

Buckley student is chosen to meet the Dalai Lama

Natalie Gomez is about to learn from one of the greatest teachers the world has to offer — His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

The White River High School junior is one of five Washington state students chosen for what's called the Compassion 2020 delegation, a program that aims to develop the leaders of tomorrow through their sense of compassion. This is the first delegation being sent, organized between the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Association of Washington Generals.

"I'm really excited to get to talk with him about how to teach compassion in the next generation, because that's something I feel a lot of kids — especially my age — are struggling with," Gomez said. "I want to be able to help people develop those qualities."

Although meeting Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, is the highlight of the trip, the delegation will first head to the Tibetan Children's Village, the Dolma Ling Nunnery, the Nyingtob Ling school for disabled children, the Tibetan Central Administration/Parliament, the Norbulingka Cultural Center, the Dharamkot hill and its meditation centers, and the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute.

All of these locations are in India. The delegation will be meeting the Dalai Lama in the city Dharamsala (which is practically nestled right on the borders of India, Pakistan, and Jammu and Kashmir) rather than his birth country of Tibet, because he and the Tibetan government are exiles, having fled when China invaded in the 1950s.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

White River High School student Natalie Gomez, left, with her sister Alexandra at this year's Washington State Fair, representing their school's FFA Chapter, which Natalie is president of.

"It's the new epicenter for the Buddhist faith," Gomez described.

She's still reading up on Buddhism and its spiritual leader, but from what she's gathered, "the Buddhist faith teaches you... essentially, how to be a whole being."

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Support women's education with local P.E.O. fundraiser

BY RAY MILLER-STILL
Editor

The Enumclaw chapter of the Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.) Sisterhood is hosting its annual Fall Fundraiser next month to support local women furthering their education.

This particular fundraiser is extra special because this year is the 150th anniversary of P.E.O. International being founded at Iowa's Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, and the Enumclaw chapter joined the other 230,000 current members of P.E.O. from nearly 6,000 chapters across the country and Canada to celebrate last January.

Since its founding in 1869, the nonprofit organization has provided more than \$321 million in

grants, scholarships, awards, and loans to thousands of women so they can pursue their higher education goals.

The Enumclaw chapter has been a part of the city's community since 1953, and has given more than a few \$1,000 scholarships to local students. During the 2017-18 school year, Enumclaw High School alum Hornet Annabelle Sharick was the first Hornet to receive the STAR Scholarship, which is awarded not by the local chapter as usual, but by P.E.O. International.

"The P.E.O. members in Enumclaw stand on the shoulders of the generations of P.E.O. sisters who came before us," said Sue Vannatter, president of the Enumclaw chapter

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COLLEGE HONORS

Buckley resident Garrett B. Feroy was named to the academic honor roll for the summer session at Oregon State University.

Feroy was among the 182 OSU students who earned a perfect 4.0 grade-point average for the term.

The OSU junior is majoring in earth sciences.

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Fundraiser

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(officially designated Chapter EF). "They were dedicated to the mission of women supporting women, just as we are today. And it is a cause that will continue to be relevant for the next 150 years."

The Fall Fundraiser, which raises money for local scholarships and other local and international projects, is being hosted at Plateau Wine and Beer on Tuesday, Nov. 12 from 5 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each, which provides attendees with a wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres.

To learn more about P.E.O. and the stories of women who have benefited from the programs, visit

peointernational.org. You can also find the nonprofit on various social media platforms at www.facebook.com/peointernational, @PEOInternational on Instagram, and @PEOSisterhood on Twitter.

Local chapter contacts are Sue Vannatter, 360-825-3030 (Chapter EF) and Lola Schafer, 360-825-5933 (Chapter JB, another Enumclaw chapter).



Members of Chapter EF are at P. E.O.'s 150th birthday party, held in Sumner, at the Mountain View Reciprocity brunch. Thirteen area chapters gather once a year for a regional meeting. Contributed photo.

Dalai Lama

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Part of the Buddhist faith is what's known as the brahmaviharas, translated as the abodes of brahma: metta, or loving-kindness; karuna, or compassion; mudita, or empathetic joy; and upekha, or equanimity (even-mindedness and serenity). Each abode leads into the next, and Buddhists that embody the four abodes (also known as the immeasurable) and collect good karma are reborn as a human or god, while those that do not embrace them collect bad karma, and are reborn as beasts.

The rebirth cycle continues until you are born in the realm of man and attain nirvana — the end dukkha, or pain and want.

As the name of the delegation suggests, compassion is the main theme of this trip.

"Compassion is something I've always had to work at," Gomez said, adding she's the oldest of five. "It doesn't always come naturally to me, and it's something that I had to learn. It's a skill I had to acquire."

She'll be putting her skill to use practically as soon as she arrives in India, since the first place the delegation will visit is one of the several Tibetan Children's Villages scattered in the country.

To say the Tibetan Children's Villages are orphanages greatly understates their importance to the continuation of Tibetan culture; more than 16,000 children, many of them refugees from their home country, attend the nonprofit's residential and day schools,

summer camps, and higher education courses.

The delegations is also visiting the Nyingtob Ling, or the Realm of Courage, a place where children with physical and mental disabilities can live, receive rehabilitative and therapeutic care, and get an education.

Gomez said she's particularly interested in meeting with lawmakers in the Tibetan Central Administration.

"I'm really excited to learn more about the Tibetan government and how it works and how the Parliament-in-Exile plays into it," she said, referring specifically to the legislative arm of the administration. The Parliament is a direct result of the 14th Dalai Lama pushing for the democratization of his government and slowly rolling back his own political power until, in March 2011, he announced he would relinquish the last of his authority as the head-of-state to an elected leader. "I also want to ask them how they emphasize their compassion through their lawmaking."

Finally, on the last day of her trip, Gomez and her fellow students will meet the Dalai Lama.

The meeting will begin with a conversation between His Holiness and Washington's Lieutenant Governor, Cyrus Habib, followed by a discussion between the delegation and Gyatso about cultivating compassion.

The 90-minute meeting will be televised, and information about when and how people can stream the meeting can be at www.wagenerals.org/compassion2020.

"I... want to ask him how to inspire people who don't want to be inspired," Gomez said.

"I go to school with your average teenage kid who isn't really focused on compassion or focused on inspiring other people. I don't think it's that they don't want to, but that they're hesitant, and I want to learn how to inspire people who aren't looking for that opportunity in their lives."

Despite the packed schedule, the whole trip is only from Nov. 6 to 12, with meeting the Dalai Lama on Nov. 11.

But even once the delegation is back in the U.S., their work has only just begun, as the Association of Washington Generals will be helping Gomez and other delegates organize a "compassion project" in their communities.

Beyond the trip and her community project, Gomez wants to continue inspiring compassion in her future, first as an immigration lawyer, and then as a politician.

The trick to that may lie in her being able to change people's minds about what's important in life, like how she shifted her own priorities.

"Especially in middle school, I was focused on the materialistic. I was focused on having the best grades, having a successful career, which are all things that I still want, but it's not my focus," she said. "It took me time to realize that... when your days are up, people aren't going to remember that you got this scholarship, you had a 4.0 in middle school. People are going to remember you from the lives you touched."

The Dalai Lama has spoken at length about the importance of compassion, one time saying, "When we are motivated by compassion and wisdom, the results of our

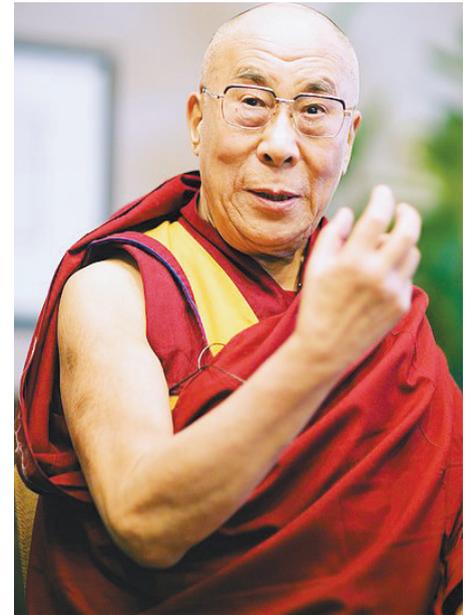


PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER PRENTISS MICHEL / CMICHEL67 His Holiness the Dalai Lama visiting M.I.T. in 2012. Born in 1935, he watched China invade Tibet and force him out, leading him to help restart a government in Dharamsala, India.

actions benefit everyone, not just our individual selves or some immediate convenience. When we are able to recognize and forgive ignorant actions of the past, we gain strength to constructively solve the problems of the present."

Gomez would likely agree. "Compassion, as a whole, can move mountains," she said.



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