

Learning to lead: Leo Club aims to serve

By Jake Mosbach jmosbach@clintonherald.com

CLINTON — A new student-initiated program in the Clinton School District is allowing students more opportunities to volunteer in the community.

According to club co-organizer Emma Folland, a district librarian and media specialist, the new Leo Club is geared for 13-to-18-year-olds and will give members a chance to perform service projects all over the Clinton area. Roughly 20 members were initiated into the club last Wednesday. Spearheaded by Clinton High School senior Justine Lange, the club aims to introduce students to the needs of the community.

"There are so many different groups and so many ways to help the community, and this is just something that will show that," Folland said. "This will do a good job of explaining that there are so many service opportunities that are out there for our kids to work with."

The group's presence will immediately be felt as student volunteers plan to clean up garbage and litter along 13th Avenue North over the district's spring break, followed by more service projects to come. CHS special-education teacher Andrew Carbajal will work with students to help them as they help the community. Getting students to buy into the idea of serving hasn't been hard, Carbajal says.

"They've already bought in. It was too easy," Carbajal laughed. "They're ready to go. Now more than ever, our society needs more leadership. I think something like this can continue to make our students into very well-rounded young adults."

While Carbajal raised the idea of cleaning up areas of 13th Avenue North for the first service project, he says the plan now is for Leo Club members to come up with future projects on their own, something that shouldn't be a problem at all, according to Carbajal.

In the near future, an entire week will highlight the service efforts of not only the Leo Club, but all district students. "Rise Above Week," running from April 3 to 7, allows students the opportunity to raise money and provide canned goods for Clinton-area residents in need. With all resources collected staying in the Gateway area, it will allow district students to actually see the fruits of their labor.

"Everything the students bring in during that week, whether it's money or canned goods, will stay local," Folland said. "The kids will be able to see and know exactly how they're helping. It's a way to have some fun, and also bring up service awareness."

