

Giving peace a chance

■ *Athey Creek Middle School students honored for their pursuit of peace and kindness. See story on Page A12*



Eighth-grader Hannah Burk, center, accepts a peace award on behalf of Athey Creek's Natural Helpers leadership program.

TIDINGS PHOTO: VERN UYETAK

Education

Promoting peace at Athey Creek

School holds third annual Spirit of Unity Award ceremony

By KATE HOOTS
The Tidings

The topics of the day at Athey Creek Middle School were peace and kindness as the school held its third annual Harold Schmitzer Spirit of Unity Award ceremony.

Notables were on hand Nov. 14 to honor students' achievements in advancing those ideals. Gary Spanovich, executive director of Portland's Wholistic Peace Institute; community leader and former Oregon first lady Sharon LaCroix; and 2012 Nobel Laureate and European Union representative Klaus Botzet each addressed the middle-schoolers.

They joined honorees including Athey Creek's Natural Helpers leadership program and Stafford Primary School's counselor, Laura Barbour, who brought a dozen or so grade-schoolers with her.

"We believe we need to marry peace and education today," Spanovich told the students. "That's really what this work is about."

Botzet spoke at length about the history of the European Union, focusing on its role in establishing and maintaining peace among its member nations.

"Europe has gone through



TIDINGS PHOTOS: VERN UVETAKE
Abby Nelson, Athey Creek's 2013 Spirit of Unity award winner, presents an honorary award to Klaus Botzet, a Nobel Peace laureate and European Union representative.

said. "Since (the EU was formed), war has stopped, and we've eager to share this experience with the world."

Peace doesn't always mean complete accord, he said. "There is a lot of debate, but countries talk about it. They don't start fighting," he said.

Tony Crawford, a long-time educator and current vice president of the Oregon Education Association, was awarded the 2014 Educational Leadership in the Field of Peace and Conflict

student peace advocacy program at Ackerman Middle School, in Canby, 14 years ago.

The program brought peace curriculum into the school, recognized students for their leadership and brought former Nobel Peace Prize winners to Oregon, including nonviolence activist Arun Gandhi and former South African President F.W. de Klerk. Crawford taught in Canby for 33 years before being elected to the OEA position in 2013.

justice, integrity and respect for diversity," Crawford said at Athey Creek.

He shared a lesson he had learned in Canby from a Buddhist monk, Lama Phuntsho. "Today I want to teach you how to create world peace," Crawford said. "No big deal; I think we have a minute."

"Lama Phuntsho said, 'To create world peace, you must develop a good heart,'" Crawford recalled. "That was it. That was the lesson. The message



Stafford Primary School sent a group that included Coen Strub, Emme Strub, Ella Martin, Katie Rumsey, Luke Young, Lucy Young, Celeste Gramnum, Cecelia Gramnum, Henry Bennett, Gade Kadel and Kaia Kadel to Athey Creek along with the school counselor, Laura Barbour. Stafford was honored for its recent campaign to spread "1,000 drops of kindness."

you develop a good heart, and I develop a good heart, and I at peace with each other. If all others develop a good heart we will all be at peace."

Carrying on that theme, the Stafford students were honored for their recent "1,000 Drops of Kindness" campaign, in which everyone at the school was encouraged to record their acts of kindness, small and large, on paper "drops" that were hung in the school's halls.

"The drops were displayed on the walls of the school to inspire others to complete acts of kindness," Stafford second-grader Emme Strub said.

"Practicing kindness and compassion increases happi-

Henry Bennett said.

Other Spirit of Unity Award recipients included Athey Creek's own Natural Helpers leadership group, designed to promote community through unity," Portland's Faubion Middle School for its "peace through the arts program and community leadership award recipient Sharon LaCroix, who delivered some of the event's final words.

"Doing acts of generosity really does lead to bigger aspects of peace," she told the students. "The 21st century belongs to you. It is up to you, the privilege and the responsibility."

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