Voices of District Honor Choir fill Benaroya Hall

The Shoreline School District Honor Choir of 5th and 6th graders performed with the Cascade Youth Symphony Orchestra at Seattle’s Benaroya Hall on November 19. Above, Tam Osborne, former Shorecrest music teacher who is now the District’s human resources director, conducts the combined choir and orchestra. The concert also featured a new composition by Einstein Middle School music teacher Frank Halferty. (Photo courtesy of Rebecca Calvo Photography)
Superintendent’s Message: Long-term solution needed to protect Shoreline Schools from Fircrest costs

Dear Shoreline Schools Community:

One of the critical issues that the Legislature needs to deal with immediately is the overwhelming impact of the Fircrest Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) on the Shoreline Schools. As the state closes similar facilities elsewhere, the number of school-aged residents placed at Fircrest has risen from one student in January 2006 to 25 students in January 2012. It should be noted that only one of the current school-aged residents actually resides in the Shoreline Schools attendance area.

The growing financial impact of the Fircrest program is an extraordinary burden for a district of Shoreline’s size. Over the past three years, the funding provided to the District from the State for the Fircrest program has fallen far short of the actual costs. Since 2008, the District estimates that it has spent over $500,000 of its local funds on the Fircrest program — funds intended to serve the 8,700 students of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park and legally not available to support an RHC.

This year alone, we anticipate that the legislative appropriation of $710,000 for the educational program for Fircrest residents will fall more than $400,000 short of the District’s actual costs. Fircrest, which is operated by the state Department of Social and Health Services, has threatened to stop payment when the appropriation is depleted, even though our responsibility to provide educational services to these challenging students continues. We have asked for a per-student appropriation rather than a fixed one.

Another alarming recent trend is the placement of school-aged residents coming from jail facilities, where they have been incarcerated. Traditional Fircrest residents of the past are not prosecuted for crimes as a result of their disabilities. The safety and logistical issues associated with residents who are coming from jail are of great concern to our District and parent community since approximately half of the Fircrest students are served in our traditional schools, with age-appropriate peers.

As our safety concerns grow, so do the District’s concerns for the workers’ compensation claims related to staff serving Fircrest residents. We were recently notified of a judgment for $70,000 of back pay and weekly time-loss payments into the future for a former District employee injured by a Fircrest student. This brings our three-year total of workers’ compensation claims related to the Fircrest educational program to more than $250,000, which does not include the negative impact to the District’s labor and industries insurance rates.

We have been told recently by credible sources to expect a dramatic increase in school-aged residents at Fircrest prior to July 1, the effective date of the new law prohibiting the placement of children under 16 at the Fircrest facility.

While HB 2720 sponsored by Reps. Ruth Kagi and Cindy Ryu proposes to give priority funding to districts that serve RHCs, Shoreline respectfully requests that the Legislature make the educational program at Fircrest the responsibility of the state and not the Shoreline Schools. There are models that the Legislature could follow for Fircrest, such as making it a Local Educational Agency (LEA), as are the Washington State School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind. Another possibility would be for the state to provide for educational programs at Fircrest in a similar fashion to those serving juvenile inmates in adult correctional facilities.

As an educational community, we will watch this legislative session with high hopes for better outcomes for the Shoreline Schools as it relates to the Fircrest RHC.

Sincerely,

Sue Walker
Mike Jacobs, Dick Nicholson and Dick Potter were sworn in as members of the Shoreline School Board on Dec. 12 following their election to four-year terms as directors. Mike Jacobs was re-elected to the District 1 position he has held since being appointed to the board in 2001. He is a partner in the Riach Gese law firm and holds bachelor’s degrees from the University of Washington and a law degree from the University of Puget Sound School of Law. Mike and his wife, Janelle, both graduates of Shorewood, have three children attending Shoreline schools and one who graduated from Shorewood.

Dick Nicholson was elected to the District 4 position, succeeding Maren Norton, who did not seek re-election. He is a 33-year resident of Shoreline and has been active in many civic and non-profit organizations, including as chair of the Ridgecrest Neighborhood Association and as chair of the City of Shoreline’s Economic Development Advisory Committee. A Certified Public Accountant, Dick holds two bachelor of science degrees from Oregon State University and recently retired from a career in surety. Dick and his wife, Jean, have a daughter who is a Shorecrest graduate.

Dick Potter was re-elected from District 5. He has worked for the Boeing Company for 33 years and is a Technical Fellow providing corporate-wide technical advice for database technologies. He holds a bachelor’s degree in economics and a master of science in industrial technology from the University of Wisconsin. Dick and his wife, Teri, have a son attending Shoreline Schools and another son who graduated from Shorecrest.

Director Debi Ehrlichman was elected as president of the Board, succeeding David Wilson. Debi is serving her second term on the Board and previously served as president from 2007 to 2009. Mike Jacobs was elected Board vice president and David Wilson as legislative representative.

Parkwood Elementary in Shoreline is a recipient of the 2011 Washington State Title I, Part A Academic Achievement Award, which includes a $10,000 monetary award. The award honors those schools that have significantly raised student achievement in mathematics or reading through an identifiable strategy.

Parkwood’s Reading Block is a collaborative model of instruction for all students in grades K-3. All staff work collectively to teach primary students in small, flexible groups targeting their individual skill level. Students progress through the block depending on their individual acquisition of skills, rather than by grade level or teacher assignment.

“We share a building-wide approach to teaching and learning that is characterized by high expectations for all learners and a meaningful expression of care for all members of our learning community,” said Parkwood Principal Laura Ploudré.

The mission of Title I, a federally funded program, is to assist children from low-income areas with their basic skills. Twenty-five different languages are spoken in Parkwood students’ homes, 50 percent of its students qualify for free/reduced meals, and 19 percent of the students are enrolled in its English Language Learners program. Parkwood was previously awarded the Title I Academic Improvement Award in 2007, 2010 and 2011, for showing significant gains overall in mathematics and/or reading proficiency among students of color and with special needs.

In addition, Parkwood was awarded the Washington Achievement Award for Overall Excellence and Closing Achievement Gaps in 2010 and 2011.
Meridian Park Elementary School in Shoreline has been awarded a Heroes in the Classroom “MVP Award” from Symetra and the Seattle Seahawks. Through the award, the school will receive a $10,000 grant to fund an innovative student achievement program.

The Symetra Heroes in the Classroom program honors teachers in the Shoreline, Seattle and Renton School Districts for educational excellence throughout the NFL football season. Twenty-four teachers, including nine from Shoreline, were recognized as Symetra Heroes in 2011, making their respective schools eligible to compete for an MVP Award.

Meridian Park will use the grant to establish a new Creation Station and Learning Center to promote hands-on exploration of math and science concepts. By creating an extended learning center that is specifically focused on math and science, Meridian Park intends to build a program that can have an impact on every student, and help improve state standardized test scores along the way.

“For students to love learning about math and science, they need to feel a connection to it and feel inspired by hands-on learning opportunities,” said Amy Jessee, principal of Meridian Park. “The Creation Station will provide an innovative, fun and challenging way for students to achieve mastery in science and mathematical concepts through project-based learning.”

Shoreline’s 2011 Symetra Heroes in the Classroom were Jennifer Etter (Shorecrest), Therese Russell (Brookside), Anne Marie Culver (Kellogg), Ali Airhart (Syre), Diana Dillard (Shorewood), Kay Law (Ridgecrest), Tracy Andersen (Meridian Park), Michael Callahan (Room Nine Community School), and Marybeth Scherf (Lake Forest Park).

For more information about the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom program, visit www.symetra.com/heroes.

10 teachers earn National Board Certifications

Ten Shoreline School District teachers have received their certifications from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The teachers and schools are:

Jennifer Altena, Syre
Andrew Bagley, Shorewood
Cristi Camp, Einstein
Mikael Christensen, Shorewood
Alisan Giesy, Shorewood
Robert Ruark, Shorecrest
Brynne Saskor, Shorecrest
Marybeth Scherf, Lake Forest Park
Clark Youmans, Shorewood
Cheryl Zahajiko, Lake Forest Park

With this latest announcement, Shoreline now has a total of 66 board-certified teachers currently working in the District.

The national certification process takes a minimum of 18 months. Teachers must demonstrate in their four-part portfolio a deep understanding and application of the national standards that are in place for their field of teaching. A national panel of peers then assesses the portfolio. Teachers also take a six-part examination in their content area.

Created in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit organization devoted to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. Visit the NBPTS Web site at www.nbpts.org.
Construction of the new Shorewood High School building began in November. At left, workers have constructed forms for the stage and orchestra pit areas as part of the school’s new theater. Once the foundation is in place, the academic building, theater and gymnasium will begin taking shape. Completion is expected for the 2013-14 school year.

At right, workers pour the concrete floor for the new Shorecrest High School gymnasium. The gym is expected to be completed prior to the beginning of school next September. Work has also begun on the modernization of the performing arts center. Construction of the main academic building will begin later this year.

At left, the Meridian Park field complex is nearing completion. It will be the home field for the Shorewood Thunderbirds varsity baseball and softball teams, which begin play in March, and includes a new elementary school playfield to be open next fall.
Einstein teacher joins WMEA Hall of Fame

Frank Halferty, District music coordinator and band director at Einstein Middle School, has been elected to the Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA) Hall of Fame.

The Washington Music Educators Association is the largest arts organization in the state, and represents more than 2,000 music teachers. In 1996, WMEA established the Washington Music Educators Hall of Fame to honor outstanding music teachers who have made significant contributions to music education in the state.

Halferty, himself a graduate of Shoreline High School, joins Einstein and Shorewood orchestral music director and WMEA president-elect Dan Wing in the Hall of Fame. John Law, Neil Lieurance and Ken Noreen, retired Shoreline School District music teachers, are also members. The induction ceremony will be held Feb. 17 in Yakima, during the WMEA conference.

Since 1993, Halferty has taught music in the Shoreline School District. He holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Seattle Pacific University in Music Education and Music Theory and Literature. He received a Master of Music in Composition from New Mexico State University.

Halferty has more than 200 compositions and arrangements in print, most recently the “Folk Song Trilogy” performed by the Shoreline School District Honor Choir in its recent concert with the Cascade Youth Symphony at Benaroya Hall.

He has 36 years of experience teaching instrumental music at all levels, and has held numerous positions as director of choirs and community groups.

He is the recipient of 14 awards for compositions, Outstanding Educator Awards in both the Shoreline and Lake Washington School Districts, and the Outstanding Music Educator Award from the Sno-King Music Educators Association. Halferty has also served as a board member on the Shoreline Lake Forest Park Arts Council. He maintains a busy schedule composing, fulfilling music administration and teaching duties, guest conducting, and adjudicating music festivals.

Shoreline Schools Calendar
For a complete list of events, visit www.shorelineschools.org

February 2012
20 to 24 • No School, Mid-Winter Break

March 2012
5 to 9 • Support Staff Appreciation Week
5 and 19 • School Board Regular Meetings, 7 p.m., Shoreline Center
10 • District Math Olympiad at Shoreline Community College
15 to 25 • Shorecrest High School marching band trip to Ireland
19 • Make-Up Day for Snow Closure
21 • Regional History Day Contest at Shoreline Center
29 • Shoreline Public Schools Foundation Spring Event (see page 2)

April 2012
2 and 16 • School Board Regular Meetings, 7 p.m., Shoreline Center
16 to 20 • Shoreline PTA Appreciation Week
23 to 27 • No School, Spring Break

Thank You Voters!
The Shoreline School District thanks the voters of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park for their approval of Proposition 1, the Supplemental Levy to Support Class Size on the Nov. 8, 2011 General Election ballot. The levy will address impacts on class size due to state budget reductions. Thank you for your support of our schools.

Frank Halferty has taught music at Einstein Middle School since 1993.

Shoreline Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Shoreline Public Schools complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance procedures should be directed to Shoreline Public Schools. Attention: Title IX Officer Brian Schultz or ADA Compliance Officer Amy Vujovich, 206-393-4412.

Board of Directors:
Debi Ehrlichman, President
Mike Jacobs, Vice President
Dick Nicholson
Dick Potter
David Wilson

Superintendent:
Sue Walker

Public Information Officer: Craig Degginger