

**NR 021220**

**Construction classes prepare for spring**

Just in time for spring, students in the Gladstone High construction program are building greenhouses and mason bee houses for local gardeners.

“In my beginning construction tech class, these projects are a practical way for students to learn to safely use power tools,” said teacher Mike Leone. “They also learn how to read blueprints, how to work with a team, and the all-important ‘measure twice, cut once’ rule.”

Made from corrugated, UV-rated plastic, each green house has built in shelving. A thermostat regulates temperature by running a fan and heater system. Students have completed two greenhouses so far, but plan to build four more by spring term.

Students are using recycled fence boards to build mason bee houses. Students will install ten of them at the Gladstone Nature Park, part of a pollinator hill project funded by a grant from Metro.

Many of the bee houses will be sold to community members for \$25, providing habitat for the insects, which are needed to pollinate gardens and agricultural crops.

“Construction is my favorite class, and this project has been super fun,” said freshman Mason Bell. “Building bee houses is really important because bees are gradually going extinct and we need to help them. I hope we can make a difference.”

**PHOTO: Construction students show off the mason bee houses they built for the Gladstone Nature Park’s pollinator hill project.**

**PHOTO: Gladstone High construction students are building greenhouses for sale to community members.**

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**Artist donates cuddly critter to calm kids**

After meeting John Wetten Principal Wendy Wilson at a winter craft market, artisan Casey Walker learned about the school’s Regulation Room, where students learn to manage anxiety, stress, and other strong emotions.

That gave Walker the idea of creating “healing snakes,” cuddly cloth creatures designed to comfort children in schools, hospitals, and trauma centers.

A thousand-dollar grant from Alain Bally paved the way for the project, which began with the creation of Rupert, now one of the calming strategies Wetten students can choose in the Regulation Room. Now Walker is creating nine more healing snakes, donating them to care centers across the region.

“It’s crystal clear that what kids experience today directly affects individual lives and, in the big picture, public life,” said Walker. “Targeting stress healing and self regulation is crucial work — visionary work— and I’m deeply pleased to contribute to it.”

**PHOTO: Artist Casey Walker [left] presents John Wetten Principal Wendy Wilson with Rupert, a healing snake, to calm students in the school’s Regulation Room.**

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**Kindergarten celebrates Global School Play Day**

Kindergarten students at the Gladstone Center for Children & Families celebrated Global School Play Day last Friday, an event designed to encourage creativity and a break from technology.

Children explored a variety of fun activities from parachute games and yoga to watercolor painting and dance.

**PHOTO: Gladstone kindergarten students play with a parachute, part of Global School Play Day.**

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**Volunteers needed for reading celebration**

John Wetten Elementary School needs volunteers to read aloud to groups of students during the school’s annual Everybody Reads Day celebration.

“Whether you love Ramona the Pest, Winnie the Pooh, or Charlotte’s Web, we invite community members to bring their favorite children’s book and share a fun passage or an entire picture book with our students,” said Principal Wendy Wilson. “The goal is inspiring children to read more.”

The event is Thursday, March 5 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Wetten Elementary, 250 E. Exeter Street in Gladstone. To participate, contact Volunteer Coordinator Theresa Schmidt at 503.656.6564 ext. 265.

**PHOTO: Staff at John Wetten Elementary dress as their favorite storybook characters to celebrate Everybody Reads Day.**