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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 18, 2013

Hidden River Middle School Starts Preparing for College

Monroe, WA – It's never too soon to start thinking about your days after high school. That's the message Michelle Simeoni wants to give to the students at Hidden River Middle School, where the counseling office has been bringing representatives from local colleges to talk about opportunities for students after high school.

As counselor, Simeoni is concerned about students who don't see themselves as college bound. "Some kids don't have siblings that graduated high school," she said. "We want kids who don't feel they're four-year college material to sit up and pay attention that there are other opportunities."

An instructor from the Divers Institute of Technology, which offers training in the field of commercial diving, visited Hidden River this fall. Michelle Philbin, Director of Admissions at DIT thought the idea of introducing college alternatives like DIT to middle school students was wonderful. "I've talked to students who say 'I wish I'd known about this sooner.' Especially guys in their twenties – they say, 'I wish I hadn't wasted all that time after high school when I could have been doing something that made me happy,'" Philbin said.

Morgan Wolff is a school counseling intern in graduate school at Seattle Pacific University. Wolff noted that not all students have control over how ready they are for college, so hearing about alternatives can be very helpful. "When a student doesn't have the best grades in the world, it's often because they have bigger things they are concerned with," Wolff described.

Casey Melnick, a representative from Washington State University, will be visiting Hidden River in December. "College is a place to explore your passions and translate that into a future career. The sooner we can get students thinking about their passions and what they enjoy learning, the more successful their life after high school will be," Melnick said.

As a college student, Wolff also had an additional perspective. “If I had to tell them one thing it’s that for a middle schooler, the greatest resource is time. Middle school is where you’re setting the groundwork for what you can do in high school, making the plan. Then high school is when you build on it, put it into action,” he said.

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