I work as a school counselor at Dean Morgan Middle School. Dean Morgan reaches and teaches 850 students, grades 6-8, all of who, with the right support systems and partnerships in place, have great potential to do outstanding things with their lives!

When I think of successful partnerships I can’t help but reflect on my growing up years in rural North Dakota. I am a son of a farmer.

My father, dropped out of school at the age of 16 to help his then widowed mother run her farm. In spite of being a high school dropout, he made it very clear to us, his five children, that he valued education; valued learning and in fact was among my best role models, of what we today call, lifelong learning. He did not however know about college, ACT tests, financial aid, scholarships, essays, or college applications. (I would have been a good candidate myself for the GEAR UP program).

My dad did teach my three brothers, sister and me the concept and value of developing successful partnerships. We could not accomplish the task and success of running a farm without working together. All spring, summer and fall we worked 10-16 hour days, servicing the equipment, tilling the soil, planting the seeds, tending the weeds, and harvesting the crops. We partnered with each other, with extended family, with neighbors, banks, machinery dealerships, with service stations, agricultural extension agents, the grain elevator, the community, and even with the schools.

During national GEAR UP week I heard Mr. Pacheco speak to GEAR UP students and parents. He talked about partnerships and how by working together we can empower our students to accomplish great things.

Continued on page 2
Dean Morgan and GEAR UP partner with our core teaching staff, whereby teachers nominate potential students to be considered by the program. We partner with GEAR UP by providing access to these students to give them the opportunity to learn about and to enroll in the program. We partner several times during the school year when GEAR UP provides lunch and learn meetings. GEAR UP staff begins building relationships and college knowledge with these students during these lunches.

Earlier this fall Dean Morgan and GEAR UP staff met to brainstorm ideas on how to strengthen our partnership. We created a “walk up” to the Casper College campus event, with students and parents, to help GEAR UP staff imprint to their new beautifully remodeled space. Our vision and hope is that more students, with their parents’ support, will take advantage of after school GEAR UP tutoring. We have partnered to begin a GEAR UP club on the Dean Morgan campus designed to build relationships and connection to this program. We are exploring the idea of building GEAR UP homerooms next year to increase access for the GEAR UP staff.

Why do I believe in building a strong partnership with GEAR UP? We just brought in a new crop of students this fall. All of them eager to grow, excited to learn, and anxious to succeed. The students were not all born with the same advantages; they don’t all have the same family systems or financial resources. I believe that when we continue to build strong partnerships with organizations such as GEAR UP, we can help level the playing field for many of these students and help them grow into successful productive adults.

FAFSA AND FSA ID SPOTLIGHT

- The FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is a form that students fill out to apply for federal financial aid that includes grants and federal student loans. The government assesses the information that is included on the FAFSA to match each student with the best possible personal student aid.

- Some of the information that is requested on the FAFSA includes your family’s income, what aid you are interested in, and what school you plan to attend.

- You’ll need to know what school you’d like to attend before you file your FAFSA.

- You will also need to create your FSA ID to help you through the application process.

- An FSA ID gives you access to the Federal Student Aid’s online systems and can serve as your legal signature.

- Only create an FSA ID using your own personal information and for your own exclusive use. You are not authorized to create an FSA ID on behalf of someone else, including a family member.

The FAFSA will be open and be available January 1, 2016 and the priority deadline for completion is March 1, 2016. We are more than happy to help you through this process and are here to help you get this all set up and filled out. Come in to the office and see us today!

Information taken from: https://fafsa.ed.gov
TIPS, TRICKS, AND TIDBITS

By Andrea Covert

As you start the New Year I encourage you to find ways to stay positive and keep motivated! One trick that I use to keep a weekly dose of positivity and encouragement in my routine is by subscribing to a weekly email of encouragement! If you would like to subscribe I invite you to check out (((ripples))) at theripplesguy.com/ripples. From the website: “Ripples is a one-minute inspirational newsletter that arrives in your email inbox each Monday morning with a couple of upbeat quotes and something to think about for the week. It arrives on Mondays, takes less than 60 seconds to read, and we never, ever, EVER share your email address with anyone. You can leave at any time by clicking the unsubscribe button at the bottom of each issue.”

“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there”

– Will Rogers

FROM ANNA’S CUPBOARD

Pelmeni

THE HEART OF RUSSIAN CUISINE

A plate of pelmeni might not look like much to the untrained eye, but it forms the heart of Russian cuisine and culture. It’s served in every Russian restaurant, cooked in homes across the country, and every family likes to think it has its own special recipe.

PREPARING PELMENI

Cooking usually means boiling for about five minutes, either in water or clear broth – in which it can later be served. Some recipes suggest frying the pelmeni after cooking until they turn golden brown. Then, once ready, the dumplings are served up with a dollop of sour cream, or sometimes butter, mustard or horseradish, or ketchup mixed with mayonnaise.

INGREDIENTS:

DOUGH

• 1 1/2 cups flour
• 2 eggs
• 1/2 cup water
• 1/2 tsp. salt

FILLING

• 1/2 lb. ground beef
• 1/2 lb. ground pork
• 2 medium onions, finely chopped
• 1 tsp. salt
• 1/2 tsp. black pepper
• garlic to taste

DIRECTIONS:

To make the dough, combine the flour, eggs, water, and salt. Knead mixture. Let rest for 30 minutes. Mix the ground beef, ground pork, onions, salt, pepper, and garlic together. Cut the dough into three equally sized pieces and roll each one into a cylinder the diameter of a finger.

Cut each cylinder into pieces the size of a walnut, then roll each piece into a very thin flat cake with a diameter of about 2 inches. Put some of the ground meat mixture in the center of each flat cake (quite a lot, but not so much that you can’t seal up the dough). Then fold the dough in half and join up the edges to seal them. Pinch the corners together: you should now have a ravioli-shaped “flying saucer.”

Boil the pelmeni in salted water for seven minutes, or until they float to the surface. Serve them in soup plates with sour cream or in broth.
BIRTHDAY BOX

January

- Ripleigh Atkins, Jan. 2
- Tiffany Roy, Jan. 2
- Melanie Wales, Jan. 5
- Michael A. Antonovich, Jan. 7
- Israel Angel, Jan. 9
- Krystyna Mayfield, Jan. 11
- Johnathan O’Neill, Jan. 23
- Joshua Streeter, Jan. 24
- Justice Bailey, Jan. 25
- Kyler Doyle, Jan. 25
- Garrett Hawkins, Jan. 27
- Anastacia Slack, Jan. 27
- Jason Wolfe, Jan. 28
- Hailey Roy, Jan. 31

STEPH’S FITSPOT

Happy New Year! Now, I am sure most of you have set some fitness goals for this New Year. This is one of the most common New Year’s Resolutions and few people keep track of this goal for long. To help prevent you from joining the masses and instead KEEPING YOUR GOAL and FOCUS, I have created some tips for you.

1. **Make it about your HEALTH.** Instead of hoping for the bikini body or getting super skinny by summer, focus instead on your overall health. Create a better and long-lasting version of yourself. ‘Get healthy’ instead of ‘get fit!’

2. **Create a plan.** Once you have your overall objective in mind, create those smaller goals, which are more attainable. Start with adding exercise to your daily routine – even just going for a walk in the crisp winter evening. Next, look at your diet and focus on how you fuel your body, and then you can increase your goals. Add running or weight training, cut the sugar from your diet, etc.

3. **Bring a Friend.** We all commit better to our goals when we have a source of accountability. Find a friend or family member that wants to join in your goal. You two (or more) can help motivate each other and make sure you stick with it.

4. **Relax.** Instead of thinking of your goal in the short term, think about this goal as a lifelong commitment to a healthier lifestyle. Take it step by step. When you have set backs, instead of quitting, just start again! After all, our health is one thing we can be in control of and always try to improve!

*Image from keepcalm-o-matic.co.uk/p/keep-calm-and-hello-2016-2*
In today’s society, a postsecondary education is critical to good citizenship, individual opportunity, and national competitiveness. Higher education in the United States comprises thousands of institutions that serve a wide diversity of students and an equally wide variety of academic preparation levels. As the demand for higher education grows, unpacking this diversity has become important to inform public dialogue about how students access higher education and whether or not they are successful.

Institutions, Students, and Degree Production

Increases from 2002 to 2012

- 4,726 institutions currently offer postsecondary degrees
- 21 million people are attending college
- 4.7 million degrees and certificates are awarded annually

Student Outcomes

Students obtaining an undergraduate degree or certificate, or are still enrolled after 6 years at any institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Still enrolled</th>
<th>Completion at Different Institution</th>
<th>Completion at Same Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private nonprofit 4-year</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-year</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National average</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 2-year</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit 4-year</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remediation Rate

- 31% Students taking at least one remedial course after enrolling

First-Year Dropout Rate

- 31% College freshmen not returning for their second year at any institution

Highly Mobile Learners

- 24% Students graduating from an institution different than their starting institution

Widespread Payoffs of College Education

Compared with those with a high school credential only, college-educated adults are:

- earning more
- more likely to work
- more likely to participate in civic activities
- more likely to have healthy habits
- less likely to rely on public assistance

Profile of College Students

Typical undergraduates are no longer 18-year-olds straight out of high school.

- 74% Post-traditional learners* on U.S. campuses today

* Post-traditional learners are diverse, and include those who delayed entry to college after high school, obtained an alternative high school credential such as the GED® credential, studied part time at the start, were financially independent, had children, were single parents, or worked full time while enrolled. These characteristics are known to adversely affect college persistence and completion.
In the next couple of newsletters the “Parents Piece” will be sharing 30 tips to raising a middle-schooler, from the Family Life website by Brenda Hunter and Kristen Blair. We hope you get some great advice and ideas. Enjoy!

Tips 11-18:
Mobile phones, gaming, social networking, and the Internet

11. Maintain tech-free bedrooms. Keep computers, laptops, televisions, and gaming equipment in common areas.
12. Keep bedtime boring. If you purchase mobile devices such as a cell phone, smartphone, MP3 player, Nintendo DS, or iPod Touch for your middle schooler, collect them all at bedtime so kids can sleep.
13. Restrict violence. Don’t purchase video games that are riddled with violence. If games are borderline, rent and preview them before buying.
14. Obey the rules. Kids must be 13 to join social networking sites such as Facebook. In fact, we advise waiting until high school at the earliest for Facebook.
15. Monitor social media and Internet usage closely.
16. Install Internet guardrails. Many parents choose to install Internet filtering software or set up parental controls. But the best guardrails are conversations parents have with kids about safe ways to use the Internet as well as family rules, consistently enforced, that govern Internet use.
17. Don’t just throw out the bad; bring in the good. Use media as a teaching tool. View uplifting movies and have rich discussions. Play sports games on Xbox or PlayStation with your child. Bowl together on your Wii. Download dance tunes and jump around.
18. Unplug. Turn off the recreational media spigot sometimes – for the day, for the week. Schedule time for nondigital family fun.

Article taken from: familylife.com/articles/topics/parenting/ages-and-stages/tweens/30-tips-for-raising-middle-schoolers

---

GEAR UP FOCUS EVENT

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL GEAR UP FAMILIES
Thursday, Jan. 28, 2016 • 5-8 p.m.

Come join GEAR UP for a night of fun and food. Students and families are invited to attend this exciting event, to be held in the new GEAR UP office: Strausner Hall, Room 217. We will play games, learn about careers, and work on goal setting. Don’t miss out! Please RSVP by Monday, Jan. 25, 2016, by calling 307-268-2047.
January 2016

GEAR UP HAPPENINGS

GAME ON ANSWER:

Students and staff enjoy reading “Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland” by Lewis Carroll at Dauii’s Book Club!

Students playing a game of chess at the GEAR UP College Success Squad’s Game Night!

MEET THE GEAR UP STAFF

From Left to right: Anna Skimbova (GEAR UP Assistant), Stephanie Marker (Student Success Advisor), Rodney Oster (Student Success Advisor), Ray Pacheco (GEAR UP Regional Director), and Andrea Covert (Student Success Team Lead).

GEAR UP Wyoming is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education totaling $3,548,876 annually with an additional $3,548,876 annually provided by in-kind and scholarship contributions.
**JANUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 New Year’s Day</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly Walsh visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Dean Morgan visit 7:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Natrona County visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly Walsh visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Dean Morgan visit 7:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Natrona County visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
<td>Kelly Walsh visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Dean Morgan visit 7:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Natrona County visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>NCSD end of second quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly Walsh visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Dean Morgan visit 7:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Natrona County visit 9 a.m.-3 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GAME ON! - WINTER DRIVING ALERT!**

**ACROSS**

1. Doo-_____
2. About to explode
3. “Bingo!”
4. Allied (with)
5. “Rocky _____ “
6. Leveled
7. From a spring
8. Weight allowance, once
9. Idiot box
10. Homeless child
11. “Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers”
12. Do watercolors
13. Exodus participants
14. Venetian marketplace
15. Cutting tool
16. Abound
17. Small whirlpool
18. Wall Street figure
19. “Pipe down!”
20. Comparative word
21. MasterCard alternative
22. “____ who?”
23. Home to Columbia U.

**DOWN**

1. Homeless child
2. “Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers”
3. Do watercolors
4. Exodus participants
5. Venetian marketplace
6. Cutting tool
7. Abound
8. Small whirlpool
9. Wall Street figure
10. “Pipe down!”
11. Comparative word
12. MasterCard alternative
13. _____ Spumante
14. “____ who?”
15. Home to Columbia U.

The title is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Crossword puzzle courtesy of: lillyscleaningservice.com/january-crossword-puzzle