

News Clips

Headlines

Rocky Mountain News

Monday, January 14, 2008

- Ex-students thank special teacher

Denver Post

Monday, January 14, 2008

- Changes sought for northeast Denver schools

CBS 4

Sunday, January 13, 2008

- Memorial Held For Student Killed In Car Accident

BET.com

Friday, January 11, 2008

- Maternity Leave?

Rocky Mountain News

Monday, January 14, 2008

Paid archives

<<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/archives/>> | Alerts <<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news-alerts/>> | Electronic edition <<https://www.post-newscustomercare.com/onlinedelivery/main.asp?pub=RM>> | **Subscribe to the paper** <<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/subscribe/>>

GRIEGO: Ex-students thank special teacher

By [Tina Griego](#)

<<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/staff/tina-griego/>> , Rocky Mountain News ([Contact](#) <<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/staff/tina-griego/contact/>>)

Monday, January 14, 2008

It was Nov. 28 of last year and Dale Wieland was teaching at West High School, which, if you know Wieland, is just where you would expect to find him. Official records note he retired in 2001 after 37 years of teaching West students but, as his wife says, "he's addicted to the place," and so he filled in as substitute teacher as often as he could. He still carries business cards that read: "Dale Wieland. I touch the future. I teach."

Hindsight makes it easy to put two-and-two together and so now Wieland can say, well, yes, he'd been feeling a little off. What 65-year-old doesn't? The corner of his mouth seemed to be sagging. He'd slur on occasion. Words had started playing hide-and-seek with him, slipping away in midsentence, leaving him gaping.

He'd made a doctor appointment, but that day at school his colleagues decided something serious was wrong. He saw the school nurse and things moved quickly after that: a ride to the hospital, a stroke ruled out, the discovery of a brain tumor the size of a small lime with a root reaching into the brain stem, a doctor telling his wife Wieland had two, three months to live. With treatment, he could linger - *linger* was the doctor's word - for eight to nine months.

Nineteen days later a second opinion determined the tumor to be of another type, an anaplastic astrocytoma. Radiation and chemotherapy could give him years, the doctor said. Four to five years was the average.

Those who know Wieland will not be surprised to learn that upon receiving this diagnosis and prognosis, his first question was practical: "Does that mean I can still drive?"

The news spread through a network of his former students. He taught industrial arts most of his career. Students came and went through his wood-shop beehive and later they would send their own kids to him because Wieland was someone they trusted, because Wieland was a straight-shooter with a quick smile and sound counsel and a heart big enough to hold the tears of a thousand students.

He'd buy lunches for students who had none. Gave hundreds of rides home. More than one student called him a father figure. After graduation, they came to call him friend.

"I couldn't have done it without you," they'd try to tell him and he'd cut them off. "You did it," he'd say.

Subject closed.

He was in the hospital a couple of nights, and among his visitors was Cathaerine Ferguson, class of 1999. On her way home, she thought: *Wieland has done so much for so many students we should do something for him.* She came up with a scholarship fund for West High graduates in his name. We could make an evening of it, a tribute, she told fellow alumni, who quickly jumped on board.

Wieland left the Colorado and Nebraska wheat fields of his family a long time ago, but he still carries with him some of their values: privacy, modesty, the idea that when "times get tough, you get tougher." When Ferguson told him her plan, he paused and said: "Now, why would you want to do that?"

But he didn't say no and the network sizzled again.

The tribute to Dale Wieland was held last week in West's auditorium. It was snowing big, wet flakes, but close to 150 people showed up. Wieland and his wife, retired school nurse and former state Sen. Deanna Hanna, sat in the audience as former students took the stage to thank him. Most of them were unable to do so without crying.

One of those students was Bernie Lopez, class of '67.

As a boy, he says, his father abandoned him, and his stepfather was an alcoholic with a vicious streak. His family lived on welfare, moving often to skirt bill collectors.

Of all the students her husband guided, Hanna tells me, "his most magnificent

contribution to society was influencing Bernie Lopez."

Lopez became the first college graduate in his family and then became a teacher himself, in industrial arts, at West, where Wieland was his colleague. Lopez's children are college graduates. His daughter graduated from Duke University and is a Denver Public Schools teacher.

"My life would have been so much different had Dale Wieland not been in it," he says. "I owe him a debt I can never repay and I'm trying to repay it by being the best human being I can be."

His voice breaks and he says: "I just want to make him proud of me."

How are old you now, I ask Lopez. He laughs. "Fifty-nine."

Wieland did not speak that evening. He could not trust his brain to provide the words. I visited him the next day. He had had his daily radiation treatment that morning and would take his chemotherapy dose that evening. He said he was feeling better than he had in a while.

I met him for the first time at the tribute, and I wanted to ask him how he reached so many students. But he's a man of few words and he uses fewer now. Still, there's no mistaking his what-are-you-gonna-do expression when his wife talks about his tumor. Or his chuckle when he sees me trying to spell *anaplastic astrocytoma*. He has not lost his well-known humor.

In the end, I asked him what he would have said to his students had he spoken at the tribute.

"Just thank them," he said. "They wanted to thank me, and I wanted to thank them for what they did for me. They made me a better person."

It is possible that at that moment I saw a tear glimmering in his eyes, but with Wieland, it's just as likely it was a twinkle.

griegot@RockyMountainNews.com

Daniel Wieland Scholarship Fund

* **For information:** Call Cathaerine Ferguson at 720-261-2133.

* **Send checks to:** West High School, 951 Elati St., Denver, CO 80204

Subscribe to the Rocky Mountain News

<<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/subscribe/>>

Denver Post

Monday, January 14, 2008

Changes sought for northeast Denver schools

A citizens group wants funds directed for poor and non- English-speaking students.

By Jeremy P. Meyer
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 01/14/2008 01:50:04 AM MST

A plan to create a new high school in northeast Denver, craft autonomy agreements for three schools, and change budgeting to give more money to poorer students and English-language learners is being proposed by a Denver community group.

Leaders with Metro Organizations for People are seeking changes for northeast Denver schools that have struggled with low achievement, poor students and more English-language learners.

"We want to level the playing field," said Jessica Buckley, a teacher at Harrington Elementary School and a member of Metro Organizations for People — a 29-year-old community advocacy group composed of 28 churches, schools and youth and neighborhood associations that was a vocal critic of the district's recent reform plan.

"We want our students to be successful, and in order for them to be as successful as students in other parts of the city, they need these supports," she said.

Tuesday, Buckley and other members of her group will meet with district administrators and board members at Manual High School with a plan they hope will improve the schools.

It includes a new high school program for about 120 students who attended Manual before it closed and either dropped out or go to schools in other parts of the city.

It also calls for an autonomy agreement similar to one being discussed at Bruce Randolph Middle School that would give principals of Manual High, Cole and Gilpin Montessori schools control over their budgets, hiring and curricula.

A key part of the group's proposal is to provide poorer students and English- language learners with more money under a weighted budget system.

The district already is considering going toward a student-based budget system, in which money would follow the kids and not the staff members.

Metro Organizations for People says poor and non-English-speaking students cost more to educate so they should get more money from the district — specifically 25 percent more for English-language learners and 20 percent more for students who qualify for federally funded free and reduced-price lunch benefits — a measure of poverty.

"Student-based budgeting is different; if you are going to weight it, it's a whole different ballgame," said Jeannie Kaplan, a school board member, who has raised the concern that a weighted system could upset middle-class families.

"The real problem, as everyone will concede, is we don't have enough money," she said. " If you are going to take the little bit that we have and put it other places, I can't imagine what it will do to our other schools."

Whenever districts begin to consider giving more money to poorer students, a conversation begins to focus on what that means for other students, said Van Schoales of the Piton Foundation.

"People say, 'What do you mean shifting resources?' " Schoales said. "While, literally, Rome is burning, there are people who are worried about piano tuners at their schools."

Providing more funding to struggling learners is critical to the district's overall success, he said.

"The district will have to carefully manage all of these different interests," he said. "There is a limited pot, and they will have to do it in a way to shift the resources to those who need it and do it in a way that doesn't negatively impact terribly the schools that have benefited from an unequal distribution of resources."

Marguerite Roza, a University of Washington professor, five years ago examined the budget at Denver Public Schools and found vast inequities, but over the years massive funding cuts have pared down those inequities, she said.

"You are not going to have the big cash transfer because Denver is already a lean, mean budget," said Roza, who recently examined the budget.

Superintendent Michael Bennet said a plan to refinance the pension will provide the district more money that can help it provide "incremental amounts to kids based on particular needs," he said.

"I don't think it's helpful for anybody to engage in a conversation or think about this (as) taking money from one set of kids and giving it to another," he said. "It gives us the opportunity to increase the pie."

Jeremy P. Meyer: 303-954-1367 or jpmeyer@denverpost.com

<<mailto:jpmeyer@denverpost.com>>

CBS 4

Sunday, January 13, 2008

Memorial Held For Student Killed In Car Accident

[Jodi Brooks](#)

<<http://cbs4denver.com/bios/Jodi.Brooks.Reporter.9.567873.html>>

DENVER (CBS4) — Friends of a college student killed with her parents in a car accident gathered to remember her and celebrate her life Thursday evening.

Chase Parr and her parents, John Parr and Sandra Widener, died in a chain reaction crash in Wyoming last month. Chase's sister, Katy, is the only survivor.

Friends of Chase gathered in Denver East High School's auditorium to watch some of her performances as a drama student.

Chase's friends say what hurts the most are their thoughts about Katy.

"Knowing Katy Parr's pain and knowing it so well and feeling like I still can't comfort her as much as she needs to be comforted," friend Madeleine Joyce said.

Katy sent a special message for those who attended the tribute.

"I'd like to thank everybody for doing this tribute. I would like you all to know that today is Chase's birthday. I am doing really well physically and pretty well emotionally. And I'd like to thank everyone there," the message said.

Katy is now staying with relatives in Idaho.

A date for the Parr family memorial has not been set yet.

(© MMVII CBS Television Stations, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.)

BET.com

Friday, January 11, 2008

Maternity Leave?

From Staff and Wire Services

Posted Jan. 11, 2008 – Pregnant high school girls in Colorado may soon be able to take maternity leave.

Denver Public Schools is putting together guidelines for pregnant students that could allow them leave anywhere from four to six weeks after they give birth. They'll be expected to complete their school work at home and keep up with the rest of the classes.

School officials believe it's important for these teen moms to have time to bond with their little ones.

Statistics nationwide show 42 of every 1,000 high-school-aged girls are having babies, and the rate is increasing.

The issue of maternity leave came up in Denver after the school district got some complaints that some students were being told to report back to class the day after they got out of the hospital or risk getting unexcused absences.