

# PIONEER

Spring Is Here!  
Photos Page 6 & 7



## Teachers Planning Walkout If Pay Increase Fails

By NATALIE NELL, Pioneer Staff Writer

Oklahoma public school teachers are about to walk out.

After West Virginia teachers went on strike for nine days and ended up getting a five percent salary increase, Oklahoman teachers decided the time for change was now.

Oklahoma ranks 50th in the nation for teacher pay. Currently, about 40 school districts are in support of suspending school. A recent poll conducted by NewsOK.com reported 88 percent of Oklahomans support a teacher strike.

Alicia Priest, president of the Oklahoma Education Association, said if lawmakers do not come up with an "acceptable" solution by April 1st, then Oklahoma schools will be forced to shut down.

"Our school communities are desperate for change because we know what's at stake here: the future of our students and this great state," she said.

Priest says their goal is to force the legislature to pass a plan that provides teachers and professionals a "significant" pay raise and restores critical funding to classrooms.

"They must work swiftly to follow the law and pass an education budget by April 1st," she said.

If their solution doesn't meet the demands of the pay raise, Priest said OEA will call for statewide school closures beginning April 2nd.

Priest said the OEA is demanding the bill include a \$6,000 pay raise this year, and \$2,000

for each of the next two years.

"We will be at the capitol until a solution has passed and has been signed by the governor. We are all in this together and we have the same goal," she said. "Together we can win this for our students. Together, we are stronger."

Yukon Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Jason Simeroth said walkouts "aren't easy" but something needs to be done.

"We will support whatever our teachers decide to do, because they're not fighting for just paychecks," he said. "They're fighting for respect, they're fighting for your kids and your grandkids, and for the future of public education in Oklahoma."

In a video posted on the YPS Facebook page, Simeroth addressed many concerns regarding parents and students. He assured parents that seniors will still graduate, concurrent courses will still be available, and Canadian Valley Technology Center is still going to be running. He also added that if school is cancelled, absents will not count at all towards any student.

Simeroth said the school board had metro superintendent meetings last week, discussing the circumstances of whether or not they'd have after-school activities.

"The vote of the majority of metro school districts support having our after-school activities, but, of course, that depends on the teachers who

are coaches and the sponsors," he said. "If they see this as part of their obligation to walk out and not participate, well we're going to honor that as well."

He knows spring sports such as baseball, soccer, golf, and track are relying on scholarships, and students can't achieve that if their activities are cancelled.

A major concern right now is if schools shut down, some students will not have a place to stay during the day or have a meal provided. However, Simeroth said the district will take care of meals.

"We're going to provide some opportunities to feed our kids, at the cost of the school district." He said there'll be locations around the district, "providing a lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m."

Amber Childress worked in the Texas school system for five and a half years before relocating to Oklahoma with her husband.

She was a paraprofessional for special education, also known as a teacher's aide. In Perryton, Texas she worked 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. five days a week, making \$15,000 a year.

She moved to Yukon last year and searched for any job she could in the surrounding cities. However, after her first interview she realized she could not make a living in education and resorted to working in retail.

"I came in the middle of the year so I figured subbing would be my best choice," Childress

Continued on PAGE 5

Editorial/Opinion

OPINION | CLIMATE CHANGE CANNOT BE IGNORED

# It's Time for America to Address Climate Change



**H**ave you noticed the weather in Oklahoma lately? I enjoy the feeling of spring creeping up on us, but some days isn't it freezing? I know what you're thinking: that's Oklahoma for you.

But what if I told you it's not just Oklahoma.

As the Trump Administration pulls the country away from efforts to decrease our carbon footprint, global warming is increasingly giving way to environmental changes that, at times, result in death.

Last year President Trump signed a bill removing the Stream Protection rule, an order enacted by former President Barack Obama which prevents the coal industry from dumping toxic waste into rivers and streams.

Not to mention Trump's genius idea to pull the United States out of the Paris Climate Agreement despite America being the second largest contributor of greenhouse gases.

The Washington Post reported that sudden drops in temperature have occurred over North America in recent years. "Climate researchers say they could become more frequent as global warming further saps strength from the air currents around the poles," the newspaper said.

The article pointed to the Arctic which has been unnaturally warm in the recent years.

The permafrost, or the frozen topsoil, has given way to greenhouse gases which pollute the air.

National Geographic Magazine defines permafrost as "a permanently frozen layer below the Earth's surface. It consists of soil, gravel, and sand, usually bound together by ice. Permafrost usually remains at or below freezing temperature for at least two years."

Besides Trump, Americans contribute to climate change in several ways like increasing the use of transportation fueled by fossil fuels, and wasting four billion tons of food annually.

We have made efforts to go green somewhat, but corporations affect the environment significantly as well. The same corporations which pay for politicians like Donald Trump are paying to control history, science, and the idea that climate change is real.

For example, in Oklahoma the fossil fuel corporations run by the Koch Brothers have non-profit educational groups like Americans for Prosperity which support school choice and advocates for charter schools.

This allows for the curriculum of schools to be decided by corporations.

The Carbon Disclosure Project, based in the United Kingdom, said in a study published in 2017 that 100 Fossil Fuel corporations, like Koch industries, account for 71 percent of global industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

With corporations controlling politics after the Citizens United case, it appears we as individuals have less say in what happens to the environment. Scientists argue the best thing you can do is stand against corrupt politicians and plan ahead.

Pedro Faria, the Technical Director of CDP said climate action is no longer confined to the direction given by policy makers. "It is now a social movement, commanded by both economic and ethical imperatives and supported by growing amounts of data," he said.

Indeed, the issue of global warming is no longer a preventative conversation, it is now a matter of adaptability to the earth's warming temperatures. We can still fight corporations, but ultimately we need to be prepared for what is already set in motion.

The Union of Concerned Scientists wrote that as sea levels rise, more frequent and severe heat waves, growing wildfire risks, increase in extreme weather events. "These and other consequences of global warming were once largely preventable, but foot-dragging by our elected leaders and policy makers over the past two decades means that we must now confront the dangerous new reality of rising temperatures and the serious impacts that accompany them," the group said.

As for Oklahoma and other parts of the midwest, we should plan ahead for extreme heat and droughts. The UCS said we should also push for more resilient cities.

To do this we have to wean ourselves off of the use of fossil fuels from transportation, lighting, and work. It's difficult to transition away from a resource as useful as oil, but our very existence is dependant upon it.





# Homeless Oklahomans Often Face Fines, Prosecution

Story and Photo by  
CICI SIMON,  
Pioneer Senior Writer

In Oklahoma City, spring brings sunshine, flowers and the image of a homeless person standing on the corner seeking food, money, or a sign of compassion from the community.

The image has become a regular sight.

According to the Homeless Alliance of Oklahoma City, in 2017 a total of 1368 'countable' people experienced homelessness in Oklahoma City. Twenty-three were recorded dead in 2017; 14 were listed in 2016 without a roof over head, or shortly after being housed. Two hundred and fifty four were counted as chronically homeless.

The organization estimated "that a community's annual number of homeless is four to five times its one-night census – in this case 5,500-7,000 people who experience homelessness in Oklahoma City every year."

The website, [end\\_the\\_homeless.org](http://end_the_homeless.org), reported an estimated 553,742 people in the United States experienced homelessness on any given night. "According to the most recent national point-in-time estimate. This represents a rate of approximately 17 people experiencing homelessness per every 10,000 people in the general population."

Communities are slowly pushing these groups out.

A Huffington Post story reported that states continue to pass more laws that essentially make it impossible for people to escape the streets.

The article said those laws make it illegal to stand, sit, sleep, panhandle and partake in other basic functions in public.

"In turn, police officers dole out fines, which often start out small but quickly balloon into crushing debt for a person without means," the Post said. "Those who are arrested, even for minor offenses, end up with a criminal record that add

another obstacle to employment and housing."

On January 16th, local media reports told the story of a homeless man who was discharged from Norman Regional Hospital. Marconia Kessee, 34, went to the facility for a headache. Later on, Kessee, was arrested after he refused to leave the hospital. He died while in custody of the Norman police.

"Kessee was cleared by a hospital physician to be booked into the jail, where he was found unresponsive in a cell about two hours later," the article said.

Body camera footage, shows officers can be heard arguing with Kessee, after he falls from the wheelchair yelling in pain. The officers accusing Kessee of 'faking an illness'.

"Are you just putting on a show so you have somewhere to stay? Because we can get you to the Salvation Army," one officer said.

"It ain't fooling a single person, I can tell you that," the other said.

Since then, both officers have remained on paid leave.

Deon Osborne, the leader of the Citizens Advisory Board Initiative in Norman, isn't surprised by the incident.

"I think the basic lack of concern for humans allowed this to happen," she said.

Osborne, and her team established, "A Petition to Enhance Community Oriented Policing with a Citizens' Advisory Board" which "advises the Norman Police Department regarding community interests, issues, and concerns."

The group also wants to offer advice to the Norman's public officials and its police department.

For instances like Kessee's, Osborne said she is seeking more compassion from public officials

and the chance to give the community a voice when events such as the incident involving Kessee occur.

"My hope in short term is that the petition sparks the creation of a Citizens Advisory Board. In long term, my hope is that more people start placing people over profit," she said. "I want to change the mind-set of reaction. I want to create a mind-set of pro-action."

A survey of 187 cities shows that over the past decade almost half have passed ordinances prohibiting solicitation by homeless individuals.

"Thirty-three percent prohibit camping in public citywide, and 50 percent prohibit camping in particular public places. Eighteen percent prohibit sleeping in public citywide, and 27 percent prohibit sleeping in particular public places. Thirty-nine percent prohibit living in vehicles. Forty-seven percent prohibit sitting and lying down in particular public places. Twenty-seven percent prohibit panhandling citywide, and 61 percent prohibit panhandling in particular public places. Thirty-two percent have citywide prohibitions on loitering, loafing, and vagrancy, and 54 percent have similar prohibitions for specific public places," the survey said.

Activist Bridget Burns believes this is an escalating problem.

"Bathrooms at public parks all over Norman are locked up for the winter so that homeless people won't sleep in them," she said. "Homeless people's pain and needs are continually dismissed, just as Marconia's were."

Individuals such as Burns, and Osborne are working to dispel myths. They hope to offer a new perspective on poverty and homelessness. For them just as spring returns, change is blooming.



## Spotlight: World Languages and Cultures Center



### TROUTMAN: Bringing the World Closer One Student at a Time

By NATALIE NELL, Pioneer Staff Writer

Chiaki Troutman says the World Languages and Cultures Center at Oklahoma City Community College is a culture-rich experience. Troutman has been the lab coordinator of the WLCC since it first opened in 2008.

"We're a learning, academic lab. The only difference is that it's open to all students and community members," she said. "Anyone who wants to use this space, is welcomed."

Troutman is from Sapporo, Japan. She taught English as a foreign language for ten years there. She came to the U.S. in 2003 and attended Oklahoma City University. There she earned her Master's Degree in Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages or TESOL.

Troutman said her lab offers the language-learning program Rosetta Stone, which helps users learn 25 different languages. For the most part, there is usually no charge to use the program.

"The most popular language is Spanish, and then Japanese," Troutman said. She said some students can finish a course within one semester.

The WLCC is located on the second floor of OCCC's Main Building. It's a colorful room, with computers, tables, lounge couches and a television, where students can watch foreign television and films.

"It's usually quiet in here. Sometimes it's too loud," she said.

To use the lab, students need their identifica-

tion cards to check in. "Over the past ten years, there have been almost 41,000 check-ins at the WLCC," Troutman said.

The lab has recently put out display boards to grab more people's attention. The boards usually define a word in a different language, or present a fact about a specific culture.

"Thank you to those who pay attention to them!" Troutman said.

Troutman said she enjoys working at the WLCC, and seeing all the diversity that comes with it.

"We're all one community, a melting pot," she said.

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## WALKOUT: State Teachers Frustrated by Low Pay, Lack of Action by Legislature

Continued from PAGE 1

said. "After the very first interview, they said they were only going to do fifty dollars [a day] for subbing. That doesn't even pay for gas."

If the pay was better, she said she'd be a paraprofessional for the rest of her life. She said the Oklahoma Legislature needs to understand that people like her want to work for the school system but it's not possible.

"We have families to take care of, so we choose other careers or other jobs," Childress, a mother of three said. "If Oklahoma actually cares about their kids, they're going to take care of it. Either do it, or stay at the bottom. If you want to stay at the bottom, you're going to get paid the bottom."

She said the Texas school system takes better care of their support staff, which includes aides and substitute teachers. "I'm not saying everything in Texas is better because it's not, but they do know to start at the schools," she said.

She added that Oklahoma teachers have worked "their butts off," they deserve better, and have to take a stand somewhere.

"My mother-in-law was a substitute teacher for Oklahoma schools in Ponca City. Twenty years ago, she was making fifty dollars a day. Twenty years later, she was still only getting \$50 dollars a day."

Like a majority of all teachers, Childress and her mother-in-law paid out of pocket to provide school supplies for the classroom.

"I know my mother-in-law spent half her paycheck on her classroom or her students, that's not worth it," she said.

Childress, her husband, and daughter will be at the capitol April 2nd protesting for teachers rights. She has a lot of teachers in her own family and wants others to know that they're not alone.

"We love our students, but that doesn't feed our children. It's not going to put gas in our cars, or let our kids get extra 'anything,'" she said. "Oklahoma needs to step up."

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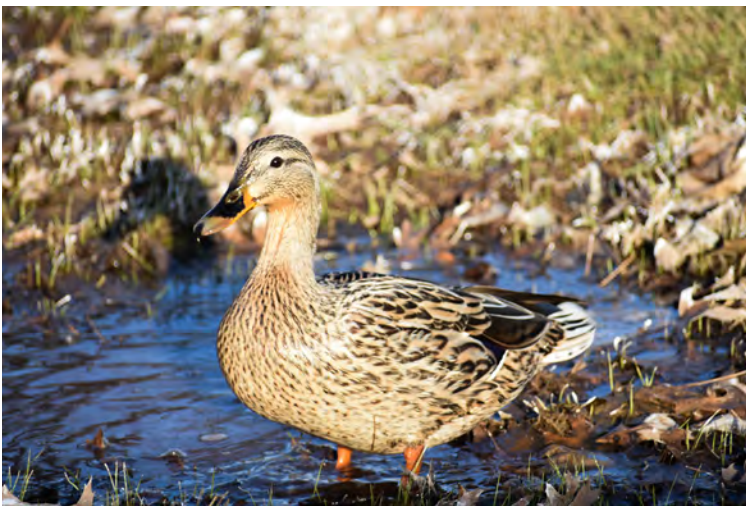
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# Spring Has Arrived In Oklahoma



Photos by CICI SIMON, Pioneer Staff



# SPRING: Sunshine, Warmer Weather A Welcomed Change







## CASA Fights for Abused, Neglected Children

Story by JENNA LOWRANCE, Pioneer Staff Writer

**D**ana Lutz is an advocate supervisor for the Oklahoma Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. Lutz works at CASA's El Reno office in Canadian County. She said the small organization works to help the roughly 400 kids in Canadian County who need their services.

"We, the advocate staff, assist volunteers throughout each case and give ongoing support until each case is closed and the child is in a safe home," Lutz said.

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association helps provide a safe, permanent home and the opportunity to thrive to abused and neglected children throughout the country. The association and its network of nearly 1,000 local community programs support volunteers serving children. CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to represent the best interests of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect.

According to the National CASA website, the movement began in 1977. A Seattle juvenile court judge was concerned about making drastic decisions with insufficient information, and conceived the idea of citizen volunteers speaking up for abused and neglected children in the courtroom. Since then, the movement has grown 949 programs in 49 states and for the past 38 years courts have supported the CASA movement.

CASA volunteers are everyday citizens. The organization's website states that they are simply looking for people who care about children and have common sense. However, every volunteer must be the age of 21 or older, pass a background check, and participate in a 30-hour pre-service training course. Twenty of these training hours are done individually and the remaining ten hours are completed with the advocate staff.

In the training sessions volunteers will learn proper interviewing skills, how to write court reports, understand the court process, and more. However, as a condition volunteers must agree to stay with a case until it is closed, some of which can last up to a year and a half.

After being trained and screened, CASA volunteers are appointed to a child or sibling group. The advocate staff tries their best to make a fitting pair between each volunteer and child. They look at the child's needs, the volunteer's needs, the involvement in each case, the type of cases the volunteer wants, and the child's age group that is desired.

The CASA volunteers are expected to complete certain duties. Some of these duties include investigating the child's circumstances, researching the case, talking to the child and involved parties and professionals, providing fact-based information, and submitting written recommendations to the court while becoming a source of support for the child.

Besides being a CASA volunteer, there are other ways to help. Individuals can help by donating money. Donating to National CASA assists in training and supporting volunteer advocates, further grows the ability and impact of the programs to reach more children, and helps raise awareness.

Oklahoma has 23 active CASA programs and serves children in 64 of the state's 77 counties as well as four tribal courts.

The mission of the Oklahoma CASA is to present a statewide voice for abused and neglected children by enhancing the growth and sustainability of CASA programs throughout Oklahoma.

Canadian county is one out of the 64 counties in Oklahoma that serve children.

The executive director for El Reno, Krystle Lane, said the number of children they have been able to help is definitely the most important.

"This past year we helped 75 children find a safe, permanent home," Lane said.

Lane said if more people were willing to volunteer they could have served 300 more children last year.

Lutz and Lane believe more people should get involved in CASA programs because it can provide children with a better future and have positive effects on the child's life and the volunteer's life as well.

"We work to produce better outcomes and to change kids lives," Lane said.





# O-Trip Professor Pushes Students to Become Financially Literate

Story and Photos by SEAN STANLEY, Pioneer Staff Writer

Oklahoma City Community College provides different educational opportunities to help students be successful in college and beyond.

Professor Jack Kraettli teaches financial literacy at OCCC and high schools in the Oklahoma City area.

Kraettli recently received his Certificate of Completion from the Oklahoma Securities Commission. This certification is awarded through taking classes with the OSC and passing the tests with a grade of 90 percent or higher. His financial classes teach students everything from how to balance a checkbook to investing in the stock market.

Kraettli said the emphasis of the certification is to “help the student understand the operation of investing and how they will benefit you today, tomorrow, and in the future.”

Oklahoma now requires all high school students to complete a financial literacy class before being allowed to graduate.

Professor Kraettli is currently teaching an InvestEd Organization Program called STARS, Students Tracking and Researching the Stock

Market, through the OSC. The STARS program is intended to raise awareness about financial education, Kraettli added, “this is as important [to] managing money.”

Kraettli said, “most students don’t think they have enough to invest and most high school students know they don’t have enough to invest. People with their first job always have priorities above investing. So one of the things I emphasize is you have to pay yourself first, and it hurts like heck.”

A previous student of Kraettli was living out of their car and was on public assistance when the class began. He completed the course owning a house and with money in a checking account.

Professor Kraettli said, “I ask the classes to voluntarily give their financial circumstance, this student said they were living out of their car they had graduated from a Oklahoma City high school so the college gives them six hours here, and one of the classes they took was my personal finance class so if they ever got any money what they would do with it.”

“They took it to heart,” said Kraettli.

A topic of debate among people 18 to 35

is whether or not it is harder or easier to be financially successful today than it was a few decades ago.

Professor Kraettli said, “I believe it’s easier to succeed because you have more tools available to you, but I think the motivation that millennials have been exposed to have been diminished or ignored.”

Kraettli went on, “students of that age are so much fun for me because you don’t know enough to know what you don’t know so you will succeed in spite of yourself. I can tell you it is impossible and they will go do it just to prove me wrong.”

He believes that it might feel hard to succeed due to the underutilization of tools and not pursuing what is available combined with the constant distraction that we deal with in day to day life. These distractions make it difficult for us to focus on things like saving for the future.

“Budgeting is difficult in high school, it’s difficult in college, it’s difficult with a PhD... you’re young and you don’t realize the dollar saved today will be worth more,” he said.





### Auto Show Scholarship Donation

Members of the Metropolitan Auto Dealers Association board along with MADA president Peter Hodges presented a \$5,000 check to OCCC for student scholarships in the Automotive Technology division prior to the opening of the 101st Oklahoma City Auto Show. The group includes: from left to right: John Holt, past chairman of MADA; John Claybon, dean of the division of Business and Information Technology at OCCC; Brad Walker, professor/departement chair of Automotive Technology; Jerry Steward, president of OCCC; Laine Diffie, chairman of MADA; Rob Smith, Platform President for Bob Howard Auto Group; Frank Eskridge, dealer for Eskridge Auto Group; Peter Hodges, president of MADA.)

# Word of the Week

Sponsored by the  
OCCC Communication Lab

## Cogitate - (Verb)

To think deeply about something; meditate or reflect.

"He stumbles along with uneven step, and occasionally pauses for the purpose of giving tongue to his profound cogitations."

The Pearl of the Antilles or An Artist in Cuba  
by Walter Goodman

Hours M – Th: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
F: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Sat: 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



CLASSIFIEDS

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION

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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Balls of yarn

6. Travelled through water

10. Stigma

14. Cozy

15. Cab

16. Desire

17. Less friendly

18. Ailments

19. Oceans

20. Blood cells

22. French for "Head"

23. Throw up

24. Shoelace hole

26. Beige

30. Secret agent

31. Lair

32. Fiber source

33. Hotfooted

35. Anklebone

39. Dicker

41. Distinguished

43. The male reproductive cell

44. A few

46. An abandoned calf

47. Favor

49. Little bit

50. Anagram of "Dome"

51. A spur like projection

54. Journey

56. Wings

57. Untenanted

63. Hairdo

64. Russian parliament

65. Prod

66. Ballet attire

67. Annoying in sect

68. Tidy

69. Bucolic

70. Feudal worker

71. Intoxicating

1. Fashionable

2. Mentally irregular (slang)

3. Arab chieftain

4. Cry

5. A thick sweet liquid

6. Tie pins

7. Pike (fish)

8. Spindle

9. Not on target

10. Nourishment

11. Angler's basket

12. Marble

13. Adjust

DOWN

again

21. Raw fish wrapped in seaweed

25. Abominable Snowman

26. Wanes

27. Poop

28. Unusual

29. Clumsy

34. Set the boundaries

36. Its symbol is Pb

37. Annul

38. Flower stalk

40. Dogfish doctor

42. Army

45. Footstool

48. Manual laborer

51. Desert plants

52. Loudly

53. Not clergy

55. Jab or roundhouse

58. Religious sisters

59. Whimper

60. Notion

61. Quaint outburst

62. Declare untrue

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