Officer Harkins takes on new role as SRO
by Kayla Wehmeyer & Kody Bisges

Officer Scott Harkins is the new school resource officer (SRO) for the California school district. His attendance has made an amazing impact for the schools in the short time of his employment.

“Our school board and administrative team had been discussing the benefits of having a full-time school resource officer for quite some time and decided that we needed to take steps to move forward and make this new position a reality,” Superintendent Dwight Sanders said.

Moniteau County R-1 school district has created a partnership with the Moniteau County Sheriff’s Office in order for the school to have an SRO. Harkins’ job is with all three buildings in the district.

He officially started on January 2 when students returned for second semester, but he had been in attendance before and completed SRO training.

“He has been engaged in being a city and county police officer for several years, but this is his first opportunity to be a school resource officer,” Sanders said.

As the SRO, Harkins’ main goal is to maintain both a high level of security and safety for the students. When there are sporting events, a play, a dance, or events that bring large crowds, Harkins is often asked to be there for supervision.

“My hours are the school hours,” Harkins said. “My normal shift starts at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.”

“The presence of Officer Harkins at school events has also been noticed and appreciated,” Sanders said. The community has said positive things about the attendance of Harkins.

With the help of an SRO, the school is a much safer place and a better place to be.
Enchantment of literacy

by Mckayla Bennett

In early November, California Elementary staff organized Enchanted Literacy Night, a fun event to encourage community literacy. They shared ideas and resources with the families in the community in fun and engaging ways.

Angie Butts-Althoff, a title one reading teacher said, “Literacy night is for both parents and students to participate in literacy and math activities. It also provides the parents with ideas and resources of how to help their children progress at home.”

Parents coming to this event learn and understand tools their children use at school.

As a bonus on this night, Sheltered Reality, a nonprofit organization whose members use music and education as an advocate to reach out to those in need, provided mini drum lessons and a concert that helped to spread kindness and teach students to take chances.

The CES student needs committee was able to share resources to build a bond between the school and the community. This included a free spaghetti dinner to give families a chance to relax and not have to worry about dinner. Families also spent time at the Scholastic book fair.

“The book fair is very beneficial to the students as well as their parents because it allows them to discuss the books that the students have read or want to read. Also, the students are allowed to purchase books on all levels (family members, younger - non school age - or adults) to take home for their own,” said Allyson Rose, fourth grade teacher and member of the student needs committee.

Jill Kirksey, elementary librarian, said, “the teachers benefit from the book fair by being able to purchase tax free books. We also have a teacher’s wish list where parents and patrons can purchase books for their teacher’s classroom as gifts.”

In Kirksey’s opinion, having an event like the book fair helps students because they learn how to select the appropriate reading material for enjoyment, and they get a miniature economics lesson in the process through independent shopping.

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Sharing is caring in fifth grade

by Georgia Hoellering

With Christmas approaching, California’s fifth grade students participated in a Circle of Sharing.

Amy Higgins, fifth grade teacher, said, “this project started 25 years ago to help families in need, as well as teach students a sense of empathy and desire to help others.”

Students brought in two dollars from home to complete baskets for raffle. This year the basket themes were spa, Christmas goodies, cozy winter night, baking goods, and a traditional Pintos basket.

Classes began selling tickets for one dollar in November. They brought in $1,751.00 from selling the raffle tickets and having a jeans week for the teachers. The Kiwanis Club generously donated $1,500, and with all the money combined, the students helped around 65 families this year.

Fifth grade used this as their own personal service project.

Higgins said, “I love seeing our students come together to help others in need.”

In my room . . . helping kids make way to adulthood

by Georgia Hoellering

Aaron Shewmake, the Elementary Assistant Principal, has the opportunity to influence about 650 kids during one school year, not just the ones that get into trouble.

First thing each morning he checks his computer for any important emails, then he deals with the students. Dealing with students often means being in his office, but he does what he can to be elsewhere in the building.

“I try to be in the classrooms more than I’m in the office. I try to visit classrooms every single day, just so the kids know I am there if they need help,” said Shewmake. “Some classes I visit more throughout the day. This includes pre-k because they haven’t yet learned the ins and outs of school.”

Even though the assistant principal has to deal with the majority of the discipline, he still loves it. Dealing with students who are in trouble can go many different ways, but it is all based around the BIST program.

This program stands for Behavior, Intervention, Support Team.

Shewmake said, “BIST works for about 95% of the kids, so we are looking for other programs to reach the other 5% of the kids.”

This success is apparent when the numbers are on the table. The majority of the students that Shewmake sees are lower elementary.

Shewmake said, “30% of the pre-k and kindergarten classes visit my office. By second grade it drops to about half of that. By fourth and fifth grade, I see about 3% in my office.”

Most often students get in trouble because they are dishonest and repeat the same actions. Mr. Shewmake tries to talk to the students and convince them that if they tell the truth, they can work through the issue together without the student getting into trouble.

Besides discipline, Shewmake greets parents and students at the door every morning and covers classrooms when teachers are sick or need to step out of the room.

Shewmake is also on several committees including PLC (Professional Learning Communities), professional development, student needs, and behavior support.

The happiest part of Mr. Shewmake’s job is to visit and work with kids all day and to hear the students’ stories, which he says are very funny. Also, he loves Fridays because these are the days kids get a buddy pack.

“The look on those kids’ faces makes every day worth it,” he explains.

With everything that Shewmake does, his favorite part of working with children is being the person that kids can talk to if they are having a hard day and need to turn it around.”
Compassion makes difference with families
by Jessica Aguado

California Middle School counselor Miss Marcia Bibb has been in education for 14 years, but she has worked with families for over 25 years.

Before starting at California schools, she helped families deal with abuse and neglect through the Children’s Division. For 6 1/2 years she did child abuse/neglect investigations, family centered services, and foster and adoptive services. She was then a supervisor for 5 1/2 years.

“Working with families can be rewarding when it helps students succeed,” said Bibb. “I communicate with parents as needed regarding concerns of the students.”

The key to success whenever working with families is understanding, patience, consistency, compassion, willingness to listen, seeing both sides of the issue and follow through.

Bibb wants what is best for the students, and helping families is the only way to achieve that goal.

“I always wish I could do more to help the students be successful; however, that is not always possible due to limited time and resources. Also, some families are not willing to make needed changes,” said Bibb.

“I discuss concerns with the parents and refer them to outside agencies for service,” said Bibb. “I reach out to parents of students in risk of harming themselves or others.”

The hardest part of working with families is lack of follow through and understanding of the issues that they face. Limited resources can make problems more complicated and make them harder to resolve. Families want what is best for their children but sometimes struggle with making these things happen.

In my room . . . leading in the right direction
by Hayden Green

Rick Edwards is the assistant principal at California Middle School. He is in his 21st year with the district where he gets to help students and lead them in the right direction.

Edwards is also the district activities director for California Schools, so he can only be at the middle school from 11:00 to 2:00. While this is a short period of time, Edwards gets right to work as soon as he gets to the middle school because he has two shifts of lunch duty. After lunch, he can get down to the more important subject, discipline.

Discipline is always a touchy subject because students may not agree with some of the decisions that are made. Even though reminders are subjective, “there are guidelines for each discipline issue which states what the consequences are,” said Edwards.

Edwards is always trying to help students find a better path. Whether it is with the student in his office or just an everyday conversation, Edwards is always looking to build a positive relationship with students.

“I am constantly talking with kids trying to build a rapport with them,” said Edwards.

Edwards also supervises games at the middle school and takes care of extra bus trips. No matter what he is doing, he is always communicating with students and getting to know them better.

While Edwards has many responsibilities in the middle school, he enjoys his job and loves seeing the students “achieve in class and extracurricular activities.”

Middle school musical madness
by Grace Porter, CMS student

Spring is around the corner, and so is the CMS musical!

This year the California Middle School choir is performing The Little Mermaid Jr. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will participate in this event.

The Little Mermaid Jr. is heavily inspired by the Disney film. The upcoming musical also welcomes new songs and characters that are not featured in the original movie.

Erika DeMoss, who teaches general music, choir and guitar, is the main director of the theatrical production.

“I’m excited about the students getting the opportunity to perform and for the community to see the finished product,” she stated.

One vital part of the play is the preparation; especially the scene sets. CMS art teacher Maggie Long commented on this subject.

“Mr. [Brad] Friedrich’s art club and set building class will be helping out,” she continued.

Alayna Butts plays the lead role of Ariel, the curious mermaid who wants to be a human. She said she was, “nervous but excited, nerve-cited!”

When asked what the hardest part of preparing for the play was she said, getting over nerves.

Disney’s
The Little Mermaid
Middle School Musical
CPAC
Saturday & Sunday
Mar 9 & Mar 10
7:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.
Adults & Students- $5
K & under- free

This newsletter is a product of the CHS Mass Media class taught by Mrs. Christy Heimericks.

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Phone cubbies, or phone jail?  
by Jesse Wingate, Anthony Strauch and Jessica Aguado  
Phones have been a concern in school for several years. According to California principal Dr. Sean Kirksey, who has been at CHS since 2015, he tolerated the phones the first year, but they have become just a distraction.

Jon Lindquist, business teacher and coach agrees, “cell phones have become a huge distraction, and I don’t believe they have any education value in the classroom.”

Many teachers now use phone cubbies to curb the problem.

At the beginning of class, teachers have their students put their phones in the cubbies so the students will not be distracted during class. At the end of class students retrieve their phones on the way out the door.

“The teachers were requesting the cell phone cubbies,” said Dr. Kirksey. “The teachers wanted a convenient, systematic way to keep students’ phones organized.”

Cell phones aren’t the only technology in the hands of the students. Chromebooks, with internet access, are provided to each student by the school district.

Kirksey explained “Chromebooks are a distraction, but a necessary one for educational purposes. We are working on a software to limit outside distractions on chromebooks.”

Not everyone uses the phone cubbies. For example, the policy in Dana Barr’s English and speech classroom is that the phone should not be seen or heard. The first offense is a referral, and the phone will be collected and returned to the office for the remainder of the day.

Upon the second offense, the phone will remain in the office for the remainder of the day and a detention will be served. After a third offense the students will be required to put the phone in the phone cubbies when entering the classroom for the remainder of the school year.

“Phone cubbies that teachers have been using are very elementary,” said Grace Henley, a senior. “I think that if teachers want students to not get their phone out, they should have the discipline and rules in place to keep students from using their phones. In most of my classes, students are mature enough to know when to not be on their phones.”

Each teacher may decide the best way to handle cell phone in their classroom.

“We try to improve the school culture and climate by our many activities and service projects,” said Atteberry.

Class members do a variety of things depending on the day or week. For instance, it could be the weekly toilet talk, video announcements, or recycling with Mrs. Kristy Gatlin’s assisted studies class.

In the fall semester, a very special project was in the hands of the leadership class.

“As president school of the Missouri Association of Student Council’s North-east district, California student council hosted the district meeting on Friday, October 26.”

This required preparation for the visit of about 1,200 high school and middle school students plus around 70 adult advisors to CHS. Leadership class was very busy with this event.