

Island Preschool Students Enjoy Graduation Party

By Sean Ely

Eating pizza, chips, cake, and ice cream, drinking fruit juice, listening to music, and hanging out with friends and family might sound like a pretty relaxing party, but for the three preschoolers, this was graduation.

T.J. Massaway, Hannah Styburski, and Makenna Horricks officially became preschool graduates from Mackinac Island Public School Thursday, May 24, adorned in graduation caps that they made themselves with paper, scissors, paint, and a white tassel.

Food and beverages were served as the children sat at their tables. They were patiently anticipating their performance at the school board meeting across the hallway.

"The students did a song called 'Tap, Tap, Twirl, and Twist,'" preschool teacher Jody Barna said. She has visited the Island for the past 16 summers, but this was her first winter as a resident. She owned a preschool for the past 20 years, but prior to that, she was an elementary teacher at Star Elementary in Plainwell.

Mrs. Barna stresses the importance of her children learning the five components of literacy: Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency. She treats preschool as a time for the kids to interact while learning.

"They do a great job, not just academically, but they work hard at getting along with others and working in a group and following directions, too," she said. "All of those skills are important. This is helping prepare them to be lifelong learners."

The parents see the classroom goals showing in their children's everyday lives.

"Actually, preschool turned out to be a bigger deal than I thought it would," T.J. Massaway's mother, Erin Bagbey, said. "I thought pre-

school would just be oriented at getting him to interact with other children, but he actually learned his ABC's and the Pledge of Allegiance, too. I'm very impressed."

Even Hannah Styburski's mother, Debra Styburski, after home schooling her daughter for six months, believes that the weeks Hannah spent with the class were monumental in her education.

"I'm very excited for her to get this wonderful experience that the school has to offer," she said. "This program is great, and it has the kids interacting, while the kindergarten is going to be teaching some real learning."

The projects, activities, and homework assignments that the kids bring home seem to be a joy for their parents because it gives them an insight into what they are doing and learning while at Mackinac Island Public School.

"I enjoy seeing the work Mrs. Barna gives," Mrs. Styburski said. "It reassures me that she [Hannah] knows it all. Her artwork is also awesome. She brings stuff home and she actually knows the letters when I'm reading a story to her. She's saying, 'Mom, this word is this, because it starts with this.' It's great to hear that."

Seeing the students bring home assignments seems to be a trip down memory lane for those who can still remember their early-school days.

"I like the artsy stuff," Mrs. Bagbey said. "I never did a lot of it when I was going through school, and or him to bring home art projects is fun. It's hands-on activities, and they're getting to use scissors, paint, and glue, and crazy stuff like that. At first he never interacted with any other children his age, so he's grown a lot in that area. Now he interacts very well with other children. He's become their friends in a matter of minutes. I was actually really surprised with that because I



Eleven of the 14 preschool students stand ready to dig in and enjoy their end-of-the-year party cake. From left are T.J. Massaway, Ella Cowell, John Andress, Dominic Morse, Macade Ferguson, Aaron Riggs, Hannah Styburski, Dylan Szabo, Makenna Horricks, Brooke Dziobak, and Harrison Myers.

thought he would be a typical child, not interacting with other kids, but it wasn't like that. He wouldn't get his hands dirty before preschool and now he's a dirty boy, like regular boys are."

Makenna Horricks' mother, Kelly, commented that her daughter has had an absolute blast as a preschooler at the school.

Both the Horricks family and the Styburski family live on the Island when their fathers, Jason Horricks and Ken Styburski, are here to prepare for Grand Hotel's opening. Jason Horricks is the hotel's golf pro, while Mr. Styburski is the hotel's controller. They live on the Island for four months while school is in session, two in the spring and two in the fall.

"The girls came in and balanced the class," Mrs. Barna said. "We had a lot of boys, and they came in and calmed our kids down. They just gave a lot to our class the last few weeks."

The three graduates con-

quered preschool, with their sites set on kindergarten and the classroom of Vicki Urman, the kindergarten teacher at the school.

"I think they are very well prepared for kindergarten," Mrs. Barna said with a smile.

"They've worked hard on the five components of literacy. They worked on things like beginning sounds and comprehension. What you learn in preschool prepares you for life. They are all ready to go on to the next step."

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Auction Earns \$5,077

One hundred eighty-two bicycles were auctioned off for a grand total of \$5,077 at the annual Mackinac Island Police Department bike auction Saturday, May 26, at Community Hall.

The \$5,077 is believed to make this year's auction the highest grossing of all time. The police department also sold \$637 worth of bike licenses.

The auctioned bicycles were unclaimed from last summer and were acquired by abandonment or impoundment by the department. They sold from \$1 to \$130 in a three-hour auction.

Mike Carley of Mackinac Island was the auctioneer.

Governor's Residence Tours Begin

Beginning June 6, free tours of the Governor's Summer Residence on Mackinac Island will be offered from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each Wednesday through August 29.

The 1902 structure has served as a summer home for Michigan governors and their families since 1944.

The home is at the intersection of Fort Street and Huron Road on a bluff overlooking the Island's downtown and the Straits of Mackinac.

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