

Williamsville native named principal of the year in Virginia county

Eric Stewart, a graduate of Williamsville North High School, was recently named the recipient of the 2007 Washington Post Distinguished Educational Leadership Award for Loudoun County, Va.

Stewart is the principal of Smart's Mill Middle School in Leesburg, Va. He was also named Principal of the Year for Loudoun County.

He has been Smart's Mill's principal since its opening in 2004.

He was recognized as being an effective manager, taking risks and encouraging innovation in curriculum and for being vested in the students' education.

"In schools where Eric Stewart has been principal, great things have happened and are happening. No detail is ever overlooked. He spends countless hours at night, on weekends, and before and after school planning, monitoring and evaluating the operation of Smart's Mill. Eric Stewart believes that the two most important factors that impact student achievement are the school climate and the quality of instruction. He manages and administrates to ensure that these elements are both present and effective," the nomination form, completed by the school's assistant principal and PTA members, read.

The Smart's Mill Middle School posted an article online, detailing the nomination and recognition of the award, at <http://cmsweb1.loudoun.k12.va.us/smarts>.

Stewart is the son of Ken and Ardis Stewart of Williamsville. He also attended Heim Elementary and middle schools.

He holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from the University of Kentucky and a master's in curriculum and instruction from George Mason University. He was hired as a math teacher at Loudoun County High School, before being named dean at Broad Run High School, an assistant principal at J. Lupton Simpson Middle School and then principal at Sully Elementary. In 2004 he was named principal of Smart's Mill Middle School.



Stewart

Taking matters into their hands — Abitibi paper drive raises funds to replace storm damaged trees

by JESSICA L. FINCH
Associate Editor

Girl Scouts from Junior Troop 1189 and Cub Scouts from Pack 455 know that one day the world will be left to their care, and they are trying to get it in the best condition possible.

The girls and boys, pupils at Heritage Heights Elementary School, are taking recycling seriously, literally collecting tons of paper.

And their efforts are not unnoticed. Abitibi Paper Retriever company, the recycling fundraising program, has been impressed by their numbers.

"We were collecting there about once a month. Then all of a sudden we noticed they were calling to say the bin was full, a lot," Susan Attridge, area manager for Abitibi, said.

The children have collected 17 tons of paper. This is the second year they have taken part in the project.

"That is exceptional for a public school," Attridge said.

Heritage Heights received its big green and yellow signature Abitibi bin two years ago. The Scouts scour their neighborhoods, asking neighbors to recycle their papers, with the help of their parents. They then bring the bundles of paper back to the school where Abitibi picks up the papers and rewards them with cash for their donations.



Heritage Heights Elementary School students have been collecting paper for two years in an effort to raise money to replace storm damaged trees, and to raise recycling awareness. Cub Scout Pack 455 members, back row, left to right, Alex Olczak and Michael Goodman, and front row, Ethan Monkelbaan, Matthew Goodman, and Jared Chmielewski; and Girl Scouts Junior Troop 1180 members, Nicole Merrifield, Melissa Goodman and Courtney Dobson, have once again filled the Abitibi bin, ready for pick up.

Kim Goodman, whose children are members of the troop and pack, said the money is being used to buy and replant trees lost in the October storm.

On Saturday, members of the two organizations gathered outside Heritage Heights to talk about why they became involved.

Jared Chmielewski, 8, and his father, Steve, agreed that they enjoy helping out.

"It benefits the school and is also helping the environment," Steve said.

The families are busy; in addition to troop and pack meetings they are involved in sports and other activities.

Raymond Olczak said it's important to teach responsibility to his son, Alex, 10, who added that he never thought the groups would be collecting as much paper as they are. Olczak is also a Webelos den leader.

Many of the Cub fathers are pack leaders, taking an active role in their son's Scouting activities.

Goodman's daughter, Melissa, 10, is also a member of the Recycling Club at Heritage Heights and said it's important not to be wasteful.

Goodman's sons Michael, 8, and Matthew, 6, also travel around the neighborhood, picking up paper in between school and sporting events.

Their father, Mike Goodman, the cub master, said it's important to start young so recycling becomes a habit.

Ethan Monkelbaan, 7, and his father, Dan, also participate. Dan

is a Wolf Pack leader.

The Scouts are working toward their Bronze Award, a prestigious honor for Girl Scouts that recognizes completion of at least 15 hours of community service. Kim Goodman said they should be close to completing that by the end of the year.

"It helps so trees won't have to be cut down," Nicole Merrifield, 10, said about taking time to help with the paper drive.

Courtney Dobson, 10, came out on her birthday — a cold Saturday — to show her support for the program.

"I am surprised by the donations. They do get a bit heavy," she said.

The Cubs are also recognized for their work through different awards and badges.

From the Girl Scout troop, eight girls have been actively participating and 26 boys from the Cub Scout Pack.

The Heritage Heights community is welcome to use the bin at the school for recycling. And as one father pointed out, it's the perfect way to discard old phone books, as new ones are currently being distributed.

Acceptable donations include newspapers, magazines, junk mail, catalogues, office paper and school paper.

The two groups go out two Saturdays a month from October through June to pick up collections from their neighbors.

As the boys and girls gathered for a picture they realized the bin needs to be emptied — again.

e-mail: jfinch@beenews.com

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Fisher-Price donates \$5,000 to plant trees at Amherst Park

The October 2006 surprise snowstorm avoided their town, but employees from Fisher-Price's East Aurora headquarters helped reforest some of their hard-hit neighbors to the north on Nov. 15.

The workers volunteered to provide labor, and their company donated \$5,000 to buy the badly needed trees for Amherst and other storm-battered townships.

Paul Maurer, co-chairman of Re-Tree WNY, said, "Not only is Fisher-Price providing the trees via this donation, but also they are graciously providing the labor today to plant these beautiful trees. These trees will get us ever closer to our five-year goal of 30,000 trees replaced in WNY."

The trees were planted in Amherst State Park, which is located at 400 Mill St., in Williamsville. Visit www.re-treewny.org.