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SPECIAL EDITION



Students Brew Success with Coffee Cart

Quite often the most popular people on college campuses are the star athletes or student body president. At Fontbonne University, two of the most popular people on campus are Neuwoehner students Stas Johnston and Sam Shortal.

Through a partnership with Fontbonne, Stas and Sam are learning valuable communication and independent living skills, while operating a thriving business.

Every Tuesday morning for the past two months, Stas and Sam, along with their teacher Madeleine Gruzca, navigate the Coffee Cart along the corridors of Ryan Hall, offering Costa Rican coffee, hot tea and hot chocolate to Fontbonne faculty and staff.

Even though the two may not be on the rolls at Fontbonne, it is evident when they arrive at office doorways that they have become a well-known duo.

"They always brighten my Tuesdays," said one customer. "They always come at the right time of day to bring me a pick-me-up."

Both Stas and Sam are in their second year in the Neuwoehner class at Fontbonne, and they work as a team to serve their customers.

"I like the money — taking it and giving change back," Stas said. He often handles the financial aspects while Sam begins preparing the beverage order.

The Coffee Cart is beneficial for the two as it requires practicing multiple skills all at once, as opposed to just practicing one or two at a time.

"They are learning how to run a small business, which includes ordering, managing and providing good service," said Gruzca. "There are multiple steps involved when selling hot drinks. Besides approaching each customer with a warm greeting, they need to pour the hot coffee or water into a cup, offer cream, sugar, stirrer and lid, and calculate the change they need to give back."



Neuwoehner students Stas Johnston and Sam Shortal prepare a hot beverage for a customer at their Coffee Cart at Fontbonne University.

The idea for the Coffee Cart was borrowed from SSD teacher Sherri Jenkerson's class at Mehlville High School, where they run a similar vending cart. The project, funded initially through a mini-grant from the Special Education Foundation, has already had to expand.

"By the second week we expanded our service to a second building and added items other than just coffee," Gruzca said.

The money earned with the cart is used to replenish supplies and also pay for Metro bus passes that the students use weekly as part of their life-skills training.

"It's an important thing that they can get out there and interact with an adult population outside of school," said Neuwoehner Principal Lorie Arnsman-Schwartz.

"The pride I see in Stas and Sam is evident as they become more confident in themselves," Gruzca said.

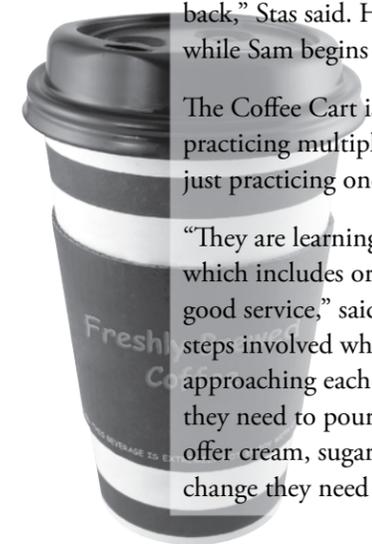
One goal for Stas and Sam is to learn the names of many staff members they cater to. Getting staff members to remember them, on the other hand, has already been accomplished.

Winter is Here, But Surfing is Now Available Year-Round for SSD Schools

From a principal's blog to an events calendar, each of the SSD special education schools now has a new website filled with information specific to the school. The "Parent Information" section, a quick reference for families, includes school hours, absence and school closing procedures, key forms and nutrition information. A key contacts list and a searchable school directory are also available.

Be sure to visit your school's site often for updated news, events and highlights.

- Ackerman School**
www.ssdmo.org/schools/ackerman
- Litzinger School**
www.ssdmo.org/schools/litzinger
- Neuwoehner School**
www.ssdmo.org/schools/neuwoehner
- Northview School**
www.ssdmo.org/schools/northview
- Southview School**
www.ssdmo.org/schools/southview



Multiple Scholarships Available to SSD Students Deadlines Quickly Approaching

SCHOLARSHIPS

With the school year approaching the halfway point, many students are already making plans for when the school year wraps up. Summer jobs, time with friends and trips to the park are popular choices.

Many graduating seniors, however, are preparing now for post-secondary education. And it's no secret that the cost of schooling is rising every year.

To help SSD students offset the costs of college and camp tuitions, SSD and other organizations, including the Special Education Foundation (SEF) and the Bonhomme Lions, provide opportunities to apply for scholarships, camperships and other awards.

"The impact of scholarships on the students and their families is significant," said SEF Executive Director Diane Buhr.

"It gives a student a great sense of accomplishment to be selected as a scholarship recipient, it aids in self-esteem and provides a very good financial start for the first year of college."

Each reward is unique, and has its own history and special requirements.

Scholarships and camperships will be awarded at the Commitment to Kids Awards Banquet on April 26, 2012.

SSD Board of Education Scholarship

Established in 2008, the SSD Board of Education honors graduating SSD students who show strong leadership skills as well as a dedication to volunteerism and community involvement. For the 2011-2012 school year, the SSD Board will reward two students who demonstrate these skills and who plan to attend college or post-secondary institutions. Visit www.ssdmo.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 17, 2012.

Bonhomme Lions Scholarships

The Bonhomme Lions, longtime supporters of education in the St. Louis area, have been providing scholarships to graduating SSD students for many years. Visit www.ssdmo.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 17, 2012.

Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship

Established in 2008, this scholarship was created to honor an aspiring teacher who lost her battle with cancer in 2007. The scholarship is awarded to a deserving SSD student who has an interest in working with children. Visit www.ssdmo.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 17, 2012.

Special Education Foundation Scholarships

The Special Education Foundation (SEF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of students with disabilities within the St. Louis area. Each year, SEF awards scholarships to college-bound SSD students. Winners for the award are selected based on multiple criteria. Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 27, 2012.

Laura K. Sherman Laughlin Scholarship

This scholarship honors the memory of Laura K. Sherman Laughlin and pays tribute to her life and to the many lives that she touched. The scholarship is presented to a deserving student who has sustained a brain injury or has a brain-related disability, including cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 27, 2012.

Dianne Arbeiter Scholarships

Given in memory of Dianne Arbeiter, a 25-year SSD employee, these scholarships are awarded to students who are served by the deaf/hard of hearing program of SSD. Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.

Deadline is Feb. 10, 2012.

CAMPERSHIPS

Sammy Goldman "Living Big" Campership

Given annually to a child with special needs, the "Living Big" Campership is given in tribute to the life of Sammy Goldman. Sammy, whose life ended at age five, was remembered for his zest for life and "living big." Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.

Dianne Arbeiter Camperships

Through the Dianne Arbeiter Fund, selected SSD students who are deaf or hard of hearing are provided tuition to attend summer camps. Campership winners are based on several criteria. Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.

Stages St. Louis Access the Arts Campership

In partnership with Stages St. Louis, this campership offers assistance to students who wish to participate in the performing arts. Access the Arts is specifically designed to make participation in musical theater arts accessible to students with special needs. Visit www.sef-stl.org for complete details and application form.

C.J. Aubuchon Campership

This campership, given in honor of C.J. Aubuchon who lost his battle with cancer, is presented to a student who exemplifies C.J.'s qualities of kindness, caring, humor and courage. Visit www.sef-stl.org for more information.

Special Education Foundation Camperships

The Special Education Foundation's mission is to assist students with disabilities to achieve success in their endeavors beyond the classroom. One of the ways it carries out this mission is by providing tuition to enable students served by SSD to attend summer camps. Visit www.sef-stl.org for more information.

Award for Ackerman Principal No Surprise to Those She Works With

"Shocked" is how Ackerman Principal Kelly Grigsby describes finding out about winning the "30 Leaders in their Thirties" award presented by North County Incorporated.

"I had no idea I was even nominated," Grigsby said, "which made winning the award even more special."

This fall, Grigsby was recognized for her leadership by being named one of the "30 Leaders in their Thirties," by North County Incorporated. NCI, in partnership with North County Suburban Journals and Gateway Television News Network, recognizes leaders in their thirties in the North County region who are making a significant positive impact in the community through their work and community involvement.

Winning the award for her community leadership is no surprise to those that work with Grigsby.

"She makes such a positive impact on the community by sharing her great sense of humor and also by always reaching out to help those in need," said Ackerman teacher Kathleen Vierod. "Kelly can often be seen having lunch with a student, shooting baskets with another or listening to someone. She is a great role model."

"It is her connection with people that makes her an outstanding leader," said Ackerman music teacher Tony Volkman. "Kelly cares deeply about the learning that occurs at Ackerman and makes sure that high standards are in place for her students."

Grigsby, in her fifth year as principal at Ackerman, received the award at a reception at the Norwood Hills Country Club.

"I accept the award on behalf of the Ackerman staff who work tirelessly every day at school to ensure students have an outstanding school experience and in the community making partnerships and representing our school so positively," Grigsby said.

"Her caring and compassion makes it easy for her to connect well with students, staff and parents," said Ackerman teacher Ellen Birch. "She is a strong and fair leader who has brought a feeling of 'family' to the building. Kelly takes the time to get to know our students at Ackerman."

"It is quite an honor to be recognized by the community I serve," Grigsby said. "I whole-heartedly believe we are doing great work for kids at Ackerman School."



"Kelly cares deeply about the learning that occurs at Ackerman and makes sure that high standards are in place for her students."

— Tony Volkman,
Ackerman music teacher

Visit www.ssdmo.org and www.sef-stl.org for complete details and an application form.