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Pine-Richland School District focuses on inclusion

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COURTESY OF PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pine-Richland Senior High School junior Lindsey Washington with teacher Michelle as they work on some projects to highlight the importance of inclusion.

In the Pine-Richland School District, each school and many organizations are working to celebrate differences in hopes of being more inclusive.

Members of the Pine-Richland High School Peer Buddies organization are working on an inclusion project. The students are creating puppets for a live reading they are planning for elementary students under the direction of teacher Michelle Dittmer.

The goal is to read stories and include puppetry. The stories that the students picked are ones that focus on inclusion, diversity and celebrating differences. The students hope the stories share more about Black History Month, along with different cultures and even differences in abilities. The students will then present the stories with students at Hance, Richland and Wexford Elementary schools via live or video streams.

At the high school, the PRHS Black Student Union worked on a bulletin board that reminds folks that highlighting Black leaders should occur year-round. In addition, the high school is featuring holidays from around the world, including Diwali, the Chinese New Year and Kwanza just to name a few.

The PRHS Gay-Straight Alliance is lifting up its peers through art. Student officers in the GSA created artwork to create awareness for their peers, letting them know they are not alone. They took time to decorate the hallways at the high school near the grand staircase.

Eden Hall Upper Elementary School and Pine-Richland Middle School are featuring Black leaders via bulletin boards along the hallways and school announcements.

PRHS junior Lindsey Washington is also helping read to students. She chose the book "Be You" by Peter Reynolds to read to younger students.

"I am all about inclusion," she said. "It important to include others and make them feel a part of the group."

Dittmer wanted to thank the PRHS consumer science department with the help of teacher April Dull for the use of sewing machines, fabric and other supplies for the peer buddies project. Principal Nancy Bowman also helped the organization order supplies.

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