



Washburn High School Foundation

November 2014

201 West 49th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55419-2588



Letter from Principal Rhonda Dean

Greetings Washburn Community,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Rhonda Dean and I am delighted to serve as Principal of Washburn High School.

I come to you from Andover High School, where I served as Principal for six years and Wayzata High School, where I served as Associate Principal for eleven years. Prior to Andover and Wayzata, I worked in Minneapolis as an Assistant Principal at South High School and a Mathematics teacher at Benjamin Banneker K-8. I am thrilled to be back in Minneapolis and to serve in a school that places great value on student learning.

These past few months have been extremely rewarding. The staff and students at Washburn are motivated and parents are extremely supportive. Our fall extra-curricular programs are flourishing. With the success of our athletic teams and the accomplishments of the fine arts programs, Washburn is on a trajectory for increased success.

We continue to strengthen our academic programs by increasing rigor and scaffolding our support systems for students. Our focus is to provide a rigorous and relevant educational program for all students.

I appreciate the warm welcome I have received over the past few months. I thank you in advance for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Dean

Rhonda Dean
Principal



www.WashburnConnections.org

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Blackbox Theatre Opens Doors, Minds

For the past 7 years, the Blackbox acting program at Washburn has maintained a safe space for youth to create, perform, and tour original theatre to diverse audiences throughout the Twin Cities community. The foundation of the Blackbox Acting Program is the belief that artistic expression can be a powerful and positive force in the lives of young people. In that spirit, students from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds are engaged in a rigorous and unique training program that results in student creation of original theatre. These performances make visible the all too often invisible voices of urban youth. Working together, students courageously and creatively use art to break down barriers and build bridges among themselves and within their community. Washburn Blackbox Acting Program is a powerful educational force, a catalyst for social change, and a course of personal power for young people and their families.

This year, the program's performances kicked-off on the 29th of October when Theatre One students performed their tributes to family and other members of the Washburn community. Students led group performances that paid tribute to important people in their lives. Ultimately, every student delivered his or her poem dedicated to a loved one while classmates acted along side of them. Using nothing but boxes as props and their own ingenuity, they delivered touching and powerful performances.

Theatre Two's focus has revolved around the prompt: "Where I come from." A student in the class suggested the prompt, and it has led to the creation of pieces that focus on issues including rape culture, police brutality, gender norms, and inequality within educational systems. These pieces are manifestations of poems written by the students at the beginning of the quarter. The authors of these poems are now helping direct their respective scenes, and the class is preparing for performing publicly at Patrick's Cabaret in December.



The Theatre Three class is also preparing to showcase their up and coming performance, *Break the Silence*, at a theatre workshop at the University of Minnesota. Theatre Three touring company is in the preparation stages of preparing *Break the Silence* for their spring semester tour. The play features topics such as cultural discrimination, identity, womanhood, sexual assault, African-American double standards, and more. During the spring semester, they will expand their viewing audience and tour to junior highs, high schools, colleges all around the Twin Cities.

The Blackbox program is a safe space where students lead critical discussions and create performance art with one another. The space allows them to discuss issues pertinent to their lives and to channel their ideas and feelings into a performance piece. The Washburn Blackbox Acting Program is grateful to the Washburn High School Foundation for continuing to support us through their Mini-Grant program. It has continued to fund the program with a multitude of opportunities to invite guest artists who help generate novel ways of thinking, share original experiences, and develop a stable and positive community youth of professionals. Thanks for everything, Washburn High School Foundation.

-Crystal Spring, Drama/Theatre Teacher, Director of Acting

Davis Brinker wins Triple Threat Award

Over the past five years, the arts have had a resurgence at Washburn High School. It began with the hiring of Nancy Lee in 2007. Nancy, along with other teachers, staff, parents, students, committed alumni and community members have pulled together to make Washburn one of the finest musical and theatre programs within the Minneapolis Public Schools and the state. Because of this focus, many more students are becoming interested in and taking seriously the performing arts.

For one student, Davis Brinker, this resurgence paid off. Davis played the role of Jean Valjean in Washburn's Feb 2014 musical "Les Miserables." On June 9th, 2014, Davis Brinker received the 2013-2014 Triple Threat Award from the **SpotLight Musical Theatre Program** for best male actor. The **SpotLight Musical Theatre Program** began 9 years ago as a way to honor Minnesota high school musicals and performing students by formally recognizing the extraordinary achievements and process of developing the young artists, onstage and offstage, in our state's high school musical theatre programs. Throughout the year, skilled evaluators adjudicate musical theatre productions at schools across Minnesota and provide constructive feedback to participating students. The

SpotLight model offers recognition based on the production's own merit, and schools are not judged competitively against other schools. In addition, Washburn High School also was awarded Outstanding Overall Production, Outstanding Overall Performance Award as well as Outstanding Performance by a student orchestra. Outstanding performances in a lead role were awarded to Davis Brinker, Marcus Lee, Greta Hanson, Berit Johnson, Dylan Cima, Alma Neuhaus and Austin Johnson.

Davis is the first Washburn student to win such an award. Approximately 70 students applied for the award. Applicants submitted a resume, essay, and three videos: one for singing, an acting monologue, and a dancing sample. Twenty four students were chosen to audition in front of an expert panel. From the 24, they narrowed to 12 and from those 12, one girl and one boy was chosen.

By winning the Triple Threat Award Brinker earned an all-expenses paid trip to New York courtesy of Hennepin Theatre Trust. While in New York, Davis received singing and acting coaching, attended dance classes at Broadway Dance Center and met with industry professionals about the entertainment

Davis Brinker wins Triple Threat Award

Continued

business. He also participated in a private audition with Telsey+Company, a leading casting agency in New York, and saw several Broadway shows.

Davis is currently a freshman at University of Evansville in Evansville Indiana as a theatre performance major. He was one of three freshmen chosen to be in ensemble for the university's fall production of: The Wild Party by Andrew Lipka.

Washburn has been successful because of its focus on academics, athletics and the arts. As mentioned above, it is only through the support and involvement of Washburn staff and teachers, parents, students, alumni, and the community that Washburn High School is successful now and in the future. Strong community schools shape our future leaders and solidify our community and city.



Washburn Millerbots, Robotics 2014-15

"It is overall the hardest fun you will ever have."

- Erszi Saly

WHS Robotics team members, juniors Erik Graba and Erszi Saly, were interviewed for this article. Following are their insightful answers to an extra-curricular activity on the rise.

Q: What is Robotics?

EG: Robotics is an activity where you get a challenge every year to score. Over a six-week period, the team builds a robot that does a function of the challenge. WHS's team is comprised of 24 active members, 7 of which are girls, and is coached by Peter Grul and Mark Lefeber.

Q: What aspect of Robotics appeals to you?

ES: The Regional Competition is by far my favorite part of Robotics. It really feels amazing when you are surrounded by so many like-minded peers from all over the Midwest and you compete with them, help them, and overall have a fun time with them. It feels amazing when you see the hard work, and the 100+ hours you spent on something and have it wipe the floor or do something that causes the audience to react. You have visual payoff of your work in Robotics.

EG: I enjoy the problem, even the initial week of panic when you are given the challenge. I enjoy the people. I enjoy a sport where the hardest part is the ideas behind it.

Q: Tell us about WHS Robotics achievements.

EG: We went to Nationals in 2011 and were quarter finalists in 2014. We have achieved awards for safety at the competitions for several years running and in 2014 we received the imagery award for our omnipresent orange and blue, our stark, but efficient pit, and our highly stylized and stunning mascot.

Q: What is it like being a girl in a heavily dominated male program?

ES: There is definitely sexism in Robotics, and it is a real challenge to feel like you are valued among all the guys. I am a scout, and there have been



teams that will not look at me when I am talking to them and would only address my male counterparts. The flip-side is that some teams seek you out to explain things and you make good relations with them because they are so accepting. The friendliness that a majority of the teams have greatly makes up for the odd rude person.

Q: What would you say to girls interested in joining the team?

ES: Girls should get interested in Robotics. It's a great way to get into the STEM field, have real experience, and it looks good on applications. It also teaches you how to deal with people especially when ideas differ on a design or plan of action - this is super-important for life later on, especially in business. The program also makes you eligible for scholarships (\$20 million last year). Plus Millerbots is good about teaching and allowing growth. The girls on the team also try to stick together; we even had a sleepover over the summer. The team is super fun, you learn a lot, smash, cut and drill things and make new friends with a lot of interesting people from everywhere. ***It is overall the hardest fun you will ever have.***

Q: What else would you like us to know?

EG: The biggest challenge facing the team is not competition or knowledge, but is instead a lack of sponsorships, as the team finds itself with a dearth of supporters willing to help the team be great.

****Contributions to the WHS Foundation help support all of our student activities, like Millerbots.***

Washburn 2014 Fall Sports Wrap-Up

WHS athletics had a historically successful fall on and off the field. Oh, let us count the ways...

Girls Soccer - Finished with a 20-1 record (surrendering only 2 goals the entire season!) with their only loss coming in the State Championship Game via a heartbreaking double-overtime shootout. This was certainly one of the most successful seasons in WHS girls soccer history. Senior Morgan Cottew was a Ms. Soccer Finalist. I think it's fair to say that Coach Cheryl Peterson's (WHS '91) long-term rebuilding plan is going very well, thank you!

Boys Soccer - Was ranked #1 in the State during the season. Finished with a 15-2-1 record and 2nd place in the incredibly talented Minneapolis City conference. Received an Academic All-State Gold Award with a team GPA average of 3.8. Senior Aidan Clemence was a Mr. Soccer Finalist. I guess you could say Coach Aaron Percy's (WHS '92) long-term rebuilding plan isn't too shabby either!

Boys & Girls Cross Country - Both teams were Conference Champions and had 5 runners qualify for State: Hannah Oscarson, Emily Covert, Hamza Ali, Martin Donovan, and Andrew Sell. Both teams received an Academic All-State Gold Award with a team GPA average of 3.8. I'm starting to sense an academic trend here!

Girls Volleyball - Finished the 2014 season with a 17-7 record placing 2nd in the conference. Finished 2nd in the Howard Lake Invite and 3rd in the Big Lake tournament. Rachel Stark was awarded Star Tribune Athlete of the Week. Three girls were named all-conference, and the

team was once again awarded the gold academic all-state team award with a 3.86 average GPA. (Yep, it's officially a trend!) In all there were 45 very committed girls in the program which allowed the teams to be competitive at all levels.

Girls Tennis - Conference Champions.

Football - Finished 4th place in the competitive Minneapolis City Conference.

Nice work Millers. Your fall season was a model for balancing high academic and athletic standards.



The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is alive and well at Washburn! Student interest, participation, and commitment continue to increase. A look at the numbers since program implementation helps to tell the story:

2011-12 Diploma Programme Summary:

- 42 students registered for exams
- 76 exams total (some students registered for more than one exam, moderated/evaluated by international judges)

2012- 2013 Diploma Programme Summary:

- 199 students registered for exams
- 488 exams total (many students registered for more than one exam; up to 6 exams taken by an individual student)
- 1 Diploma Candidate
- 4 Medallions
- 15 courses giving exams, counting both Higher Level and Standard Level courses in the same content area, i.e. Physics HL and SL, Spanish HL and SL

2012-13 Middle Years Programme Status

(designed for students ages 11-16):

- Application for Candidacy submitted March 28, 2013
- Awaiting and expecting approval for candidacy
- Staff members participating this year in IB professional development
- Orientation Session
- Technology Integration
- Coordinator Training

2014 Diploma Programme Summary:

- 1 Diploma Candidate (began with 2)
- 2 Medallions
- 272 students registered for exams
- 562 exams total
- 1312 IB Exam Papers, total - Students write 2-3 papers (take 2-3 separate exams) for each subject.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Continued

Please note: The IB Diploma Program is a two-year program of study. Students in the IB Diploma Programme are expected to commit to the full program of study.

We are all excited about the continued growth of the IB Programme at Washburn. This course of study provides for increased college and university-recognized rigor within the already exceptional academic program offered at Washburn and will help continue to strengthen Washburn's reputation as more students take advantage of this unique opportunity. More information about The International Baccalaureate may be found on their website at: www.ibo.org.

-IB Summary contributed by Linnea Swenson Tellekson, Ed.D.,
IB/MYP Coordinator



Academic Success at Washburn

Congratulations to Washburn's four National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists - **Travis Doyle, Ella Johnson, Brien Johnson, and Leo Hanneman**. These four semifinalists will now continue to compete for a coveted National Merit Scholarship which will be awarded in the spring. These students have qualified based on the fact that they were among the highest scores among 1.4 million students who took the PSAT last year.

Congratulations also to six Washburn students who earned Letters of Commendation which recognizes these students for exceptional academic promise as demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the 2013 PSAT: **Page Bennett, Elizabeth Blackburn, Ellen Dymit, Noah Hardman, Bridget Peterson, and Robert Sherman!**"

Thank You Donors!

The Washburn High School Foundation would like to thank the following people who made donations between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. Because of you, we are able to continue our goal of making Washburn High School the top high school in the city with the best teachers, the best resources and best prepared students for the future. ***Thank you for your continuous support and donations!***

Advocate (>\$10,000)

Lawrence Bachman
Estate of Lawrence Bachman ('41)
Kip and Suzanne Knelman
Stephen Stoll
Estate of Stephen Stoll ('61)

Scholar (\$5000 to \$10,000)

Anonymous

Gold Medalist (\$1000 - \$4,999)

Mark and Carrie Bachman
James and Edith Broten
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 Jane Furber Becker
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 In honor of Vicki Bunker
 Toni A. and James A. Beitz
 In honor of Vicki Bunker
 Philip B. Bell
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and Ray Tharp ('42)

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In memory of Peter Bissell ('59)

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In memory of Gretchen Renich Watz ('56)

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John White
WHS Class Of June '48
Doris Wong

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Adam Wright
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Orange and Blue (\$1 - \$99)

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Richard T. (Rick) Brimacombe
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Vicki Bunker
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Karlotta C. Heckrich Carlson
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In memory of Peter Bissell ('59)

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Ann Smith Chase
Mary Chenoweth
David and Katherine Christesen
In memory of Peter Bissell ('59)

Christopher Clancy
Gayle Reuter Dahl Claus
William and Gwendolyn Coddington
In memory of Peter Bissell ('59)

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In memory of
Hon. Noah S. Rosenbloom ('42)

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In memory of Peter Bissell ('59)

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Letter from the WHS Foundation President

Greetings fellow Millers, alumni, community members, parents, students, staff, and all stakeholders in Washburn High School. No alarm bell ringing here, no crisis mode, no emergencies. We are not in rebuilding mode, we are in BUILDING mode! There is even talk of an addition to the Washburn campus in order to accommodate the consistently increasing enrollment at Washburn. Mind you, this is a school that some thought should be shuttered less than ten years ago. My comments, therefore, will be brief this time. I'll let the stories speak for themselves. YOUR SUPPORT matters! YOU are making a difference in helping Washburn regain its rightful place in the conversation about not just the best schools in the city, but in the state.

You may read in these pages, once again, of the wonderful success that Washburn and its students have had since the last Legacy Newsletter. It is a pleasure to be involved in the process of advocating for and helping to support such a great school filled with such great people. Please follow the example of those named as donors within the past fiscal year and consider a donation to the WHS Foundation. Every little bit helps as we continue to work with Principal Rhonda Dean and the Administrative Team to identify areas of unmet need and provide value-added opportunities to benefit the students of Washburn as greatly and as efficiently as possible. We are currently around "halfway there" in reaching a fundraising goal of \$150,000 per fiscal year in support of Washburn, so there is indeed room to grow. **LET'S BUILD** together and help write the next chapter of success in Washburn's storied history. Thank you for your continued support... **GO MILLERS!!!**

Mark Bachman, '91
WHS Foundation President