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February 2023 Hope Newsletter

Story of Hope:

Miss America 2023 Grace Stanke appears at UW-P to inspire middle schoolers to go into STEM

By Alex Rodriguez, January 13, 2023



Grace Stanke, Miss America 2023, center, sits with a group of girls attending the Girls in Engineering and Math Conference (GEMS) at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside Thursday. Around 450 middle school-aged girls from Racine Unified schools attended a keynote speech by Stanke and several STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) workshops Thursday.

A total of 450 girls from Racine Unified School District middle schools attended the 10th annual Girls Empowered by Math and Science conference Thursday and were joined by Stanke, in her first appearance since winning the title.

The girls, students from Gifford School, Walden III, Gilmore Fine Arts, Jersted-Agerholm school, Mitchell School, Starbuck Middle School and The R.E.A.L School — spent the day living like college students at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, 900 Wood Road, and attended a keynote speech by Stanke as well as a panel discussion moderated by her, and were assigned to attend different workshops that all focused on different STEM disciplines.

“Science isn’t limited to just one thing,” Stanke said. “For me, I focus on nuclear energy, but there are so many ways it can affect society and continue to improve.”

In her speech, Stanke, 20, told a story of how she was first attracted to STEM, specifically engineering, and started competing in Miss America scholarship events as a necessity for financing after her father was diagnosed with cancer.

Stanke is from Wausau and will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's in nuclear engineering this spring. To read more, click on this link: [Miss America 2023 Grace Stanke appears at UW-P to inspire middle schoolers to go into STEM \(journaltimes.com\)](https://www.wisconsinjournaltimes.com/miss-america-2023-grace-stanke-appears-at-uw-p-to-inspire-middle-schoolers-to-go-into-stem/)

Story of Hope:

A librarian's dream helps turn a waiting area at Cook County Jail into an educational nook for children who visit the incarcerated

By Laura Rodriguez Presa, Chicago Tribune, Jan 04, 2023



Before visiting his incarcerated father, 2-year-old K.D. stacks blocks in the early literacy play space inside a Cook County Jail waiting area on Dec. 15, 2022. (Armando L. Sanchez / Chicago Tribune)

When 2-year-old K.D. walked with his aunt inside the waiting area of the Maximum Security Division at Cook County Jail to visit his father, he smiled.

Unlike all the other times his aunt had brought him to the jail, this time, colorful furniture, dozens of books, toys and a vivid mural adorned the space where he typically — and anxiously — waits until an officer escorts him to see his father, who is incarcerated and awaiting trial.

His smile was thanks to the memory of Becca Ruidl, a librarian with the Chicago Public Library who died of COVID-19 in March at age 30. Her dream was to provide a literacy space for children of the incarcerated at the jail, where many children of color tend to spend time while visiting their loved ones, said Elizabeth McChesney, Ruidl's friend and former boss.

On Dec. 13, an early literacy play space was inaugurated at the jail's Maximum Security Division thanks to McChesney's commitment to honor Ruidl's legacy. McChesney galvanized other leaders who supported the vision to change the narrative of children experiencing trauma and providing them with learning opportunities.

"When you walk into the lobby of visitation, it no longer signals hopelessness; it signals connection, and the impact of that is not just for the children, but also for the individuals who are incarcerated," said Dr. Nneka Jones Tapia, a clinical psychologist and managing director of justice initiatives at Chicago Beyond. To read more, click on this link: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/people/ct-cook-county-jail-adds-child-friendly-center-fights-stigma-incarcerated-20230104-o2pdctt5rje3dhtxf33jeqmrq-story.html>

Stories of Hope:



This organization has been highlighted before on the Hope From the Bottom Up website at <https://hopefromthebottomup.com/hope-filled-organizations#map>. They are very actively working with young political leaders in many states, bringing together Democrat and Republican elected officials to lessen the political polarization in our country. Below is a story of one of their efforts.

On the Rise: Kansas Future Caucus



Young leaders in Kansas are stepping up.

Last week, MAP traveled to Topeka to partner with the Kansas Future Caucus for a moment of action. In a panel discussion titled “A More Collaborative Kansas: How Young Legislators Are Shaking Up Topeka,” the young legislators discussed their work in the state legislature and goals for the 2023 legislative session.

There is a profound culture shift taking place. “The [Future Caucus] idea extends past the legislature... It’s giving people something higher to aspire to... Politics does not have to feel like it has for the past 4, 8, or 12 years... If it’s going to be a long term change, it’s got to be from this generation. It’s got to be from future leaders of our parties and the state, and that’s in this room,” said Rep. Rui Xu, the Democratic co-chair of the caucus during the panel.

“When I first came in, [the legislature] was very polarized. I would stay away from Democrats; that was ingrained in my mind, but that’s not how you get things done. That’s not how you get legislation passed... We are bringing back the fact that: I’m going to disagree with you in committee.... I disagree with you on a lot of things... But afterwards, let’s go get drinks or dinner and have a conversation,” said Rep. Blew, the Republican co-chair of the caucus.

Relationship-building is key to good policymaking. And the Kansas Future Caucus is the go to place where young legislators can find policy partners in the statehouse. Kansas is just one of MAP’s many points of proof that the Future Caucus model works. It creates a permission structure that unites legislators along their shared generational identity so they might transcend their partisan differences.

Learn more about how young legislators are shaking things up in Kansas by reading the full article at this link: <https://medium.com/millennial-voices/on-the-rise-tour-kansas-future-caucus-c8580fd42aff>

The Arts:

I love the change of seasons. Each season has its own beauty. And as seasons change, it reminds us that the mix of change and sameness in the world around us is a good thing. We enjoy the beauty of the past and present and look forward to beauty in the future.



Click on this link for some music appropriate to the winter season:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcXSm51UI5M>

Hope-Filled Organization:



From battlefields in Iraq to the Nashville music scene, how a Marine veteran is using art to heal

By Meg Dunn, CNN, Published Thu August 11, 2022 Nashville, TNCNN —

Growing up, Richard Casper always knew he wanted to serve others. When he was a junior in high school, the 9/11 terrorist attacks happened, and he realized how he would fulfill that calling.

"I had this urge inside of me," he said. "I joined the Marine Corps infantry. ... I wanted to be the first person going overseas and fighting."

During basic training, he was selected for a special duty of guarding then-President George W. Bush at Camp David. Once he received clearance and completed that 14-month assignment, he was still determined to deploy.

"When I touched down in Iraq, I was prepared to die," Casper said. "I was just ready to do my job."

Within the first four months, his Humvee was hit by IEDs four separate times. During one mission, his good friend and gunner, Luke Yepsen, was shot by a sniper and died beside him.

“It was so hard to comprehend what happened because we go to work the next day like nothing happened,” Casper said. “When you’re in the infantry, they have to strip away all your vulnerabilities. They have to, because (otherwise) you’re not going to survive in war.”

Casper was forever changed after serving in Iraq, and he struggled with the transition home. He started failing the college business courses he had enrolled in and developed crippling anxiety.

“I couldn’t do it,” Casper said. “But I knew I was smart. You had to have a certain IQ to guard the President.”

He went to his local VA hospital and learned he had post-traumatic stress, degenerative disk disease, and tinnitus, among other medical issues. To read more, click on this link: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/11/us/nashville-music-art-veterans-therapeutic-cnnheroes/index.html>

To view a 9 minute video about Richard Casper and his work, please click on this link: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/11/us/nashville-music-art-veterans-therapeutic-cnnheroes/index.html>

The Future:

Guest commentary: Build net-zero schools in Racine

Tom Rutkowski, Jan 8, 2023, Racine Journal Times

Schools in the United States spend almost \$8 billion a year on energy, a cost greater than all the money spent on textbooks and computers combined and second only to salaries.

Some school districts, recognizing that this money could be better spent directly supporting educational goals, are building net-zero schools which use less energy and generate the energy they need through renewable sources.

As it begins to design and construct several new schools, it is the right time for Racine Unified School District to build schools that will eliminate the costs of energy, provide healthier indoor environments and embody the principles of sustainability as an educational resource.

The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act includes new financial incentives for school districts to adopt energy efficiency measures and renewable energy options. These incentives will significantly shorten the payback period for the initial investment and relieve the school district of the energy burden for decades to follow. In addition, net-zero schools also insulate the school district from the volatility of rising energy prices. To Read more, click on this link: [Guest commentary Tom Rutkowski: Build net-zero schools in Racine \(journaltimes.com\)](https://journaltimes.com/guest-commentary-tom-rutkowski-build-net-zero-schools-in-racine/)

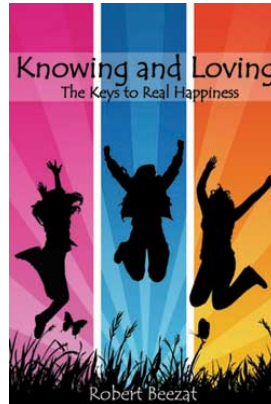


Located just south of Madison, the Oregon School District's Forest Edge Elementary is the first net-zero school in Wisconsin.

To read about the first net-zero school in Wisconsin, click on this link: <https://www.archpaper.com/2021/09/hgas-forest-edge-elementary-school-is-wisconsins-first-net-zero-energy-school/>

Prayers and Spirituality:

We all hope for good things for ourselves, our families, our community, our country, and the entire world. For many people, prayer is one way we express that hope. Several years ago, I wrote a book called Knowing and Loving: the Keys to Real Happiness.



Here is a link to information about that book:

[Knowing and Loving – Robert Beezat \(characterbasedmanagement.net\)](http://characterbasedmanagement.net)

Chapter Twenty in the book is titled “Praying for Wisdom, Strength, and Courage.”

Below are the first several paragraphs of Chapter Twenty.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Praying For Wisdom, Strength, and Courage

Like most people, I always had a problem with not having prayers answered. We have all heard the quote in the Bible when Jesus said, “Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it shall be opened to you.”

So, why doesn't someone get cured of cancer when I ask God to do so? Why isn't there peace in the Middle East when I ask God to accomplish that? Most importantly, why can't the Chicago Cubs win a World Series, or even get to one, when so many fervently pray for that to happen? (To put that sentence in proper context, I wrote this chapter in 2010. I doubt that prayer had anything to do with it, but the Chicago Cubs actually won the World Series in 2016. Who'd of thunk?)

When I pray, I don't expect cures for my ailments, winning a game, good fortune for my family, etc. I don't think God intervenes in those matters very often or at all. Instead, I pray for wisdom, strength and courage. Those are qualities of the Spirit/spirit which the second half of the quote above makes reference to. Jesus said, “And I will ask God to send you the Holy Spirit who will guide you.”

My first request is to ask for wisdom.

Wisdom is a very broad term in my way of thinking.

Wisdom is a combination of knowledge and love (head and heart) that leads to practical action.

To read the full chapter, click on this link: <https://hopefromthebottomup.com/sites/default/files/inline-files/CHAPTER%20TWENTY.%20for%20hope%20newsletter%286%29.pdf>

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Hope From the Bottom Up website link: <https://hopefromthebottomup.com/>

Or send me an email (robert@robertbeezat.com) with the name and email address of the person you think would be interested. I will then contact them.

Thank You