Auburn High School Robotics Team #3219, also known as “TREAD” (Technology, Robotics, Engineering and Design), and Auburn Mountainview High School Robotics Team #2907 faced off against 100 teams from across the state at the FIRST Microsoft Seattle Regional Robotics Competition in March and the FIRST Spokane Regional Robotics Competition in April.

TREAD made it to the semifinals in Seattle and the finals in Spokane, and Team #2907 made it to the quarterfinals in Seattle and semifinals in Spokane. “It is very impressive that two Auburn schools made it to the highest level of competition at both the Seattle and Spokane competitions,” says Jan Erie, TREAD advisor. “Our teams have a depth of talent.”

This year’s competition, called “Rebound Rumble,” required teams to build robots that could play basketball. During a six-week “build session,” Auburn’s robotics teams designed, programmed and built 100-120 pound robots that could score baskets, quickly maneuver a 27 x 54 foot field, and balance on teetering bridges in the middle of the field. After the build session, the robots were crated and shipped to a secure location. Teams reunited with their robots one day prior to the regional competition.

FIRST Robotics encourages and inspires students to engage in the fields of engineering, science and technology through hands-on, mentor-supported challenges and achievements. Students design, wire, program and weld with the assistance of teacher advisors and industry mentors. According to Tim Scott, Team #2907 advisor, “Mentors are key players during the build sessions. We review concepts and show students how things work together. These designs are complicated and it takes all the support we can get to finish our robot and have it ready for competition at the end of the six-week build session.”

Next year both teams hope to reach the FIRST 2013 Robotics Championship in St. Louis, Missouri.
Sign language opens a different, engaging channel of communication for Jessica Fletcher.

Her mother, Colleen, is technically hard of hearing, and frequently she turns to her wide vocabulary of hand-shaped signs to exchange a silent, captivating conversation.

"I mean, my mom is completely oral. She hears, but she needs to lipread," said Fletcher, a junior at Auburn Riverside High School and a second-year student in Cindy Anderson’s American Sign Language (ASL) class. “My mom used to work with deaf people sometimes, so I thought it would be interesting to learn the language.

“There are new signs I picked up from what my mom remembered, and I knew the entire alphabet,” she added. “It’s interesting.”

And worthwhile.

Fletcher and her classmates continue to excel in Anderson’s program, the only one of its kind offered in the Auburn School District.

Representing Auburn Riverside, Fletcher recently won a statewide contest — Tahoma High School’s ASL Invitational — in the second-year level, storytelling category for her symbolic rendition of “King Kong”.

In front of judges, a majority of whom are deaf, Fletcher successfully translated the story within the three-minute limit.

Asked how she described the star gorilla, a grinning Fletcher simultaneously pumped her closed fists off her chest.

Fletcher’s classmate, Jayme Greer, also stood tall at the invitational, placing third in the ABC storytelling category for her symbolic rendition of “Gone Fishing”.

Greer decided to try sign language, following her sister, Kelsey, who flourished under Anderson’s guidance.

“I like the idea that you don’t have to talk to convey what you’re thinking,” said Greer, an exceptional student who would like to pursue civil engineering at Oregon State University. “It’s really a unique form of language.”

Fletcher and Greer are exemplary personalities of Anderson’s work.

Anderson, who previously worked as a silent language interpreter before going into teaching, offers five classes daily, working with about 140 students of varying skill levels. Anderson is in her 16th year at the school.

“Some students can just memorize signs quickly and just grasp the whole concept of ASL as a different language, and the grammar part that comes with the language as well,” Anderson said. “These two (Fletcher and Greer) definitely learned quickly. They retained the information and they can produce the language, not just watch it and understand it.”

Students, such as Fletcher and Greer, learn at least 500 signs by the second year.

Fletcher’s favorite? The sign for “how are you?”

Greer’s the sign for “trouble.”

Like Greer, Fletcher hopes to practice conversational ASL long after she finishes school.

Students often become fluent with the alphabet, but encounter some difficulty in learning the different sentence structures. ASL follows the same English order, others do not, Anderson said.

While ASL is the native language of most deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the country, not all signs are interpreted similarly.

Distinct signs or accents are practiced in different regions, Anderson said.

Despite its challenges—like other foreign languages—ASL gradually has caught on in acceptance and exposure, Anderson said.

“It was considered a true foreign language since the 1960s. It has taken many years for colleges and universities to accept it as a true foreign language,” she said.

That acceptance has led to high schools offering the program.

Many colleges and universities are beginning to recognize the study of ASL and deaf culture as legitimate academic pursuits, and are starting to accept ASL in fulfillment of their foreign language entrance and exit requirements.

In several states, including Washington, ASL is mandated by law as acceptable in fulfillment of high school foreign language graduation requirements.

More and more colleges and universities are accepting ASL in fulfillment of foreign language requirements.

“ASL has come far, and improved in many ways (in the classroom) today,” Anderson said.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Recognizes Auburn Mountainview High School for Having #1 Student Pass Rate for Microsoft Office Specialist Certification

Auburn Mountainview High School (AMHS) students are earning Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Certification. In fact, AMHS has the #1 student pass rate for MOS Certification and the fourth largest number of certifications in Washington State.

Randy Dorn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, applauds AMHS staff and students for “setting an example for the rest of the state as the IT Academy continues to grow within Washington.”

A number of students have scored in the high 900s and one student has scored a perfect 1,000. With some of the best scores in the country, these students may be invited to represent the United State in the 2012 Worldwide Competition on Microsoft Office in Las Vegas in July.

Auburn School District offers MOS certification at all four high schools. Besides the comprehensive computer skills that students gain for their high school studies, certification is impressive on job applications, resumes and college applications.

According to Patty Eckelman, AMHS business education teacher, “My goal is to give students learning opportunities and skills that prepare them for college, work and other post-secondary opportunities...MOS is the only industry-level certification that validates the computer skills needed to get the most out of Microsoft Office applications. And it is designed for industry, not high school students, so the certification really grabs your attention on job applications, scholarships and resumes.”

Did You Know?

Six Auburn Mountainview High School seniors have been accepted into top art schools including Duy Vo, Pratt Institute for the Arts, Michelle Ahn, University of California, Alex Mojica and Justin Williams, Cornish College of the Arts, Johnathan Rutherford, Highline, and Alexia Hosier, Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising.

Over 50 graphic design students from Auburn High, Auburn Mountainview and Auburn Riverside High Schools will participate in the International Academy of Design and Technology’s portfolio review on June 1. Students will have the opportunity to meet with professionals from the art field and representatives from art schools and universities to review their portfolio of works.

Hailey Hansen, Auburn High School senior and DECA marketing education student, was awarded a $5,000 scholarship from Hilton Worldwide.

Hailey Hansen is an active member of the AHS community. She is a member of DECA and serves as the vice president of membership and leadership for the AHS Chapter. Under her guidance, the chapter has reached the Summit Level Membership Goal.

Over the course of four years, Hailey has earned numerous awards including a fourth place finish in the 2012 State DECA Competition in Marketing Communications and Entrepreneurship Promotion and a second place finish in the DeVry Business Pitch Competition in Chicago.

According to DECA advisor Lori Jacobs, “Hailey is an outstanding student. She is most deserving of this highly competitive scholarship.”

Hailey will attend Washington State University in the fall and plans to enroll in the School of Hospitality.

The Auburn School District Automotive Technology Program was awarded 24 new Kohler engines for the program’s small gas engine classes. The 24 engines retail for approximately $6,000 and are excellent training aids for the small gas engine program.

Ten Auburn Mountainview High School students scored in the top 20 percent in the 2012 National Financial Capability Challenge. The challenge tests financial skills and awareness and is created and managed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of Education. Over 80,000 high school students across the country took the exam. The following AMHS students scored in the top 20 percent and earned certifications that will look great on job applications, scholarships and resumes:

Darrell Chitwood
Audrey Clair
Isaiah Evans
Kyler Gormley
Trevor Halvorson
Lewis McDonald
Ian Nelson
Kaliyah Pierce
Andrew Rodin
Nyaruey Thareek

AMHS student grown annuals, perennials, baskets, herbs & veggies
Auburn Mountainview High School Greenhouse
28900 124th Ave SE

Plant Sale
May 3rd & 4th (8am - 6pm)
May 5th (8am - 3pm)
May 7th & 8th (8am - 3pm)

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Nyaruey Thareek
Auburn Riverside High School Students Claim 11 Medals at SkillsUSA Competition

Auburn Riverside High School students competed at the Washington State SkillsUSA Competition on April 12-14 in Renton. Over 900 of Washington's top Career and Technical Education (CTE) students participated in the event. The following Auburn Riverside High School students participated and placed in the competition. Gold medalists qualify to compete at the National SkillsUSA Tournament in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 23-27.

Basic Electronics
Alex Fulford, gold
Michael Lant, silver
Darlene Kern, bronze

Advanced Electronics
Dustin McAllister, 4th

Cabinetry
Austin Fune, gold

Computer Maintenance Technology
Bryan Rivera, silver
Brandon Hall, bronze
Mario Rodríguez, 4th

Electronics Technology
Riley Schulz, gold
Alex Labish, silver
Braden Mast, bronze

Job Interview
Michael Lant, gold

Extemporaneous Speaking
Bryan Rivera, silver

Quiz Bowl
Quiz bowl team, 4th

SkillsUSA is a national student organization that promotes student professionalism and technical skills in a variety of trades.

Auburn Mountainview Students Tackle Engineering Challenge

During National Engineers Week on February 14, three engineers from The Boeing Company challenged Auburn Mountainview students to build a bridge from Seattle to Bainbridge Island designed to withstand the weight of traffic. Only using paper, tape, ruler and scissors, student teams had 30 minutes to create a “bridge” that would hold a textbook at least 12 inches above a flat surface for a minimum of 30 seconds.

Some textbooks crashed to the ground, but the winning design had no trouble cradling the textbook. According to Jim Maurus, one of the Boeing engineers, “The challenge helps students discover the skills it takes to be a successful engineer: curiosity, problem solving, creativity and a love of learning.”

Students also learned the different types of engineering and how to prepare for a career in engineering. Maurus stressed the importance of taking a variety of math, science, language and fine art classes; getting involved in extracurricular math and science activities; and studying for the SAT.

“I love my job,” says Maurus, “so I want to share the opportunity with young people.”

Auburn Mountainview Senior Wins AVCA Logo Design Contest

Justin Williams, a senior at Auburn Mountainview High School, created the winning design for the Auburn Valley Creative Arts (AVCA) logo design contest. AVCA will use the design on everything it publishes, from posters to postcards to websites.

Justin’s bold, eye-catching design beat out over 100 other entries. According to AMHS graphic design instructor Lonnie Chavez, “The contest had many professional entries. Justin is a talented artist.”

Justin and his design were recognized at an AMHS spirit assembly on April 20. AVCA presented Justin with a winning certificate and gift card. “I learned a lot from the contest...how to create something for a client and how to deal with deadlines. And I gained more experience on the computer and with the programs,” says Justin, a second-year graphic design student.

The modern design is a series of colored, geometric shapes that incorporates the organization’s acronym. All three contest judges voted Justin’s design as the best entry.

Justin is not only a graphic design student but also a student of the fine arts. He draws and paints with a variety of mediums. One of his favorite pieces is an ink drawing of an African elephant.

Justin plans to major in graphic arts in college and apply his creative skills in his future career.
Mt. Baker Middle School Students Win 2012 School of the Future Design Contest

On February 2, Mt. Baker Middle School students—James Baldwin, Kylie Covara, Jordan Harrison, Conner Hofman, Adrian Hollingsworth, Madalyn Horine, Josh Leitner and Aislinn Suelflow—won first place in the 2012 School of the Future Design Competition sponsored by the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI). They represented the State of Washington during the regional competition on February 23 and won second place.

The team designed, planned and created a prototype of a school for the future situated on a building site that Auburn School District currently owns for a future building project. According to Mt. Baker teacher Bruce Jacobs, and project adviser, “The students took off with the project. After a lot of research and investigation, the students created a final product that was structurally sound and environmentally conscious. The building blends with the landscape and even utilizes the site’s wetlands for a ‘Science on Wheels’ curriculum.” The team was also mentored by Jesse Kingsley, a University of Washington architecture graduate student.

The schoolhouse boasts geothermal electricity, light tubes and skylights, pedestrian sky bridge, performing arts center, two-story gymnasium, green wall and rooftop garden.

The team designed a paved path from the schoolhouse to the wetlands and a footbridge into the wetlands so it can be accessed for hands-on, outdoor science education.

All classrooms follow a curvature along the southeast side of the building to maximize the use of natural lighting and to provide an unobstructed view of Mt. Rainier.

Additionally, the lower gymnasium, cafeteria, performing arts center and commons are all located together to increase community engagement.

The team presented their project to a jury for review. Their visual aids included 3-D model of the school, PowerPoint presentation, display board and site map.

The annual competition, open to middle school students, challenges student teams to design their schools to enhance learning, conserve resources, be environmentally responsive and engage the surrounding community. The opportunity allows students to develop math, science, language, communication and leadership skills through the process of design. The multi-disciplinary solution requires students to follow a planning process from the concept phase to completion of the project, with thorough documentation.

2011-12 Auburn School District High School Teacher of the Year Is Fred Donaldson

Fred Donaldson, Auburn School District autoshop and small gas engine teacher, is the district’s 2011-12 high school level co-teacher of the year, sharing the honor with Auburn Riverside High School ELL teacher Jackie De Haven.

Mr. Donaldson touches the lives of students from across the district. He is the popular autoshop and small gas engines instructor for the entire Auburn School District. He instructs and impacts the lives of students from Auburn High, Auburn Mountainview, Auburn Riverside and West Auburn High Schools. He relates to students, possesses instructional flexibility, and helps students learn skills based on their ability levels. Mr. Donaldson develops lessons and runs the shop to match the needs of his students.

As a Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructor, Mr. Donaldson takes to heart the duty that he needs to prepare his students for the real world of work. He runs his autoshop like a small business, and expects his students to work and behave in a professional manner. Many of Mr. Donaldson’s graduates populate local auto dealerships and auto mechanic businesses, making a positive impact in the business community.

Mr. Donaldson leads the district’s advisory board for automotive education, which is comprised of master mechanics and experts in the local automotive industry. He is rated as a Nationally Certified Master Trainer by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) frequently requests Mr. Donaldson to teach other professionals in his field.

Additionally, Mr. Donaldson secures automobiles, tools, small gas engines and cash through various grant programs. Recently, the automotive technology program was awarded 24 new Kohler engines for the small gas engine classes. These items are excellent, real-world training aids for students.

On June 11, Mr. Donaldson will be recognized as an outstanding teacher by the Auburn School Board. Additionally, he has been selected to move on to the regional level of competition.
Competition Corner

2012 Passing the Torch: Washington State High School Jewelry and Metals Exhibition

Auburn Riverside High School Results

- Kenia Marquez, 1st place, jewelry category, for her necklace, “Beauty of Armor”
- Chris Connacher, 2nd place, jewelry category, for his necklace, “Angel Descending”
- Carly Morgan, honorable mention, jewelry category, for her necklace, “Afloat”
- Barbara Vasquez, 2nd place, “Inspired by Music” category, for her music box, “Virgen de Guadalupe”
- Kayla Wicks, 3rd place, “Inspired by Music” category, for her music box, “Song Birds”

2012 Saul Bell Design Award Competition

Auburn Riverside High School Results

- Drew Abts, 2nd place, “Emerging Artists” category, for her necklace, “Kingdom of Heaven”

2012 Technology Student Association (TSA) State Competition

Auburn Riverside High School Results

- Kate Wallen, 1st place, Transportation Modeling
- Marvin Velasquez, 2nd place, Transportation Modeling
- Prab Kaler, 3rd place, Transportation Modeling
- Maelynn De Los Angeles, 2nd place, Woodworking Design
- Andrew Ridge, 3rd place, Technical Sketching
- Andrew Ridge and Kate Wallen, 4th place, Vex Robotics
- Andrew Ridge and Kate Wallen, 4th place, Engineering Design
- Ruslan Kuzmich, 4th place, Architectural Model
- Ron Warren, 5th place, Architectural Model

2012 SkillsUSA Puget Sound Regional Welding Competition

Auburn Mountainview High School Results

- Anthony Houston, 2nd place


Auburn High School Results

- 8th place overall

Auburn Mountainview High School Results

- 4th place overall
Auburn High DECA Students Raise Awareness and $8,500 for Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund

Auburn High School DECA members launched a school-wide fundraiser to benefit the Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund. Over the past six months, students have raised $8,500. Four deserving seniors will be awarded academic scholarships for their future studies.

Tucker Johnson, a senior at Auburn High School, lost his life in a tragic car accident in late August.

DECA members started the Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund to pay tribute to the outstanding character that Tucker demonstrated. Tucker’s outgoing personality and serving, caring, sensitive nature is sorely missed. “Tucker accepted everyone, loved everyone, his smile would light up a room,” says Lori Jacobs, Auburn High DECA advisor.

DECA students collected funds through coin drives, T-shirt sales, football dedications and the Tucker Trot. More importantly this project developed a sense of unity on campus. Students will continue to raise funds and grant scholarships until the time that McKinley Johnson, Tucker’s sister, graduates in 2014.

In March, “The Community Service Project for the Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund” was among the top five selected to advance to the 2012 DECA International Competition in Salt Lake City. The student project leaders—McKinley Johnson, Alyssa Wall and Mariah Sonstelie—developed a 30-page written document and a 15-minute presentation for judges.

“Doing the project and the presentation was one of the hardest yet most rewarding experiences I have ever had,” says McKinley Johnson. “I could not practice my introduction because I would just start crying; I miss him so much.”

Donations can be made to the Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund by contacting Debbie Sumner or Lori Jacobs at (253) 931-4880.

Auburn High School DECA Chapter Wins 4th Place at International Competition

On May 1, the Auburn High School (AHS) DECA Chapter, a student leadership organization for marketing and business students, won 4th place for their community service project, the Tucker Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund, during the DECA International Career Development Conference in Salt Lake City.

Led by students McKinley Johnson, Alyssa Wall and Mariah Sonstelie, the project was developed to honor Tucker Johnson, a senior at Auburn High School, who lost his life in a tragic car accident in late August.

The trio qualified for the DECA International Competition after placing in the top five at the State Competition. They developed a 30-page written document and prepared a 15-minute presentation for a panel of judges at the International and State Competitions.

Pictured right: AHS DECA trio Alyssa Wall, Mariah Sonstelie and McKinley Johnson capture 4th place at the DECA International Competition.