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# ROCK RIDGE REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ROCK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EDUCATION TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

## LAURENTIAN GRADES PREK-6 HONORING OUR VETERANS

On Monday, November 11, Laurentian Elementary hosted a heartfelt Veterans Day program that brought together students, staff, and guests. The event, held in the school "Heart", featured performances by the Rock Ridge School orchestra and 6th-grade choir, as well as a moving Eagle Scouts flag-folding ceremony.

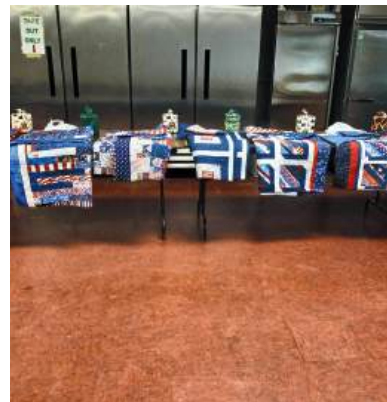
This Veterans Day program not only celebrated the courage of our veterans but also served as an important educational experience for the students, helping them understand the value of patriotism, community, and service.

## WRAPPED IN A QUILT OF VALOR

The 6th grade class from Laurentian Elementary was invited to attend a special Veterans Day event. The Gilbert VFW honored five veterans with a Quilt of Valor.

A Quilt of Valor is a high-quality, handmade quilt, either machine or hand-stitched, given to a Service Member or Veteran impacted by war. It serves as a heartfelt symbol of gratitude, saying, "Thank you for your service and sacrifice to our nation."

The students learned about the importance of preserving history and expressing appreciation for those who served in the military. The ceremony was a heartfelt moment of connection between the younger generation and Veterans, reinforcing the values of community, patriotism, and remembrance. It was a moving experience that left a lasting impact on both the students and the Veterans present.





# LEARNING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

In an effort to teach students about the democratic process, Laurentian Elementary School students participated in a mock election on Tuesday, November 5.

The event, which used an electronic ballot system, allowed over 400 students to cast their votes in a free and fair election, mirroring real-world procedures. Teachers and Laurentian Ambassadors ensured the process was secure and accessible for all participants.

The school's mock election was designed to engage students in civics education and encourage responsible citizenship from an early age. The results, which were shared with the classroom teachers the next morning, will help students understand the importance of voting and the role it plays in shaping their community and country.



# *Inquisitive* Students of the Month

These students were chosen by their teachers for asking higher level questions, having a growth mindset, using critical thinking skills, and eager to learn "WHY"!





# PARKVIEW

## GRADES PREK-2

### OJIBWE WAY OF LIFE

Parkview's second grade successfully completed a Project Based Learning assignment on Native American Culture and Seasons.

Each group researched a season and learned about what Native American, specifically Ojibwe, life was like during that time of year.

The students learned about what they ate, wore, and lived in, as well as many interesting facts. They then collaborated in groups to create a poster showing what they learned.



Emily Jankila-Christiansen, the Indigenous Education Director for Rock Ridge, came and presented interesting facts about the Ojibwe culture.





# NORTH STAR

## GRADES 3-6

### SMALL GESTURE, BIG IMPACT

North Star Elementary's "Our School, Our Responsibility" initiative is more than just a slogan—it's a way of life. This value is evident in the actions of our fourth-grade classes, taught by Mr. Teasck and Mrs. Morley, who are carrying on a tradition started over 50 years ago: taking care of the yards of homes surrounding the school. As winter settles in, these students are also stepping up to help neighbors by shoveling snow, embodying the spirit of service that has long defined North Star Elementary.

Research shows that when students engage in acts of service, it not only benefits their communities, but also enhances their own growth and development. According to a 2019 study in the *Journal of Community Psychology*, students who give back experience increased empathy, teamwork skills, and a stronger connection to their school. These opportunities build a sense of responsibility and pride, fostering a school culture where students feel empowered to make a positive difference.

Principal Scott Manni emphasized the importance of teaching students the value of service. "When students give back, they learn that they are part of something bigger than themselves," Manni said. "It's about understanding that being part of a community means taking care of each other. These are lessons that extend far beyond the classroom."

By helping neighbors in need, North Star's fourth graders are learning what it means to be true community members while keeping a decades-long tradition alive. Their actions remind us all of the power of service to unite and uplift.





# RRHS GRADES 7-12

## ULLAND BROTHERS PRESENT

Students in Mr. Fosters' Building Construction class spent some time at Ulland Brothers located in Virginia. Students learned about the different types of career options Ulland Brothers had to offer. Ulland Brothers primarily hires Equipment Operators, General Laborers, Truck Drivers, and Mechanics. Students also toured through their facility. This was a great opportunity for our students to learn about Highway Heavy Construction.





# AN INSPIRING ALUMNUS

Rock Ridge High School students welcomed home a special guest. Alex Wercinski, the 2021 Virginia High School valedictorian, was visiting family on the Iron Range for Thanksgiving.

During her visit, Alex was able to present to freshmen in the career exploration classes about her experience as a midshipman, chemistry major, and a Division I track athlete with the United States Naval Academy where she is set to graduate in 2025.

As an elementary student, Alex was inspired during a high school award ceremony, when a senior was recognized with a West Point scholarship. For Alex, the process of being accepted into one of the top academies in the world began in 9th grade. She started volunteering and joining service clubs at Virginia High School. She participated in athletics and worked hard at academics. She took rigorous courses and in her junior year of high school she began the competitive application process with the US Naval Academy.

In the Spring of her senior year of high school, it was Alex's turn to be recognized at the award ceremony. She had been accepted to the US Naval Academy and would be heading to Annapolis, MD. We thank Alex for her service and the time she spent with our students inspiring them to work hard and accomplish their goals.



# AN EXTENSIVE EXPO EXPERIENCE

Recently, Rock Ridge hosted an Apprentice & Trades Expo. More than 60 representatives from all over the state arrived on our campus to help us learn about apprenticeships and trades.

Naomi Cowan from the Department of Labor in St. Paul presented to over 1,000 students in our Performing Art Center about the benefits of apprenticeships. Jacky Bird, our local 218 Trades representative, discussed local opportunities with unions and employment in the trades. Throughout the day, students visited over 40 display booths, met employers, recruiters, and people who are committed to our students' education.

In addition to career expos, Rock Ridge High School students are introduced to programs of study and career pathways in various ways. Teachers lead classroom instruction, facilitate group discussions, create project based learning activities, and invite career speakers to share their expertise and experiences. Students have opportunities to visit college campuses, go on industry tours, conduct informational interviews, participate in mock interviews, and observe someone in their workplace through job shadowing. With the design of the new building and the implementation of the Director of School to Work Engagement and Career Counselor positions, we are creating student and community engagement experiences that are starting to get noticed.

Representatives and stakeholders from all over the state are returning to their communities after attending events on our campus and sharing what we are doing at Rock Ridge High School. The Apprentice and Trades Expo was our fourth career expo to date. Rock Ridge students will leave high school more prepared, more informed, and with an advanced understanding of the options they have and the skills they need to succeed. Stakeholders are encouraged to contact Jill Oja or Willie Spelts to share ideas, resources, and opportunities for students.





# Happy Holidays





# Blood Drive

Sponsored by

**ROCK RIDGE  
HIGH SCHOOL**

Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
9:00am – 1:00pm

Bus Parked in Parking Lot

Contact Ms. Clennon to Sign Up!

*Presenting donors receive a free beanie!*



## Prepare to donate



Eat well  
and hydrate



Bring a  
photo ID



Feel good and  
symptom free



Must be 17+ or  
16 with parental  
consent form



Meet minimum  
weight requirements



Save time! Answer  
your health history at  
[mbc.org/iDonate](https://www.mbc.org/iDonate)

For full eligibility requirements  
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