

STUDENTS SERVE AS ROLE MODELS

• MENTOR PROGRAM MATCHES HS STUDENTS WITH ELEM. KIDS

Mentoring is a program that allows Wagner High School students to share their time with elementary students. It involves giving up time and sharing it in a positive way.

The mentoring program is open to high school students in grades 10-12. Students who wish to be involved in the program must demonstrate good attendance and must be passing all of their classes. In addition, they must demonstrate a willingness to serve as positive role models in and out of school.

Mentoring also involves serving as a positive friend and providing help, advice, and encouragement to younger students to help these younger students care more about themselves, about school and about the future. Wagner School Counselor Dana Sanderson trains the high school mentors in the fall.

“(Mentors) agree to be accountable for all facets of the mentoring process and for their own success in and out of school,” Sanderson said.



Mentors meet with the younger students they mentor at least twice each week for about 30 minutes each time throughout the entire school year.

They use study hall or SRB time in classrooms, in the library, in the gym, or in other places inside the school building to help younger students with homework, to sit and talk or to play games to get to know one another.

Sanderson explained that a student's involvement in mentoring is a commitment for the entire school year. He advised students who want to participate in the mentoring program to plan accordingly.

“We are looking for mentors who really want to help someone else to be a better and happier person and a better student,” Sanderson added.

“Mentors are expected to be consistent, even when they are busy.”



SHADOW ART SHINES

Everyone says the silhouette on the wall at school library in Wagner looks like Brooklyn Tolliver.

And it is her. She did, after all, model for the piece of art that she created.

But Tolliver, 17, is not fully convinced that it looks like her.

"I don't see it as myself," she said. "I just see it as a shadow. I was told that it looks like me from the side, but I don't know."

Regardless, it's been selected as the nation's most unique art structure in a community library.

Tolliver's shadow art display, titled "Reading in the Shadows," was selected as "Most Unique Structure/Art Installation," in a contest put on by book supplier Cenage Learning, as part of National Library Week. The contest is part of National Library Week, which started April 13 and runs through Saturday. The whole month of April is School Library Month.

The cardboard model is not your typical art. It's assembled with scraps of boxes, not painted and is mostly colorless.

But when the light comes on, the sculpture springs to life.

"I just like how simple it is," Tolliver said. "There's really not much to it. It took me about an hour and a half."

The idea for "Reading in the Shadows" stemmed from a class project on shadow art by teacher Jim Peters. Seeing initiative in Tolliver, Peters asked if she would create larger-scale work to display in the library. With the help of a few classmates who traced around Tolliver to create the model, the Wagner junior then pieced together cardboard segments. A large spotlight sits about 10 feet from the cardboard, casting a yellowish glow on the wall, but leaves a perfect outline of the finished product. The shadow shows a student sitting against a wall on the floor with her knees raised and her legs at an angle, holding a book. That shadow, her teachers insist, is a perfect representation of Tolliver.

"That was the first thing I thought when I saw it," Peters said. "I said, 'That looks just like her.'"

Others agreed.

"Look at how much that looks like her," school librarian

Brenda DeHaan said later. "Right down to the eyelashes."

The display has been up for a few months since its completion in January. But DeHaan almost didn't enter it into the contest as the deadline approached because of some problems uploading the correct file to the website for the contest.

"I figured we might as well give it a shot," DeHaan said. "I didn't imagine this."

The exhibit made it into the top five.

Although she was competing against people in larger communities like New York, some small-town campaigning paid off. The school advertised the online voting on its website and teachers encouraged students to vote when making announcements in class.



The school will receive \$500 from the company that put on the contest, money that will go toward the library.

Tolliver said she's not that into art, if she's being honest. She plans to study for a medical career when she graduates next spring. But on a list of accomplishments that includes playing volleyball and basketball and participating in student council and National Honor Society, she can add

accomplished artist to her list as well.

"I guess it was better than what I thought it would be," she said. "I wasn't expecting it to be out this long and like this."

DeHaan, who also serves as librarian at Andes Central, said the shadow art is a great example of the two worlds of books and art meshing perfectly.

"I think it's because you have to use your imagination in both cases," DeHaan said. "They say that a picture is worth a thousand words but there's some of us that would rather read the thousand words. This is really a perfect balance."

Peters said the school is making a more concerted effort to display student art and said Tolliver's standout shadow art is a great example.

"We have a lot of talented kids and Brooklyn just did a great job," he said. "You can't ask for anything more."