

## Local Schools



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# A Thousand Cranes

MARCH 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

## A Thousand Cranes

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - The Imaginary Theatre Company finished its play series Tuesday, Feb. 21, at Poplar Bluff Schools with a performance of “A Thousand Cranes” for fifth graders in the Tinnin Fine Arts Center, underwritten by the Bank of Missouri.

Imaginary, the professional touring ensemble of The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, previously performed “My Father’s Dragon” for Eugene Field and “A Gnome for Christmas” for Oak Grove. Last year they put on plays at the Kindergarten Center, Lake Road and Junior High. Tinnin Director Tim Thompson and R-I Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Patty Robertson will continue planning the rotation next year.

“A Thousand Cranes” by Kathryn Schultz is about a Japanese girl who was diagnosed with Leukemia a decade after being exposed to radiation from the atomic bomb in Hiroshima during World War II. According to an Eastern legend, if a person folds 1,000 paper cranes, s/he will be cured of disease. The girl – Sadako Sasaki, made it to No. 644, and now has a monument built in her honor at Seattle Peace Park.

The plays were brought to the district as part of Three Rivers College’s Patrons of the Arts series. Beginning in the 2015/16 school year, the community college opted to deliver the plays directly to the schools within its service area, free of cost.

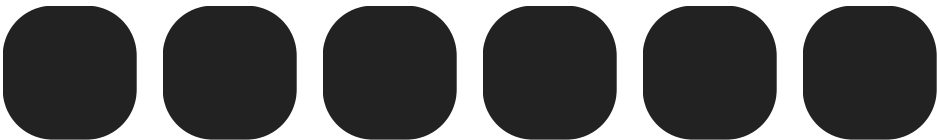
Shown in the photo: Actors (standing from left) Jeanitta Perkins, Aaron Orion Baker, Charlie Barron and Catherine Regan (seated) of the Imaginary Theatre Company pose after holding a Q&A with students about the play, “A Thousand Cranes.”

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director,  
Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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# Student Safety Patrol Established at PB Middle School

FEBRUARY 16TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Student Safety Patrol Established at PB Middle School

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - A new group of student leaders has emerged at the Poplar Bluff Middle School this year with the relocation of the campus on Victory Lane.

A total of 25 sixth graders make up the Safety Patrol, an organization committed to directing walkers through Bacon Park before and after school.

“We never had walkers before, so we had to design an exit strategy,” said Principal Dr. Brad Owings, referring to the previous location of the school on Oak Grove Road. “It’s another way for students to show responsibility and leadership, and be role models.”

The teams of students work in shifts, from 6:50-7:20 in the morning and 2:20-2:45 p.m., lining the trail on the hill behind the school to the city park. Several students man a station, and there is one roamer with a cell phone in case of an emergency.

The students wear safety vests and are supplied with gear such as flashlights and hand warmers for the changing conditions. Following each shift, the Patrol debriefs with teacher sponsors, Kathy Pattillo and Kelly Lawson. They also meet as a group monthly, and have had guests including school Safety Resource Officer Kenny Carpenter.

“The students take the job very seriously, and it is an honor,” said Pattillo, noting that the group has a waiting list. Lawson added: “These are skills that can carry them through life.”

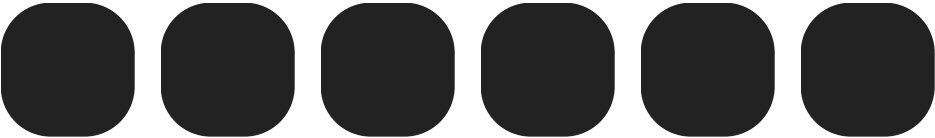
Shown in the photo: Lanie Robertson mans her station in the forefront, while Safety Patrol members line the asphalt trail behind her.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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## Meet 10-Year Old Librarian, Bailey Williams

FEBRUARY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Meet 10-Year Old Librarian, Bailey Williams

### **Meet O’Neal Elementary’s 10-year-old librarian**

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The self-imposed questionnaire above is precisely how 10-year-old Bailey filled out her successful “application for co-librarian” to land a job in the O’Neal library one year ago.

Bailey, now a Middle School fifth grader, can be found after school at her former elementary labeling and putting books on shelves, polishing tables, crafting holiday decorations, tending to the pet hamster and hedgehog, and running miscellaneous errands in the building as assigned by O’Neal Librarian Ashley Robertson.

“She just came to me one day and told me that she was gonna be co-librarian,” said Bailey’s mother Julie Williams, an insurance billing clerk. “I don’t know how she broached Ashley, but she filled out a job application, and evidently Ashley hired her.”

The seed was planted last school year when O’Neal upperclassmen were tasked with reading to younger students. After creating and submitting the application, Bailey began sacrificing her recess to help out as needed. Today she has her own desk at the library, complete with a nameplate and family portraits of her brothers and dog. She also volunteers during select academic labs at the Middle School.

“I like helping little kids find their books,” said Bailey, wearing a homemade lanyard that states her job title. “It’s mostly picture books in the first grade, then by second they start to learn how to spell words and write sentences. By third grade they are reading books

like ‘Diary of a Wimpy Kid,’ then in fourth they go back to comic books, because they are worn out from AR testing.” Accelerated Reader, used at some elementaries in the district, is a quizzing program designed to monitor the completion of reading assignments.

The girl’s budding passion for books has carried over to her home life. Bailey has a bookshelf in her bedroom and a system for her family to check out the books she has collected at fairs. Her father Jim, an occupational therapist, has a book that is twelve months overdue, according to Bailey, who enforces her own fines. “Let’s just say I’ve gotten a lot of shoes,” she said.

“She’s always done these sort of things – like having school with stuffed animals,” Julie said. “When she sets her mind to do something, she does it. And I mean she does it,” he mom continued, sharing that Bailey is also a Junior Girl Scout and sold 56 boxes of cookies on the very first day of the annual sale.

Earlier this school year, Bailey was informing elementary students how they are to behave in the hallway when O’Neal Principal Dr. Amy Dill first got to meet the young co-librarian. “She’s productive, responsible and a good role model,” Dill exclaimed. “She’s going to be a little teacher.”

Bailey’s application spawned other ideas from classmates for student positions at O’Neal, according to Robertson, including computer lab, counseling, physical education, nursing and breakfast assistants.

Robertson was even invited to Bailey’s birthday party over the summer, and is considered a friend of the family. “It reminds me that sometimes being a teacher is about making a connection with students, not just a curriculum,” Robertson said. “This experience could change the rest of her life.”

Name: Bailey Williams

Number: Don’t have one yet

Address: Mrs. Owings’ classroom

Talents: Able to organize perfectly

Achievements: Reading 66 chapters in one book

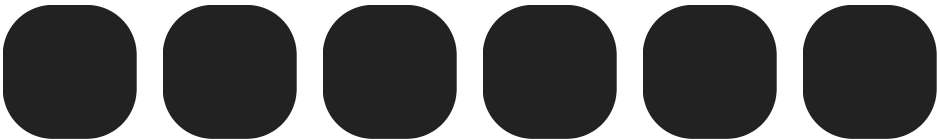
Shown in the photos: Bailey poses next to her computer desk, which contains a basket with items such as stickers to identify books that are about popular subjects like animals.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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# Autism Ambassador Opens Up to Students

FEBRUARY 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Autism Ambassador Opens Up to Students

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Poplar Bluff Junior High School students had a chance to view the world from another lens last week.

“Finding Kansas” author Aaron Likens spoke about what it is like to live with Asperger’s

syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder he was diagnosed with at the age of 20, prior to which he did not realize he was different.

“If you met one person with autism, you met one person with autism,” said the 33-year-old on Wednesday, Jan. 25, in the gymnasium. “One person’s Kansas can be another person’s opposite of Kansas.”

Kansas to Likens is a state of mind; a place of familiarity where he feels “safe, confident and normal,” his book states. For him that locale happens to be the racetrack, having grown up a mile from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. In addition to presenting over 800 times about autism awareness through Easter Seals Midwest in St. Louis, Likens is a successful flagman at racing events across the country.

The author of the blog “Life on the Other Side of the Wall” available at [www.aaronlikens.com](http://www.aaronlikens.com), Likens discovered writing as a way to express himself, he said, admitting that the craft was merely a “painful” task for him in grade school. “I’d like to say it was a noble effort – wanting to make the world a better place,” Likens said.

To the seventh and eighth graders, Likens variously described himself in a light-hearted way as unfiltered, hypersensitive and routine oriented. Individuals affected by the condition may not be good judges of body language and take things very literal, he added.

“Those with Asperger’s see and process the world around us differently,” Likens said, quite simply. Although these may seem like common traits in people, Likens explained that there are different degrees. While he is clearly well-educated about the interworking of his mind, he said he does not recognize his pattern of behavior until after the fact.

In 1980, one in 1,500 people were documented to have autism, in 1997 that number grew to one in 500, now one in 68 Americans are diagnosed with the disorder, said Likens, citing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A new incident rate will be released in the near future.

According to the most recent studies which, Likens noted, are incomplete, Asperger’s appears to be “a wiring issue” through which information is processed in a part of the brain that should not be receiving the signal.

R-I Special Services Director Mindy Garrett, who booked the event, said she selected the Junior High age level because students are particularly receptive to building “empathy and compassion” at that age. Likens agreed that his favorite type of audience consists of

pre-teens and teenagers because of their thoughtful questions.

“It’s such an honor to be able to present at schools,” Likens posted on his public Facebook page afterward. “This student after my (presentation) came up to me and said that it was so thrilling to see someone with his diagnosis speak and to finally know he isn’t alone.”

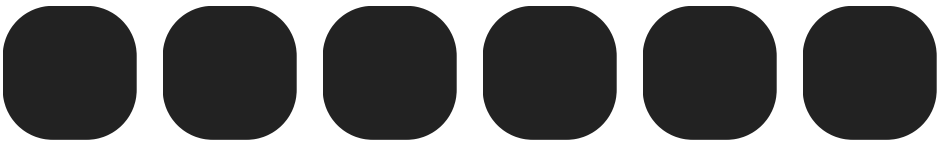
About three-fourths of the students Aaron Likens spoke to about living with Asperger’s syndrome indicated they know someone with autism spectrum disorder.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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# First Lighthouse School in Southeast Missouri

DECEMBER 20TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN



## First Lighthouse School in Southeast Missouri

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Eugene Field has achieved lighthouse status under The Leader in Me program, joining only a dozen other schools in Missouri and less than 250 worldwide that have met the prestigious benchmark.

Students have participated in goal setting, data tracking, leadership roles, self-led conferences with parents and community events since the elementary school received a grant valued at about \$75,000 from Franklin Covey's I Am A Leader Foundation in 2013.

"It reinforces the hard work of our staff and students over the last four years and shows that, regardless of socioeconomic status or a child's age, personal leadership can be taught and modeled," said Eugene Field Principal Jennifer Taylor, after sharing the news to the campus community on Thursday, Dec. 15. "It is completely attainable for students to achieve personal and academic goals and give back to their community, putting leadership in action to better themselves, even if they have obstacles or limited background experiences."

At the start of the month a review team from Franklin Covey visited Poplar Bluff to evaluate the environment, culture and language at Eugene Field. The model teaches students to become self-reliant, take initiative, plan ahead, set and track goals, prioritize, manage their emotions, be considerate, express their viewpoint persuasively, resolve conflicts, find creative solutions, value differences and live a balanced life, according to company officials.

"Schools who achieve the lighthouse milestone are great examples of a strong leadership model, process and of what it means to be a Leader in Me School," stated company Education Practice Leader Sean Covey in a press release. "This school has experienced transformational results by implementing the principles and practices related to The Leader in Me."

The program, which is not taught as a curriculum but rather incorporated in all classroom activities, is based on Dr. Stephen Covey's bestseller, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." The seven habits are: to be proactive, to begin with the end in mind, to put first things first, to think win-win, to seek first to understand then to be understood, to synergize, and to sharpen the saw.

Prior to writing the successful grant, Taylor and her team participated in a book study of "The Leader in Me," which details how the habits can be used by school-aged children to

develop the skills and self-confidence needed to succeed in class and life. Now recognized as an exemplary Leader in Me school throughout the region, having fully implemented all of the criteria in the program, Eugene Field will continue to receive annual on and off site coaching, and sustain its certification with reviews every other year.

“This is a tremendous accolade for the students, faculty and staff at Eugene Field,” R-I Superintendent Scott Dill commented. “They have worked unceasingly to improve themselves and to improve their school. All of their hard work and their persistence has merited this award.”

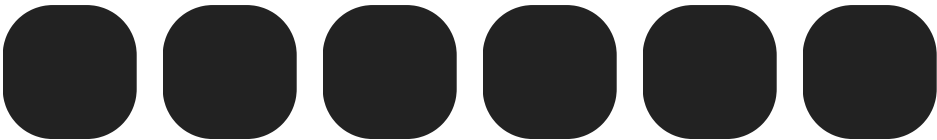
Shown in the photo: Eugene Field Elementary staff and students celebrate after learning last week they have become a lighthouse school under The Leader in Me.

Photos and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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