

# SIERRA VISTA HERALD

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## Buena student store gets a fresh start

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Mark.Levy@svherald.com Buena High School marketing instructor Kristen Hale chats with freshman student Clay Kreibich during Wednesday's DECA store grand opening, located at Colt's Corner in the school food court area. Hale is also the Buena chapter sponsor for DECA.

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New instructor, students aim to revitalize marketing program

Mark.Levy@svherald.com Buena High School marketing instructor Kristen Hale chats with freshman student Clay Kreibich during Wednesday's DECA store grand opening, located at Colt's Corner in the school food court area. Hale is also the Buena chapter sponsor for DECA.

Mark.Levy@svherald.com Buena High School DECA store manager Gracie St. Cyr, junior, hands a bag of popcorn to Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Cadet Joshua Seler, freshman, during Wednesday's store grand opening. Free popcorn was handed out to anyone who made a purchase at the grand opening.

Mark.Levy@svherald.com Buena High School freshman Sophia Santos looks to purchase school supplies at the DECA store during Wednesday's grand opening.

SIERRA VISTA — Drawing a healthy crowd of students to peruse its shelves after school on Wednesday, a revitalized Colts' Corner opened its doors inside the Buena High School cafeteria for the first time this year.

The free popcorn with the purchase of any item probably had something to do with the turnout. It's a simple marketing strategy that proved popular, demonstrating that the student store shows signs of new life as it, and the school's marketing program at large, looks to recover after a down year.



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"We basically rebuilt it up from the bottom," said Buena junior Georgia O'Connor, president of Buena's DECA chapter.

The DECA students run Colts' Corner to raise money for competitions and other chapter activities. O'Connor said they aren't going to competitions this year, as the students focus on fundraising and getting the store on its feet.

"We had to get the DECA store running fully because we started from the bottom up," O'Connor said. With a new teacher and new students, the DECA chapter is starting fresh this year.

## A background in retail

Making a transition from being a retail store manager in Tucson, Buena's new marketing instructor, Kristen Hale, knows how to run a store.

"This is kind of my baby," she said, during the store's grand opening on Wednesday. She plans to install slot-boards and real retail fixtures in the store so the students will be really proud of it.

It's also going to be open every day before and after school, plus during school lunches, instead of the sporadic schedule used last year.

When she took the job, Hale expected teaching young students would be much more difficult than training adults.

"Surprisingly, these guys are amazing. They are so much more witty than they're given credit for," Hale said.

Working in a retail setting will make the students more employable when they attend college and may face getting a job to help cover expenses, she said.

Hale is also allowing consignments in the store, with Rose in Bloom, owned by Amanda Wilcox, already showcasing its wares on the Colt's Corner shelves.

Demetry Simonton, a member of Buena's 2010 graduating class, also has plans to help bolster the Buena DECA chapter's fundraising efforts. As a southeastern Arizona distributor for Dippin' Dots, Simonton is working with the students to sell his company's frozen yogurt at Buena, with \$1 from each purchase going to the DECA fund.

When he was at Buena, Simonton served as president of the DECA chapter and he said it's the best program for an aspiring entrepreneur to take.

"It really expands your mind," he said, noting how going to state competitions helped shake his small-town mentality and broaden his horizons. "It was an amazing experience."

Hale currently has 14 students in her marketing class and 24 in her class on starting your own business, but many of her freshman future focus students are already honorary DECA members.

"I should have a pretty robust program next year," Hale said.

O'Connor, like Simonton, offered a glowing testimonial for the marketing program and DECA chapter. She's taking both of Hale's classes and hopes to start her own bakery one day.

"The CTE department, and the marketing specifically, has given me more information I can use the rest of my life than I've learned in the past three years of high school," O'Connor said. "It taught me how to market myself better."

## About DECA

Once known as Delta Epsilon Chi and Distributive Education Clubs of American, DECA is a student non-profit organization that prepares aspiring entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management, according to its website. There are about 215,000 members in college and high school, with roughly 3,500 high school chapters worldwide.

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