

Student Council Speaks UP

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 27 January 2011 17:09 -



On some Wednesday noons, certain students divide from the pack bound for the cafeteria.

Those students funnel into the Gothenburg High School board room where they plan upcoming social events, talk about issues affecting students or organize food drives.

On this day, members of Student Council are planning coronation activities.

“What should we do for an art drop?” asks senior Brennan Costello.

Fellow senior Elisa Meridith suggests borrowing a mural from the art club.

At another table, Student Council members discuss accepted attire for the coronation dance and how many slow dances should be played.

“No cha-cha,” remarks one student with a laugh.

Senior Tannor Mroczek said he enjoys being part of the council and making up event themes, setting up dances and controlling what happens at dances.

On a more serious note, senior Aaron Lauer describes the Student Council as taking care of the student body.

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“It’s easier for kids to talk to their peers instead of going to an adult,” adds senior Tre Ostergard who is Student Council president.

In addition to planning and decorating for social events this school year, the three seniors said Student Council members welcomed students back to school, sponsored a food drive for the local food pantry and will give a scholarship in May.

Ostergard also presided over a Veteran’s Day ceremony last November.

“We’re always looking at what we can do to make the school better,” Lauer said.

Mroczek added that the council used to be involved in summer community projects like painting the United States on pavement next to Dudley Elementary.

Sponsor and fourth-grade teacher Mary Meisinger said Student Councils in any school represent their fellow students and bring issues to the council.

“It’s a group of respected peer leaders in their class,” she said.

Meisinger shares sponsorship of the organization with high school principal Randy Evans.

High school Student Council members are elected by their classmates in each grade. The top eight vote getters grades nine through 12 serve on the council.

Dennis Davenport, who co-sponsored Student Council in Gothenburg in the 1990s, describes the council as serving the school and making it a better place and a communicator between students and faculty and administration.

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“It should work to improve relations between various groups of students, the faculty, and the community,” said Davenport who now teaches in Cozad. “It should model the best features of the governing bodies we have in place, in our local community, state and nation. “

The council should also be a place where young people gain leadership skills and experience, he said.

For example, Davenport took students to council conferences throughout the state where they met workshop leaders like former governors Bob Kerrey, Ben Nelson and Kay Orr.

Gothenburg also hosted a district Student Council rally where he said “some students from another community got in trouble pulling some shenanigans on some of our faculty.”

Davenport noted that council members are in a medium where their own creativity can rise to the surface.

“They learn to organize, to lead, to deal with opposition and to work at making a positive difference,” he said.

In fact, Davenport said Student Council members once actively campaigned to be officers, producing spots broadcast on Channel One which students watch.

“Campaigns took on a new dimension when candidates wrote their 60-second campaign script, developed creative props and lived with the results of their media campaign,” he said.

Under Davenport’s tutelage, Meisinger said Student Council was involved more in

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