

Kalispell Education Foundation



First Round for Give Local Campaign

The Kalispell Education Foundation worked with 60 other non-profits and the Flathead Community Foundation to participate in the first year of Give Local, a campaign to generate giving over a 24-hour period. Falling on the 5th of May this year, the event was promoted as “A Fiesta of Philanthropy,” as it corresponded with Cinco de Mayo celebrations in many communities. Booths, give-a-ways, and performers were highlighted at the Hampton Inn conference room during the affair. By the end of the 24-hour period The Kalispell Education Foundation had raised over \$5,000 to go toward grants for in the classroom projects as well as student scholarships. The KEF would like to thank all of the donors who participated this year along with organizer Lucy Smith for all of her hard work. The success of this year’s event will surely be the start of an annual tradition for non-profit fundraising in the Flathead Valley.

Geo Cachers Seek Hidden Treasures

When our director Mike Kofford visited the Geo Cache after school club this past spring, teacher Mishele Kisler was the ring master for some controlled chaos. Students busied themselves with programing locations and reading descriptions for several hidden treasures or “caches” planted around the Woodland Park area in Kalispell. Student pairs use one of eight hand held GPS units directing them to tree stumps or rockpiles where fans of Geo-caching carefully hide small prizes for those with the patience to locate them. Walking single file toward the park, Mishele soon had students scouring the grounds of a nearby hillside for a cache. Young Dillon informed me that he loved Geo-Caching because it gave him a sense of adventure after spending most of his time near a computer screen. When they can’t locate a site they have to talk with other teams to update site information. The team has even hid a cache of their own in Thompson Park.

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Projects Update 2015



Visit www.kalispelleducationfoundation.org to see photographs from each sponsored project.

Ollie part of KMS Robotics

According to KMS teacher Kristen Pevey her students were enthralled with their introduction to robotics and computer programming this year. She found that 96% of participating students were able to meet the programming lesson objectives by successfully coding their devices. 282 students were exposed to the technology overall and there are high hopes for most enrolling in next year's 8th grade coding classes. Computer programming continues to be a growing field nationally with most local programming jobs hired outside the valley. Piquing student interest by providing hands on kinesthetic coding experiences is not only fun but expanding future job opportunities for KPS students. Next year Kristen hopes to team up with Industrial Technology teachers and work with their Automation and Robotics courses.

Makeover for Music Room

When you visit Russell Elementary School and you ask to see the music room you will be led to the far end of the gym where the original stage has been converted into a classroom. Needless to say, there were many necessary repairs when the KEF approved the grant application from music teacher Shannalee Finlayson. Not only was the room repainted with help from a Linderman Education Center art student, but the grant paid for a set of new instruments the children were able to incorporate into their performance at the KEF's An Evening of Fine Arts in February 2015. Halfway into the project it was discovered that the special panels lining the former open wall were damaged and needed to be replaced. With help from principal Bill Sullivan, needed funds were located and the old panels were updated. What a transformation!

DNA Barcoding at GHS

Students at GHS got the opportunity this year to work with a DNA barcoding lab learning valuable information about genetic diversity. Students extracted DNA from local native plants and copied it through a process known as PCR. Students would then decipher the barcoding in the DNA sequence to add to the data on a national coding database. Accumulated information was used to create a Native Plant Field Guide for the Western Montana region. Teachers at Glacier High School found the experience very empowering for students because inquiry based learning is hands-on. Students were also able to access the national data base on their plant to expand their knowledge. Stephanie Nadasi and Sarah Conner will continue the barcoding project each year for freshman.

Learning Social Responsibility

Counselors at KMS have learned many middle school students are less successful in traditional classrooms due to a lack of educational role models in their lives providing encouragement. Enter The Social Responsibility Program. SRP was created to motivate high risk students through non-traditional means. This includes a class specifically designed to target the types of skills needed for passing classroom curricula. Additionally, the class gave students the opportunity to become empowered by working together on tasks such as climbing a rock wall (The Summit). They also built empathy preparing and serving food at the Samaritan House in Kalispell. Passing the course always ends with a celebratory breakfast at Bojangles' Diner where students are recognized for their accomplishments