school is easy to recognize because of the leadership modeled by its students. Easton Valley Elementary is in its fourth year of implementation as it builds positive leaders.

Each month at Easton Valley Elementary, students participate in the River Hawk Rally, a pep assembly that kicks off the monthly habit from the "Leader in Me" program. What makes these rallies unique is the leaders of the rally are not teachers. Instead, the rallies are planned and led by the Student Lighthouse Team, consisting of fifth- and sixth-grade students who, Principal Patty Schmidt explained, "Plan the rally and all the activities to teach the habit on which the school will focus for a month."

The student team is guided by teachers Renee Bowman, Jennifer Johnson and Halie Butt as the group plans special ways to roll out a monthly habit — activities that involve the entire student body at a pep rally and provide activities for students to complete at home.

The focus of the most recent rally was *Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind*, which emphasizes the importance of setting goals, contributing to the school's mission and vision, and going MAD: Make a Difference.

At the most recent pep assembly, the rally student leaders reviewed the goals and which hallways were most successful in meeting their individual goal of reading at home each evening.

Next, a student team member asked a question related to the habit. "What does Habit 2 mean?"

Hands shot up and one lucky student gave the winning answer. She was called down to participate in a contest of "Whose WIG is this?" Three staff members were called up and the student guessed which staff member had set the Wildly Important Goal of going from drinking seven or more pops in a week to less than 7 by Dec. 20. After several more questions of guessing the staff member's WIG and reviewing why goal setting is important, Principal Schmidt, principal came forward to lead the rally in applause.

"Show the student lighthouse team your appreciation." Applause erupted. Schmidt complimented the team members on their growth in confidence as they learned to lead the rally and speak in a microphone.

Next Mrs. Schmidt called out groups and the entire building moved into their "Hawk Families," cross grade level groups from preschool through grade six led by one to two staff members. Older students offered a hand to their "family member" from the preschool and led them to their Hawk Family.

Everyone in the building is part of a Hawk Family (with the exception of the office secretaries), and these families meet two to three Wednesdays a month to work on activities planned by the Staff Lighthouse Team.

"Today's work is writing thank you cards to military serving oversees. Many times, our activities turn into service-learning projects where we make a difference in our school and community," Principal Schmidt explained.

MSP photo by Jane Schmidt

Kameron Wilson and Callen Messerich help Thatcher Tietjens write his name during Hawk Family Time. Students were creating a weather wheel.

The "Leader in Me" program is an evidence-based school improvement model equipping students with the leadership and life skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century. According to its website, this model is based on the See-Do-Get Cycle – when you change the way you **See** things, it influences what you **Do**, and the results you **Get.**

The strength of the "Leader in Me" program is a focus on positively changing behavior. Terms are never used negatively but rather to empower students.

"Every student has a role and that is how they feel valued," Schmidt explained. The "Leader in Me" process teaches everyone how to manage priorities, focus on goals, and be a positive influence. A common terminology is understood by the entire building.

"I don't hear you using pro-active language," Mrs. Schmidt reminded one student in a classroom as she observed students' conversation during project time. The student nodded and a change took place in her word choice.

Principal Schmidt reports that "without a doubt, Hawk Family Time is the highlight for the students of Easton Valley." The friendships forged across grade levels and the ties built within groups help to provide the school with strong connections and the development of habits that will last a lifetime.

The Hawk Time is evidence of the motto, "Together we are better!"

Networking and AutoCAD at Easton Valley

**By LEXEE STOLL
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Seniors, Easton Valley High School

Here at Easton Valley, we offer a variety of computer classes.

Mr. Tristan Sikkema teaches seven different classes. The classes he teaches are web design, video editing, intro. to gaming, Academy (CCNA, Solid Works, and Gaming) and 3D animation, second semester.

Web design, video editing and intro to gaming are for any grade level. The Academy is for juniors and seniors.

The web design class has students who are working on HTML and coding to create their own websites.

In video editing, students recently finished interviewing a grandparent and are now making a slideshow of their life.

In intro. to gaming and gaming classes, students use the Unity game engine to learn the basics to create their own game in the second semester.

Solid Works is a class that currently uses an AutoCAD program to design different parts used in manufacturing, and some will be able to print their projects out on a 3D printer.

The Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) class teaches the basics of routers and switches. EV students also learn to build their own computer networks for home and businesses.

Easton Valley is only one of two high schools in the state of Iowa that offers this program. Something that is unique

MSP photo by Calli Beck

Joey Portz and Nick Palmer take computer classes at Easton Valley High School. EV is one of only two Iowa high schools to offer a Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) class in networking, routers and switches.

about all these classes is that this is the career and technical education program for computer science that we share with Maquoketa and Bellevue.

We interviewed four students who are currently enrolled in computer classes. Junior Zoë Espiridon is currently taking CCNA. We asked her what her favorite project has been so far, and she replied that making ethernet wires and plugging them into our computers is what she most enjoys about the class.

"The coolest thing we have done in CCNA is work hands-on with routers and switches," Espiridon said.

Sophomore Emma Bormann, a website design student, said, "I enjoy website design because it is really fun because we are learning to use Photoshop and editing photos to strategically place spots of color in black and white photos."

Abe Michel, a Maquoketa student, is in the Solid Works and Gaming class.

When asked what he enjoys about the class, Michel replied, "It is self-paced and involves problem-solving," he replied when asked what he enjoys about the class. "The coolest thing we have done is to make his own game."

Michel said he enjoys being able to come to Easton Valley to take these classes.

Brig Bormann, a sophomore, is in CCNA.

"I like all of the hands-on learning," Bormann replied when asked why he enjoys the class. The coolest thing he has done is the command prompt which is being able to talk to other computers by typing in keywords, explained.

Students who complete the CCNA class will receive a certification and can seek employment using their qualifications.