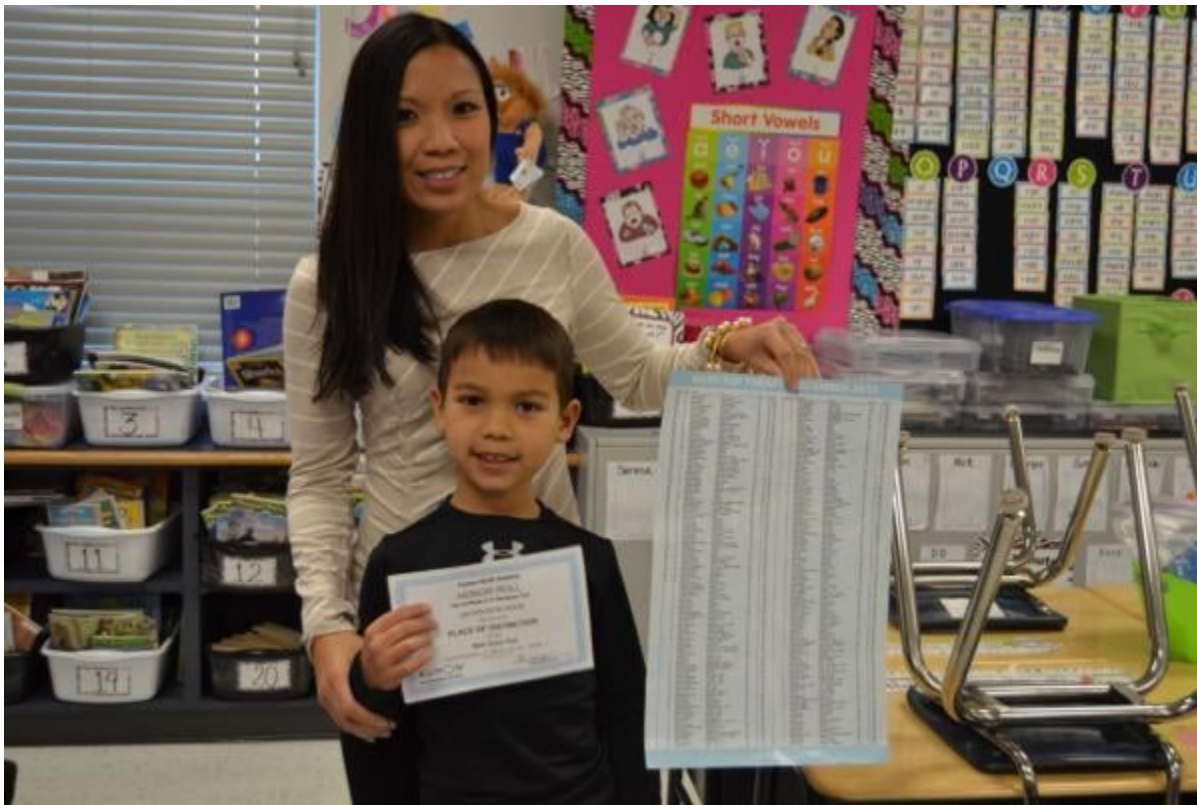


Goshen Elementary has young math prodigy

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Goshen Elementary student Jackson Blaskie in many ways is a normal 6-year-old, except when it comes to academics, especially math.

Recently, Jackson Blaskie placed 14th out of 15,289 in a national Math Honor Roll for kindergarten pupils. He has been attending Kumon classes since he was age 3. He is already functioning at a fifth- or sixth-grade level in math.

Jackson is the son of Judy and Jason Blaskie of Edwardsville.

Goshen Elementary Principal Tara Wells she she is extremely impressed by young Blaskie.

“He has an innate knowledge and understanding of math concepts,” she said. “I have not had a student at Goshen with math abilities at his age. He is really gifted. He is just a sweet, loving boy and doesn’t act any different than any other kid. He is a great friend and role model for the other students.”

By age 2 or 3 Jackson started asking about math problems and he sought more challenges each day in that regard. By 3, his parents would ask him what was 325 plus 13, minus 8, plus 25 and he would answer it right off the top of his head.

Jason Blaskie said it has been a little overwhelming, but he and his wife have done what they can to keep everything normal in their family, knowing they have a child prodigy on their hands. The couple sometimes reflect about the character Will, a young math genius portrayed by actor Matt Damon in “Good Will’s Hunting” and the legendary Albert Einstein, who discovered the theory of relativity. The two know their child is special not only in his math abilities, but as an overall young man.

Blaskie praised Wells and his teachers, Mr. Dinkeheller and Ms. Jarvis, for spending a considerable amount of time with their son in keeping him moving ahead.

“We have talked about moving him ahead a grade, but from a social standpoint, we think that would be a little overwhelming,” he said. “We met with his teacher and created a plan to keep him engaged and excited about math in the classroom.”

When Jackson was younger, he loved to count everything he could get his hands on.

“He would ask how many books were on a shelf and he loves baseball scores and results,” his father said. “He definitely sees the world differently than the rest of us.”

Judy Blaskie is a pharmacist and works a lot with calculations, and his father has a finance career, so it is probably natural that Jackson derives his math intellect from them.

Wells and Jackson’s teacher, Ms. Jarvis, have set up a method to continue Jackson’s success in the classroom. Initially, Jackson works in a large group with other first graders as Ms. Jarvis provides targeted instruction using the mathematics curriculum. Jackson then moves to independent work on a computer program where he can perform at his level.

“He can target specific skills, and once he has mastered those skills, he then moves to the next level,” the principal said.

Jackson is a member of a soccer team and he enjoys tossing the football with his father.

He said quite simply he loves math and all the concepts surrounding it.

Wells said she appreciates how Jackson interacts with other children. “He is a good role model and spends time with kids with special needs. He is always patient and willing to share his knowledge with friends.” Wells said. “It will be great to hear how he progresses through school and his future successes. Maybe he will make Goshen famous.”

