

Building tomorrow's leaders through service

This is not a poster-making class Enumclaw High School teacher Dave Stokke wants everyone to know about his leadership course.

That's not to say the 50 students don't, on occasion, create posters, but student leadership in the Enumclaw School District has a different look and feel these days.

Today's leadership at the middle and high school level is project oriented, service centered and community building.

"The kids are really, truly learning to lead in three different facets," EHS Principal Jill Burnes said. "Before it was a class without a strong purpose or curriculum."

The class emphasis is on communication, character, personal growth, building strong relationships and team. The students in class are Associated Student Body (ASB) and class officers, but the class is open to any student who wishes to take it as an elective.

Stokke modeled his class after programs from Sumner High School's John Norlin and Jostens Renaissance. Norlin's successful program is built around eight foundations – patience, forgiveness, honesty, humility, kindness, commitment, respect and selflessness.

Jostens Renaissance is a recognition program for a broader base of the student population. Two years ago with a grant from the Enumclaw Schools Foundation EHS leaders attended the national conference and brought home the foundation for today's program.

"Rather than 10 percent of the population getting 90 percent of the recognition," Burnes said, the goal is 90 percent of the population is being recognized in areas outside athletics and high-achieving academics like academic improvement, attendance, music, service and talent. "We're asking them to take their leadership and expand it beyond a strong focus on the traditional and reach as many kids as possible."

Stokke's students have expanded that concept to recognizing hard working staff and plans are under way for a new student breakfast.

"It's a work in progress," said Stokke since he's in his first year.

Stokke's been able to meld the project management and servant leadership together with the class organizing the district's recent Thanksgiving food drive and turkey dinner basket giveaway.

"They learn everything they would need to do in business to develop a large project," said Stokke, which involves the curriculum piece of the course set by the state like setting a budget, organizing entertainment, marketing, supplying staff – everything one would do to host an event. "The projects are the hands-on piece of the curriculum."

"I can't give you tangible results yet, but we are tracing the data," Burnes said, but more importantly, she said, the results are measured in less tangible areas like encouragement and hope. "Students are setting and meeting personal goals and they are feeling less defeated. There's more sense of belonging."

Momentum at the Middle School

"All students can step up and lead and all students can step back and serve," said Enumclaw Middle



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– Karl Karkainen, EMS Alpha teacher

School language arts and social studies teacher Karl Karkainen, who advises the 6th, 7th and 8th grade ASB and Alpha class there.

He created the 12-week Alpha, the leadership class, to keep the positive energy going after the district participated in Rachel's Challenge, the national program centered on a chain-reaction of kindness. He named the class Alpha to stick with the timber wolf theme – alpha being the name given to the leader of the wolf pack.

The district's Thunder Mountain Middle School has a similar program.

"The goal of leadership class is to promote a positive school climate, plan activities which allow all Titans to participate, model appropriate behavior and promote Titan pride," said Kamele Kimball, who has been teaching TMMS's class for the past three years.

At EMS, the goal is for students to learn to become better leaders through service opportunities and presentations, in the local community and around the world.

"I really treasure the opportunity to be able to teach a class like this," Karkainen notes in his syllabus. "I expect the students to rise to the challenge, take ownership in these activities and opportunities and learn lots about others and themselves in the process."

EMS's class reaches the ASB students who are required to take it, but also about 16 students per trimester, who are placed there as an elective. Having a class specifically for leadership makes a world of difference. "Thirty minutes one time a week, it's really hard to do too much, but everyday for 45 minutes, that's huge," Karkainen said.

Kimball agreed. She said it was hard to have an afterschool program, especially one that reaches so many kids. Her two classes average 30 students each. She figures she reaches between 150 and 175 students a year.

"We work closely with the ASB," Kimball said. "All those kids will come through here at one time or another." Not everyone will run for an ASB office, she added, "but this is a cool opportunity for those who don't have a voice."

Karkainen reaches more students too, about one-third of the school could potentially take the class and the beauty in that is, "these are not necessarily natural leaders."

The heart of his leadership class is how to lead a discussion. Each monthly 30-minute student-led discussion is built into the day and focuses on the topic of school-wide trait of the month or "Pawsitive."

Alpha students are also in charge of an assembly each trimester usually educational like Veterans Day or filled with student recognition "Howl Outs," once again sticking with the timber wolf theme.

There are also events. For example, this year the



EMS students meet with seniors at High Point Village and EHS students load up goods from a recent food drive.



EMS entered a float in the Homecoming Parade and in October hosted a Halloween social during school hours so every teacher could chaperone and every student could attend.

The class is also participating in Project Citizen, a curriculum piece where they will write a public policy and present it to either the Mayor or the School Board.

Although constantly evolving, the class has stuck to its service roots by heading projects like the school's new recycling and compost program and helping out with Alice Lampkin's special needs students, who are a new addition to the school this year. Alpha students also are support crew and cheerleaders for the district's Special Olympics Pack the Gym Night. This year's event is set for Feb. 13 at Thunder Mountain Middle School. Each trimester also includes a service project. Last year students raised money for a freshwater well in Sierra Leone.

By far, visiting seniors at High Point Village was the field trip that stuck with the students and the one they would most like to continue.

"I think that's what they really enjoy is the service piece," Karkainen said. "Some have served with their church, but for some of them it's new."

"I'm finding leading is not for everyone and service is not for everyone," he said. "My hope is that they stick with one of them."

Comments from Alpha graduates indicate the leadership and service traits are taking hold.

"I think it is a great opportunity for kids to step up and be a leader, and kids will listen to kids more than adults at assemblies," wrote Hunter Hatzenbeler.

"I have become better at talking in front of people," Kyndra Rademacher noted. "I also learned more about Mrs. Lampkin's students. I realized they are really happy even though they can't do the things we do."

"This class was amazing," Kyle Morgan wrote. "I learned a lot and I wish it was all year."