

DISTRICT 21 NEWS



L to R: Curt Maki, Cathy Ilkka, Sande Schoenecker, Mary Kay Bachel, Amy Mach, Kristina Madigan, Vonnie Ericson, Amy Peters, Margaret Kartak, Nick Huber, Lisa Wiener, Alissa Gibbs, Tim Ledwein.

This new publication is a response to community members' requests for more district news. Content suggestions are welcome!

Mission

To engage and support everyone in high levels of learning.

Vision

To be a premier school district that models excellence and embraces the challenges of the 21st Century.

Values

- Allocate time and support to best practice research and implementation
- Respect diverse thinking
- Model appropriate, positive interactions
- Think globally
- Learn and apply supportive, interactive technologies

Priorities

- High Academic Achievement
- Maintaining Fiscal Integrity
- Effective, Engaging Communication

Inside

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Got S.T.E.M. ?

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics

Well, at Raven Stream Elementary, we do!

This year the teachers in Grades 3-5 are involved with a Science and Engineering program offered through the Region 11 Math and Science Academy in conjunction with the University of Minnesota. The focus is on the Minnesota Science Standards in Grades 3-5 with an emphasis on the Nature of Science and Engineering standards.

The program consists of five different training days for the teachers at off-site locations. Each training day consists of getting the teachers ready to bring ideas and concepts back to their classrooms. The first training day was on Engineering. We looked at the definition of an engineer and the students' misconceptions about engineers. The second training day will emphasize engineering design and getting more acquainted with wind energy, electricity, motors, and generators. The third day will focus on the Nature of Science and developing the central tenets that go along with the Nature of Science. The fourth training day will be on Inquiry, specifically scientific inquiry and modeling. Lastly, the fifth training day will be on Modeling Eliciting Activities (open-ended problems which allows students to create, test and improve mathematical, scientific or engineering models).

Associated with each of the training sessions is the implementation of these concepts in the classroom. In order to do this, teachers will participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Raven Stream. Between each of the training sessions, the teachers will meet four times to discuss, plan and evaluate what is going on in their classroom. The students will complete baseline assessments to find out their background knowledge. There will be classroom instruction and the completion of science activities. Several of thinking from the students' point of view interviews will be given to assess the low and to push their thinking to higher levels. Lastly, a summative assessment will be given to the students to measure the new learning which occurred.

"AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE HAS TO BE A HUGE COMMITMENT TO A PROGRAM LIKE THIS BY THE STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS TO MAKE THE PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL," PRINCIPAL PAT PRIBYL.

This commitment, we hope, will lead to a higher level of teaching and learning at Raven Stream in the area of science and, more specifically, the Minnesota Science Standards.

We Grow S.M.A.R.T. Kids

Ask any Kindergarten student about the S.M.A.R.T. room, and he/she will tell you how fun it is to learn there. In ISD #721's quest to be "a premier school district that models excellence and embraces the challenges of the 21st Century," its elementary schools utilize a program called Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (S.M.A.R.T.) with its youngest learners.

S.M.A.R.T. is a multi-sensory approach to learning, designed to develop and enhance the physiological and neurological skills students need to succeed in school. The program consists of activities for developing and enhancing students' large and fine motor skills, visual perception and eye-hand coordination. The S.M.A.R.T. program is designed to help each student progress at his or her own rate and to enrich and enhance the student's abilities in a positive, play-like atmosphere.

Each school has a specific area for its S.M.A.R.T. room and each Kindergarten classroom takes part in the program 3-5 times per week throughout the course of the school year. Other primary grades also use the room. Students are able to participate in physical activities through this program such as jumping and climbing, while at the same time learning key skills to be successful academically.

Below: Eagle View S.M.A.R.T. Room In Action



High School Teachers Use Moodle to Enhance Learning through Technology

"IF WE TEACH TODAY AS WE TAUGHT YESTERDAY, WE ROB OUR CHILDREN OF TOMORROW." —JOHN DEWEY

Students and teachers at NPHS understand and convey this idea presented by Philosopher, Psychologist and Educational Reformer John Dewey, especially when it comes to technology. Technology allows teachers to take their classrooms into students' homes with the help of an array of online tools. One of these tools embraced by NPHS is a program called Moodle.

Moodle is an online course management system which allows students to take tests, submit homework assignments online, post classroom discussions through online forums, and receive email reminders/messages from teachers. NPHS teachers have created many more ways to use this system in their classrooms to enhance student learning in and out of the classroom.

Communicating with students outside of the classroom isn't an easy feat in a school environment of 1,200 students, so many teachers utilize Moodle to send news flashes and other reminders to students for things such as tests, quizzes or homework assignments. They can also use it to post class notes. Teachers in the math department have gone so far as to create online video tutorials for their students.

Math Teacher Erik Garnass uses a combination of PowerPoint and jing.com to create audio and video of himself walking through specific math problems so students who either missed school that day or need to review the process for the lesson from that day don't fall behind. Garnass, who teaches geometry as well as a remediation class for students who have struggled to pass the MCA math test, said, "It's a great tool for remediation as well as for special education students who may work through the assignments at a slower pace."

Math Teacher Michelle Schellin is able to create videos from her hand-held smart board combined with jing.com, allowing students to see her physically writing out and solving math problems. Schellin, who teaches the hybrid stats class in the afternoon, also uses moodle to communicate through live chats with students once a week in the evening. This allows her to assist them with homework outside of school hours.

Other uses for Moodle include easy links to online sources, posting of audio and video files, forum discussions, updating of daily class progress and assignments, as well as a digital reference point for class notes and discussions. Students who miss school for one reason or another can keep up with classmates through their teachers' Moodle sites.

Parents can access these sites, too. If parents wish to follow what is happening in their child's classes, they can enroll in the class as well.

New Prague Area Schools works on a philosophy of integration of technology in all aspects of its curriculum, knowing the best way to integrate technology is when classroom teachers use technology effectively and efficiently in the curriculum to improve student achievement. The objective is not learning to use technology; it is using technology to learn.

**That's
a Fact!**

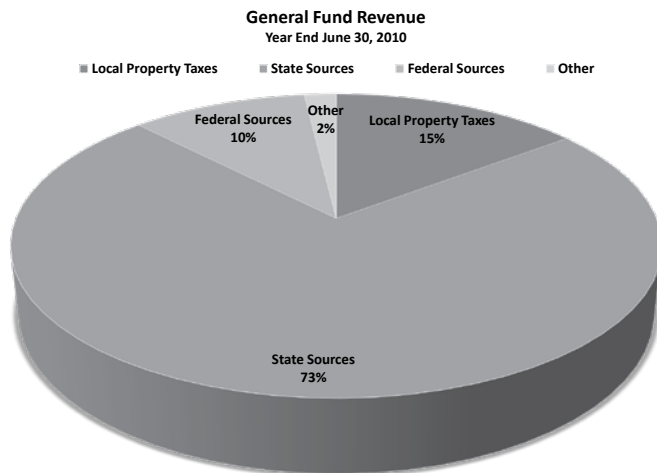
The NPAS web server has delivered **1.29 terabytes** of data in the last 12 months.

Understanding Local Property Tax Levies

School finance is very complex, a bit dry, and makes for good reading material right before bed. However, it is very important for citizens to understand the basic concepts and how changes affect them, the students, and the community overall.

There are three revenue sources for funding education – state, federal, and local. This article focuses on local funding.

THE MAJORITY OF LOCAL FUNDING FOR THE GENERAL FUND COMES THROUGH A PROPERTY TAX LEVY WHERE INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNERS WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PAY FOR A PORTION OF THE COST TO RUN LOCAL SCHOOLS. A PORTION OF THE SCHOOL LEVY IS APPROVED BY VOTERS AND A PORTION IS PRESCRIBED BY STATE STATUTE.



Voter Approved Levies

One type of voter approved levy is a bonding levy. This levy is used when a district has a capital need such as building a new school, renovating an existing building, or upgrading equipment or technology. The voters approve the sale of bonds to finance the project, and the revenue generated by the tax levy pays the principal and interest payments for these bonds. A bonding levy is approved by voters for a specific period of time and every new bond sale requires voter approval. In 2011, \$4.8M in revenue will be generated for bond payments. A bonding levy cannot be used to pay for daily operating costs of the district.

The other type of voter approved levy is an operating levy. An operating levy may be used only to pay for the daily expenses of operating the school district such as teacher salaries, utilities, classroom supplies, etc. Because state and federal funding

haven't kept pace with increased costs, 302 of 337 Minnesota school districts have found it necessary to ask the voters for additional revenue to fund their ongoing operating costs. Revenue generated by an operating levy is a dollar amount per student so the total amount of revenue generated annually varies based on student count. An operating levy is also approved by voters for a specified period of time and needs to be re-approved by voters when it expires. In 2011, \$3 million of revenue will be generated through the operating levy. New Prague Area Schools' current operating levy expires in 2013.

Categorical Levies

Another portion of the property tax levy pays for specific categories of expenses and is set by formulas approved by the legislature. Levies like these include operating capital, equity, transition, and community service. Similar levies, also based in statute, but based on local needs include career/technical, deferred maintenance, crime, facility leases, integration, re-employment and health and safety. Several of these levies have maximum caps set by the legislature. The revenue generated from these levies must be spent on expenditures specified in statute. Currently, approximately \$2.0 million is generated annually by categorical levies.

The 2011 Levy

The levy certified by the school board in December for calendar year 2011 decreased from the 2010 levy mainly due to prior year adjustments and variations in principal and interest payments for bonds. The operating levy amount per student did not change since this was approved by voters, but the total amount due from individual property owners changed based on the number of students and value of individual properties in the district.

The property tax levy is a key piece of funding for New Prague Area Schools.

Other Local Funding – User Fees

Another piece of local funding comes from user fees such as student participation fees, and admission to events. While these fees help to defray expenditures, they do not amount to a large portion of the district's overall funding.

As in all matters of public funding, we encourage you to ask questions, attend board meetings, or do your own research on the topic. If you have any questions regarding local levies or any other finance topic, please call the district office at 952-758-1700.



Participants, Fans, Coaches Safer with AEDs, Training

ALL THREE GYMS USED BY THE NEW PRAGUE ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT NOW HAVE AEDS POSITIONED FOR EASY ACCESS. THE DEPARTMENT WAS AWARDED THREE "HEARTSTART" AEDS FROM THE MDEWAKANTON SIOUX COMMUNITY THROUGH A GRANT PROGRAM FOR THIS PURPOSE.

The three AEDs have been strategically placed in areas where Sudden Cardiac Arrests are most likely to occur near gyms at NPHS, NPMS and the CEC Building. Statistics show that a person who suffers Sudden Cardiac Arrest has three minutes before permanent damage can occur. Activities Director Brad Skogerboe feels that, "The Activities Department has to do everything in our power to keep student athletes, spectators, and coaches safe during practices, competitions, or whatever brings people to our facilities."

The Activities Department is also making a strong effort to get coaches and advisors at New Prague High School certified in CPR and AED use. The coaches, advisors, and any other interested ISD #721 employee were offered free training from the Le Sueur County Sheriff's Department last spring. More training opportunities will be available during the 2010-11 school year.

The training is also being offered to the captains of various activities at no cost. The Minnesota State High School League has established an "Anyone Can Save a Life" program and has offered guidance throughout the process. "We want to put as many people as possible in ISD #721 in a position to save someone's life,"

says Skogerboe. "I feel very strongly about this effort and the coaches, advisors,

and captains have been very supportive as well."

On behalf of New Prague Schools, Skogerboe sends thanks to the Le Sueur County Sheriff's Department and the Mdewakanton Sioux Community for their efforts in saving peoples' lives.



That's a Fact!

Sixty percent of students at NPHS are involved in sports and fine arts activities.

NPAS bus drivers log just under 1 million miles per year, and the last 1.6 million miles have been accident free.

The Extra Mile

Jane Gerold

Eagle View Paraprofessional

Four years ago, Sam, a student with a visual impairment, started at Eagle View Elementary School. Sam needed the assistance of a paraprofessional throughout the day for mobility and orientation purposes and also for academic help with Braille. Jane Gerold, a paraprofessional who has been with New Prague Area Schools for 21 years, was given the assignment to work with Sam on a daily basis. As the year went on, Jane learned Braille from Sam, as she had no previous experience in this area. It was at this time that Jane sought out information from the Faribault Academy for the Blind. Jane was told about an online Braille class, and she contacted district administration about taking this course to better prepare her to work with Sam. From start to finish, the Braille coursework took two years for Jane to complete. She studied a total of 20 lessons to obtain the "Certificate of Proficiency in Braille Transcribing." According to Jane, the Braille coursework and exams were very difficult as all work had to be completed correctly, or it would be sent back to her for corrections.

"Jane is a very special person," says Special Services Director Tony Buthe. "She was prepared to go 'the extra mile' for this young man to maximize his educational opportunities. We're proud of Jane's commitment and the great service she provides every day."

Sam is now in the third grade. A typical day for Jane is working directly with Sam in his regular education classes along with Brailing all of his lessons for the week. Jane now has a love for Brailing and is looking at continuing her education in the area of transcribing Math Braille, which would require another 20 lessons.

“Big Yellow Buses” Going Green



It takes 24 yellow school bus drivers and 14 van drivers, traveling a total of nearly 1 million miles per year, to bring our students to and from school. Another 17 substitute drivers keep vehicles rolling when illness or other challenges arise.

NPAS SCHOOL BUSES WILL SOON BE RUNNING CLEANER AND GREENER THANKS TO THE VOLUNTARY EFFORTS OF NEW PRAGUE AREA SCHOOLS AND PROJECT GREEN FLEET, A COLLABORATION OF BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING MINNESOTA'S AIR QUALITY.



Buses are made “green” by the installation of federally approved catalyst mufflers that can reduce engine emissions by up to 50%. Buses eligible for retrofits are older buses (2004 or older), with diesel engines that are expected to provide many more years of service. Newer buses (2005 and newer) create less pollution and don’t need retrofits. A total of 19 buses in the district’s fleet of 32 will be retrofitted with pollution control equipment.

Diesel vehicles contribute more than 50% of the traffic related air pollution generated in Minnesota. Because children breathe more air relative to their body weight than adults, they are more susceptible to the problems these pollutants can cause.

Participation in Project Green Fleet is entirely voluntary. Air quality in Minnesota currently satisfies federal standards administered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. As a result, there is no regulatory mandate in Minnesota to retrofit diesel engines to make them run cleaner.

“This project just made sense. It will benefit not only the students of New Prague Area Schools, but the entire area in which our school buses operate,” said Transportation Director Craig Most. “We will begin installing the equipment in the very near future as it becomes available.”

Thanks to Project Green Fleets sponsors, participation in the program is completely

free to participating bus fleets.

Project Green Fleet began in 2005 when the Minnesota Environmental Initiative (MEI) partnered with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and numerous businesses, state government agencies, and non-profits to create the project. MEI, a non-profit organization, who builds partnerships to develop collaborative solutions to Minnesota’s environmental problems, continues to coordinate Project Green Fleet.

For more information, visit www.projectgreenfleet.org

PartnerSHIP Improves Student Nutrition

New Prague Area Schools has partnered with the public health department in Scott County to implement comprehensive nutrition policies through the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) to encourage healthy eating throughout the school day.

Students learn, eat and play at school during the years when they are acquiring lifestyle habits. “We want our schools to be an environment that supports good nutrition to help them become healthy adults,” says Health Services Director Cheryl Malecha.

“We look forward to working with students and their families throughout the school year to make our schools a place that supports learning and healthy eating,” says Malecha.

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), an integral part of Minnesota’s 2008 health reform law, strives to help Minnesotans lead longer, healthier lives by preventing the chronic disease risk factors of tobacco use and exposure, poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

As a result of this grant, NPAS has achieved the following:

- Formed a Food Advisory Committee, which recommended that all food choices focus on healthy options, in an effort to reduce risks of nutrition related diseases facing our society
- Improved the nutritional quality of food served at school by offering increased numbers of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Added healthier options to the ala carte line at New Prague Middle School, such as a grilled chicken breast sandwich and chicken fajitas
- Added healthier options to K-5 snack carts
- Researched and implemented a Farm-to-School initiative to bring locally grown items into our offerings

For more information about the Carver-Scott SHIP initiative and a full list of participating schools, visit www.carver-scottship.org.



Success in Reading Begins Early

"Letters, letters, letters have names. What is the name of this letter?" chants Tracy Geske to a group of Kids' Corner preschoolers, as they wait in line before going outside to play. Tracy is a Minnesota Reading Corps tutor working in one of the district's preschool classrooms. She is helping this classroom of 3- to 5-year-olds learn the alphabet letter names, an important early reading skill.

Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC), which is part of the national AmeriCorps program, is a statewide initiative to help every child become a successful reader by third grade. "Prior to third grade, children are learning to read. At third grade, children are reading to learn," said Lana Puffer, Early Childhood Programs Coordinator and MRC Reading Coach. "Being a successful reader sets the foundation for success in school and life. That is why it is so important to provide literacy rich programming and support to young children."

Like NPAS elementary schools have done the past few years, Kids' Corner preschool applied for and received a Minnesota Reading Corps grant last spring. The grant supports a part-time preschool classroom reading tutor throughout the 2010-11 school year.

THE MRC PRESCHOOL MODEL IS A RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM THAT INCLUDES A LITERACY RICH ENVIRONMENT, CLASSROOM ROUTINES THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS, AND SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES THAT MEET THE INDIVIDUAL LITERACY NEEDS OF EACH CHILD.

"We are encouraged by the progress we already see in many of our students. We are especially grateful for the extra support the MRC member provides to the students who need more small group and one-to-one work," says Bridget Barnett, Kids' Corner classroom teacher.

The MRC model provides teaching strategies that encourage the development of conversation, vocabulary, letter recognition, sound awareness and print knowledge. The MRC classroom tutor finds ways to connect literacy skills with activities, games and music children enjoy. Geske has received special training to help her work with the classroom teachers planning for a literacy-rich classroom. Erin Anderson, Kids' Corner teacher says, "We are learning new literacy teaching strategies that help us work with all children in our classroom."

"It is rewarding to see the children use the new words they are learning, hear a rhyme in a story that is being read, and build confidence in their writing skills," shares Geske. "They are learning that reading can be fun, and that is critical to becoming life-long, successful readers."

The Minnesota Reading Corps program began in 2003 and has grown to include 675 tutors in 109 school districts. Volunteer tutors with MRC receive a small living stipend and funds for college after completing their year(s) of service. To learn more about MRC, visit www.minnesotareadingcorps.org.



Minnesota Reading Corps tutor Tracy Geske helps preschoolers prepare for a letter naming exercise, focusing on one of the critical pre-reading skills at this age.

Tips for Parents of Preschoolers

Learning to read is a big job! Successful readers need 10,000-12,000 words in their vocabulary by the time they reach Kindergarten. You can help your child build their vocabulary and other pre-reading skills, and have fun, too.

Letter Knowledge

Use "squirt" cheese to write the letters of your child's name on individual crackers. Then see if your child can put the crackers in order. Can he/she name the letters? Then, enjoy "eating" their name.

Letter Sounds

Play "toss the salad." Assemble the ingredients you will use to make a salad. Then, have your child hand you the ingredients like this, "I need something that begins like 'lamp' (emphasizing the 'l')." Your child should hand you the lettuce. "I need something that begins like 'toy' (emphasizing the 't')." Your child should hand you the tomatoes. And so on.

Phonemic Awareness

Play rhyming games and read books with fun, playful sounds.

Food Service Policy Update

On December 13, the Board of Education adopted an updated policy regarding food service account balances. Effective January 17, if a family's food account balance falls to or below \$0, the family will be allowed two more meals per student. If the account is still below \$0 after two meals, the student(s) in the family will receive a cheese sandwich and milk each day for lunch until the account has a positive balance. The updated policy #726 can be seen in full at www.np.k12.mn.us.

Applications for the Federal Free and Reduced Price School Meals program are available at all school offices and online. Contact Food Service Director Robert Foix at 952-758-1220 with questions.

Hybrid-Online Classes Offer New Opportunities

By Tierney Chlan, Class of 2011

When you think about a classroom, things like desks, chairs, and whiteboards come to mind, but would you ever consider your kitchen table? How about your bedroom, the couch, a coffee shop?

For some students at New Prague High School, an Internet connection has become their link to the classroom. How is this possible? The answer is classes like College in the Schools Composition and AP Statistics, which, for the first time, are being taught in a hybrid-online format. This format means learning still takes place like normal at school, but a portion of the class is completed online.

The idea of hybrid-online was introduced last fall. Many suburban schools had hybrid classes and NPHS thought it was a good idea. Administrators decided the new classes would be held first and fifth hour for transportation convenience. They also decided to test the idea out with upper level classes for those who had the maturity to handle the demands, not to mention the license to drive to school.

Carrie DeValk has taught College in the Schools (CIS) Composition many times before, but this is her first hybrid class. Her students meet every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, with non-contact days (the days students are not required to be in school) on Wednesdays and Fridays. Because of the hybrid schedule, DeValk has had to modify her schedule.

"I've had to rethink assignments we have done before and rearrange my lessons because I don't see my class as often."

However, DeValk thinks this class is worth the trouble. The hybrid-online format is a new experience for students that will benefit them in the long run.

"The best part about this class is knowing that I am helping students prepare for the future. With this format, they experience more independence and are in control of their own performance, like in college."

She stresses that, "Students are receiving the best of both worlds." In fact, the only thing DeValk regrets about the hybrid is that she doesn't get to see her students every day.

Not only is CIS Composition part of the new hybrid-online format, it is also part of the Netbook pilot program. Everyone has heard the talk about the freshmen getting Netbooks, but administrators decided to test it out on seniors first.

Each student in the CIS course received and became responsible for a Netbook they will use until the class is completed second trimester. Students are required to bring their Netbook to class every day and are encouraged to use it outside of the classroom as well.

"The Netbooks are convenient and much more efficient for what we need to do," said DeValk.

The class is almost completely paperless, and students use Moodle to turn in assignments. They also use Google Docs for drafting papers because everyone in class can see their work in real time and offer feedback directly on the document.

Senior Nicole Erickson expressed her surprise when she saw fellow senior, Landon Schaeffer, typing a suggestion for a paragraph she was working on. The instant access and feedback students receive is just one more advantage to the hybrid-online format. DeValk has expressed her belief that Google Docs is helping to make her students better writers.

THE HYBRID-ONLINE COURSES AT NPHS OFFER A GREAT NEW EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS, BECAUSE THEY RECEIVE A COLLEGE EXPERIENCE WHILE STILL IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SETTING. THE WORKLOAD IS ABOUT THE SAME, THE ASSIGNMENTS ARE JUST COMPLETED DIFFERENTLY. THE HYBRID FORMAT IS NOT PERFECT. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ARE WORKING OUT THE KINKS TOGETHER, BUT THE LONGER THE CLASSES GO ON, THE BETTER THEY GET. AS TIMES CHANGE, SO MUST THE WAY WE LEARN, WHICH IS EVIDENT THROUGH THE NEW HYBRID-ONLINE CLASSES.



NPHS Senior Elizabeth Northrup researches ideas for her trend analysis using one of the University of Minnesota databases

"It took me awhile to get used to the Netbook because it's so small," said senior Brianna Pexa, "but now that I'm used to it, I find it very helpful."

AP Statistics is the other hybrid-online course offered this trimester. Later this year, CIS Psychology will be offered in this format. Students can participate in online chats and have Moodle assignments as well as regular book assignments.

Michelle Schellin loves the flexibility that a hybrid brings. "Students learn in different ways. The students that partake in the online chats are not always the students that I hear questions from in class. It really does reach out to students in different ways than a typical math class."

"Some of their Moodle assignments have been helping them become more familiar with other computer programs, especially Excel," said Schellin.

Teaching a hybrid class has enabled Schellin to incorporate many technologies into her lessons. She uses jing.com to make video tutorials for students and uses Moodle for live chats. During live chats, students are shown Schellin's entire computer screen so they can see a PowerPoint, a calculator, or other useful program.

Volunteers Help Students with Successful Start

Every day hundreds of children jump cheerily off the big yellow bus and walk through the doors of our three local elementary schools. Principals, teachers, office assistants, paraprofessionals and other support staff are ready and waiting for these energetic and diverse students. For the next seven hours each day, we do our best to engage our students in learning opportunities and social activities that will help them grow to be the unique and talented individuals they are meant to become. But we aren't the only ones ready and waiting.

Parents and community members give their time and talent to a variety of programs in our schools. Some parents get involved by helping in their child's classroom each week, assisting students with additional practice and learning extensions in small group settings. Some parents get involved by helping teachers with the many behind-the-scenes details they need prepared to offer exciting learning opportunities in the classroom. Some parents and community members come to school and share their expertise or passion, giving our students and staff a unique and specialized look at their area of interest. Many parents attend Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings four to five times per year to give input and feedback to our schools.

Here is a sample of a few of the projects and the number of people who donated their time and talents to enhance our three elementary schools.

September/October 2010	Volunteers
Media Center and Classroom	182
Fundraisers	34
Book Fairs	62
PACs	105
Picture Days	27
Staff Appreciation Dinners	143
Total	553



Family Involvement Coordinators Nancy Hertzog (Eagle View), Lori Geiger (Falcon Ridge), and Ann Buehler (Raven Stream) match parent volunteers with school needs.

Each month, each week, and each day, volunteers give of their time and their talents to help us deliver the quality education that New Prague Area Schools is known for. This year, in the first two months of school, hundreds of parent volunteers helped our schools welcome back students, facilitate fundraisers, host conferences with families, encourage our teachers and support staff, and provide input and guidance to key decisions.

EAGLE VIEW, FALCON RIDGE, AND RAVEN STREAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WERE GIFTED WITH EXTRA HELP AND SUPPORT DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER OF 2010 BY THE OVER 500 VOLUNTEERS THAT ASSISTED WITH KEY PROJECTS.

That's a Fact!

Community Education facilitates more than **300,000 contact hours** of learning each year.

Natural Resources Class Featured in *Outdoor News*



Jeff Decker's natural resources management class at New Prague High School was featured in an article in the November 19 issue of *Outdoor News*. Contributing writer Joe Noble tells how this fall's class assisted the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to conduct mark and recapture surveys for trout in metro area rivers. In the spring, students make wood duck houses and study nesting behaviors. About 100 students take this course each year, studying biology, ecology and natural resources management, while earning a science credit toward graduation. The full article is online at the High School page.

New Prague Grad Brings Talents Home

Community Services recently finished an arts learning project called, "Inspire," with teaching artist and New Prague graduate Greg Preslicka. During "Inspire," Preslicka worked with three groups of community members—preschoolers, school agers, and teens and adults—to gather ideas about how they learn. He used these ideas as inspiration for the design of three 9-by-5-foot murals on canvas. Once designed, with direction from Preslicka on color choice, members of these three groups actually painted the murals. The murals are on display in the Community Education office, in the Community Education Campus (CEC) Building, where preschoolers and other community learners arrive for class. A video recapping the project is in process and will be available on the Community Education website later this year.

THE "INSPIRE" ARTS LEARNING PROJECT WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF A NEARLY \$10,000 GRANT FROM THE METROPOLITAN REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL AND AN INVESTMENT OF \$2,500 BY COMMUNITY EDUCATION.



"How We Learn" painted by Teens & Adults



"How We Learn" painted by School Agers

Congratulations to TIES Winners

Nick Huber and Sande Schoenecker of New Prague Area Schools were recognized as **TIES Exceptional Teachers** at the TIES 2010 Education Technology Conference at the Minneapolis Hyatt Regency on December 7. They were among 79 teachers from 39 districts, chosen by their superintendents for the award. The honor recognizes teachers who model the best practices in using technology in their classroom and engaging students in learning.



Fourth grade teacher Nick Huber uses technology daily with his Raven Stream students. Many of his students use a program called "Read Naturally," which improves oral reading fluency and comprehension skills.



Raven Stream third grade teacher Sande Schoenecker leads Raven Stream's pilot classroom for 1:1 Netbooks. The students practice spelling words using a free website called "Spelling City," word process writing workshop essays using Google Docs, practice basic number facts at various websites, and practice many grammar skills through various websites that have interactive tools.

Students Focus on R-E-A-D-I-N-G

“READING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ACADEMIC SKILL AND THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL ACADEMIC LEARNING. IF OUR CHILDREN CANNOT READ, THEY ARE ON THE ROAD TO ACADEMIC FAILURE. TEACHING CHILDREN TO READ MUST BE OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY.”

—EVERY CHILD A READER



Research bears out time after time that students must read well by third grade to prepare for school and life success. In its work at the elementary level, the district has employed a number of assessment strategies and programs to support skill development in this critical area.

Teachers Focus on Individual Needs

“Being cognizant of each student’s needs is our number one priority,” says Curriculum & Instruction Specialist MaryKay Proshok. “By evaluating results from a variety of tests, e.g., DIBELS fluency test, NWEA, MCAII, MCAIII, and classroom assessments, teachers are explicitly aware of the balance of student learning needs within their classrooms.”

Team collaboration time focuses on the specific academic and behavioral needs of our students and helps teachers to determine the best approaches for each child. Teachers and specialists provide research-based strategies that work to strengthen weaker areas and capitalize on areas of strength. Programs such as Orton Gillingham, PALS, Soar to Success and READ 180 are just a few of the approaches elementary teachers are using to strengthen students’ reading skills.

Orton Gillingham

The Orton Gillingham program focuses on the structure of language and gradually moves towards reading, while emphasizing four of the five senses—what children see, feel, touch, and hear. The program provides students with immediate feedback and a predictable sequence that integrates reading, writing, and spelling. It can be used with a one-on-one teacher-student model or small-group instruction, which is most common.

The student is directly taught reading, handwriting, and written expression. Learners move step by step from simple to more complex material in a sequential, logical manner that enables them to master important literacy skills. This comprehensive approach to reading instruction benefits all students.

Reciprocal Teaching, developed by Palinscar and Brown, provides the program’s critical comprehension strand. This highly effective instructional activity employs strategies to increase students’ ability to read for meaning and retention by developing four comprehension strategies: predicting, comprehending, summarizing, and clarifying the meaning of words.

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies is a type of class-wide peer tutoring to improve reading skills. Teachers pair students with different reading ability, and the partners work on activities that address the skills that are causing problems. The pairs are changed regularly, giving all students the opportunity to act as coaches and players.

PALS enable teachers to address individual student needs, as well as observe students and develop individual remedial lessons. Preschool-Kindergarten PALS focus on letter names and sounds, letter-sound correspondence, phonological awareness, and decoding. First grade PALS stresses decoding and reading fluently.

In Grades 2-6, PALS promote reading fluency and comprehension. In the higher grades, PALS activities include partner reading, paragraph shrinking (identifying the main idea), and prediction relay (predicting what will be learned next, reading aloud, determining if the prediction was accurate, and summarizing the main idea).

The ability to read is crucial to the success of all students, and it is essential to success in our society. It is the academic skill that lays the foundation for all learning.

READ 180

When students reach middle and high school, they are expected to be competent readers. Some students struggle with grade-level text; the text they can read often fails to contain interesting or age-appropriate content. These struggling readers can become discouraged and fall further behind in school.

READ 180 addresses their needs through adaptive and instructional software, high-interest literature, and direct instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary skills. Additional tools include high-interest video segments that build background to help students form mental models of what they’re reading, paperbacks and audio books to help struggling readers strengthen reading skills and habit while they enjoy authentic, grade-level literature. READ 180 is in its second year of adoption in New Prague Area Schools.

New Prague Area Schools Special Education Transition Program

TRAN·SI·TION (NOUN) A PASSAGE FROM ONE STATE, STAGE, SUBJECT, OR PLACE TO ANOTHER.

NPAS Transition Program provides students with an opportunity to experience situations and develop skills and resources needed for independence. The program began in the 2007-08 school year to provide options for students 18-21 years of age and eligible for these services.

The intent of Transition and one of the primary purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living.”

Participation in the Transition Program requires students to be between the ages of 18-21, not yet graduated from high school, and hold a valid Individualized Education Program (IEP) with transition goals.

According to Transition Program teacher Sue Kratochvil, the transition process should start as early as possible to help lay the foundation for a solid education. This enables students to complete high school prepared for adult life, whether that be employment, further education or training, and/or independent living.

The program is housed at the Central Education Campus and includes simulated apartment and work environments. Businesses within the local community act as extensions of the Transition Program, providing opportunities for career exploration and valuable job skills to build on based on the students’ interests, aptitudes and IEP goals. Community service is also built into the program.

STUDENTS IN THE TRANSITION PROGRAM FOCUS ON THREE AREAS OF STUDY TO PREPARE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING: POST-SECONDARY TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING.

The Post-Secondary Training area includes putting together a plan to achieve life

goals and determining what kind of schooling or training is necessary to get there. The second area, Employment, enables students to explore career interests, participate in job trials and work in supported or competitive jobs. The third area, Independent Living, teaches skills in personal care, food planning and preparation, home safety, household maintenance and budgeting/personal finance, all the while students are learning self-advocacy skills.

Each young adult entering the Transition Program has a graduation plan and an IEP that identifies skills needed for their future goals. When students reach their IEP goals, he or she has technically completed requirements for graduation, which can occur at any age. Along the way, they have established links with adult service providers such as rehabilitation services and county support services, which will continue to provide information and guidance for families and young adults to live as independently and successfully as possible.



Transition student Sam and instructor Sue Kratochvil work on life skills in the apartment simulation room.

www.np.k12.mn.us

It's Online...

District 721 offers a wealth of news and information online related to our work with students and the community. Check out these resources on the district’s website: www.np.k12.mn.us

- **Athletic Schedules** for our conference, with links to maps to competition sites. [HOME PAGE](#), [SCHOOLS](#), [HIGH SCHOOL](#), [ATHLETICS](#), [ATHLETIC SCHEDULES](#)
- **Board Meeting Webcasts** for the latest Board discussion. [HOME PAGE](#), [SCHOOL BOARD](#), [BOARD MEETING WEBCAST](#)
- **Calendars** by school of major events, days off, etc. [HOME PAGE](#), [CALENDAR/ SCHOOL YEAR](#)
- **Community Education** information on Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Preschools, Youth and Adult Enrichment, Arts Programming, and more. [HOME PAGE](#), [COMMUNITY EDUCATION](#) (Register at ce.isd721.org.)
- **Employment Opportunities** with the district. [HOME PAGE](#), [HR/EMPLOYMENT](#), [EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES](#)
- **Facility Use Information** for people who want to use gyms, classrooms, or other facilities. [HOME PAGE](#), [FACILITY USE](#)
- **Lunch Menus** and other information about meal programs. [HOME PAGE](#), [FOOD SERVICES](#)
- **Newsletters** note each building’s news, events, and accomplishments. [HOME PAGE](#), [DISTRICT NEWSLETTERS](#)
- **Policies** that govern how the district operates. [HOME PAGE](#), [POLICIES](#)
- **Special Services** site with information on Special Education, English Language Learning, Health Services, Adaptive Sports, and much more. [HOME PAGE](#), [SPECIAL SERVICES](#)
- **SuptTalk** monthly interview “show” online, with superintendent and guests. [HOME PAGE](#), [CLICK “SUPERINTENDENT TALK”](#)

www.np.k12.mn.us

**NEW PRAGUE AREA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION**



The Roots to Grow...

**New Prague Area
Education Foundation**
PO Box 171
New Prague, MN 56071

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**For more information on the
foundation, please visit:**

www.therootstogrow.org
Email: info@therootstogrow.org
Phone: 952-758-2000

Foundation News

Foundation Funds Early Reading Tools

Within our first year, the New Prague Area Education Foundation (NPAEF) has made great strides in its goal of raising and distributing funds to enhance and strengthen the academic experience in New Prague Area Schools.

The Brain Power Walk/Run on Dozinky® Saturday was our kick-off fundraiser. We were pleased with the number of participants and look forward to continuing this tradition annually. The event raised nearly \$6,000 and we enthusiastically thank the sponsors, participants and volunteers who made this event a success.

We awarded the inaugural 2010 grants in August to the Read to Me program proposed by Raven Stream Elementary first grade teachers and to the Creating Lifelong Readers through Independent Reading initiative proposed by Eagle View Elementary first grade teachers. Grant recipients were selected based on criteria including scale of impact and long-term effectiveness. Both programs are currently being integrated into the curriculum to enhance the 2010-11 school year.



Our Board of Directors continues to support education with their dedicated direction and encourages others to carry forward our mission. We recently expanded the Foundation's commitment by adding a scholarship component. We look forward to distributing the first NPAEF scholarships at the 2011 New Prague High School Night of Excellence in May. Within the following months, we will actively seek to secure a corporate partner who will enable us to grow the Foundation and develop our programs to achieve their full potential.

NPAEF has a variety of volunteer opportunities and welcomes your active participation on subcommittees, fund raising events, or simply working the concession stand at boys' basketball games and wrestling matches. There are many ways for you to become involved and make a difference! If interested in joining our efforts, please contact the NPAEF President, Jane Dittberner at 952-758-6664. Other Board members include Dan Bishop, Shawn Brandt, Colleen King, Kristy Mach, Mark Rezac, Paul Sirek, and Amy Trygestad. More information is available at www.therootstogrow.org.



*Together may we give
our children the roots to grow
and the wings to fly.*

Stimulus Dollars Provide Energy Tools

New Prague Area Schools recently received \$150,000 of federal stimulus money to improve energy performance within two of its eight facilities. With these funds, New Prague High School and the Central Education Campus will be receiving boiler retrofits.

New Prague High School will receive four Thermal Solutions condensing hot water boilers that are capable of up to 97% efficiency. The four boilers will be in addition to the existing Scotch marine boilers which are required to keep our dual fuel natural gas rate. Not including the energy grant, the return on investment is under nine years with an annual estimated savings of \$18,000.

The Central Education Campus will receive four Fulton high efficiency steam boilers that are capable of 86% efficiency. The four boilers will replace one of our existing Scotch marine boilers and the other will stay to meet the requirements of our dual

fuel contract. Not including the energy grant, the return on investment is under nine years with an annual estimated savings of \$21,000.

Wondering why there is a difference in efficiency between the two boilers?

The simple answer is that the Central Education Campus uses steam as its medium to heat and the High School uses hot water. In a hot water system, you need only heat the water to the amount of warmth that is needed on any given day and a pump will circulate it throughout the building. In a steam system, you need to bring the water to a boil to create steam and the steam's pressure is what circulates the warmth throughout the building.

Both projects are part of a long line of technologically innovative energy improvements that reinforce New Prague Area Schools' continued commitment to efficiency and conservation.

IN FISCAL YEAR 2010, ALONE, THE EXPECTED SAVINGS/COST AVOIDANCE IS ESTIMATED TO BE JUST UNDER \$100,000 WITH A POTENTIAL OF \$135,000 IN FISCAL YEAR 2011.

My Antonia BY WILLA CATHER

**Performance on Sunday, March 13, 2 p.m.
at New Prague High School Auditorium.
Tickets available through Community
Education starting February 1.**

**Take Part in One or More Related
Events: Details on page 2 of
Community Education brochure.**



NPMS Fields Get "Extreme Makeover"

The New Prague Middle School athletic and recreational fields have recently gotten an extreme makeover. With the acquisition of the Borkowski property and the moving of the house, reconstruction and expansion of the fields began in July. After the house was moved, Witt Construction began leveling and grading the fields and constructing two new softball fields. The fall weather and timely rains made the conditions perfect for growing grass and the project was complete in September.

"This project is in alignment with the master facility plan of 2008 and will benefit the community well into the future," states Director of Operations Tim Rybak.

The fields will benefit the NPMS athletic and physical education programs as well as spring and summer Community Education programs.

"Staff and students are anxiously waiting to use the new fields," says NPMS Assistant Principal and Activities Director Brad Gregor. The fields are scheduled to be ready for use in the fall of 2011.

Rtl Focus Improves Literacy Instruction

As you walk through the halls of New Prague Area Schools, you will hear the letters “Rtl” being tossed around by both professionals and parents. The main goal of Response to Intervention (Rtl) is to lay the groundwork for achieving full literacy through early intervention services. Within the Rtl model, school staff intensify instructional support for struggling readers, to close their learning gaps as soon as possible and keep them on track for reading and school success.

Rtl is a three-tiered instructional model, where student performance is regularly measured, and progress is monitored to identify gaps in skill development.

- **Tier 1** is the delivery of a scientifically-based core program with fidelity, intensity, passion, and reasonable accommodations. If done well, we expect to meet the needs of most students.
- **Tier 2** is “more”—more time, more specific teacher-led instruction, more opportunities to respond, and more progress monitoring.
- **Tier 3** is the “most”—most time, most specific teacher-led instruction, most opportunities to respond and the most frequent progress monitoring.

If a child’s performance in a specific skill area falls into Tier 2 or 3, a continuum of research-based action commences, with specific methods of evaluating and monitoring, to bring the student to proficiency.

A successful implementation of Rtl is based on three primary concepts:

- School structures ensuring the most effective instruction.
- Regular collection of data to screen the progress of all students.
- Use of research-based intervention practices within a multi-tiered delivery model (i.e., different interventions based on the need level of the student).

Response to Intervention (Rtl) was introduced to the education world in 2001 by President Bush with No Child Left Behind. At that time, the national motto changed from “all students can learn” to “all students must learn.”

THE RTI MODEL RELIES ON TERRIFIC INSTRUCTION BY THE CLASSROOM TEACHER USING EXCELLENT CURRICULUM. IT IS CRITICAL TO HAVE A HIGH-QUALITY, RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM IN PLACE THAT MEETS THE INITIAL NEEDS OF 80-90% OF OUR STUDENTS, REDUCING THE PROPORTION IN NEED OF INTERVENTION.

“The goal is to make sure curriculum and instruction are not at the root of referrals for problem solving or special education,” says Special Services Director Tony Buthe. “We are arming our teachers with the best tools and methods to establish the best possible base.”

Rtl in Our Schools

NPAS elementary schools are in their third full year of implementation in the area of reading for Grades K-5. All elementary teachers have received training on benchmarks and progress monitoring. They also know how to record the data collected from progress



Intervention Specialist Jen Larson helps students with literacy concepts.

monitoring and implement interventions based on the data for the students who are at risk of falling behind expectations.

“Response to Intervention has enabled Eagle View Elementary to use data to drive our instruction and teaching practices in order to best meet the needs of our students,” says Mark Randall, Eagle View Principal. “It has provided us the ability to look at data to target specific skill deficits of students so that we can define appropriate and effective interventions in order to meet their needs.”

The School Readiness program (pre-school) and the Middle School are in their first full year of implementation, after one year of planning. Each focused this fall on screening and identifying students who are below grade level in reading.

“At the Middle School,” explains Brad Gregor, Assistant Principal, “the advanced screening of students in reading proficiency allows us to provide services for children based on prevention and intervention instead of waiting for them to fall behind.”

The High School is in its planning year and continues to work to identify both Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions for the 2011-2012 school years. Specific classes within the areas of reading and math have been added to help support students who are below grade level within those two areas.

Other Areas of Impact

The concepts of Rtl also apply to mathematics and specific student behavior, where interventions are available. All of the New Prague Area Schools are in the planning and implementation phase in both these areas. The fidelity of the Rtl program is crucial and a systematic approach works best to ensure that the programs operate effectively.

A district Rtl Team meets monthly to create and direct a common understanding of the district-wide intervention program among all staff members. The team works to ensure our district’s Rtl program is considered in decisions affecting both general education and special education, creating a well integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

Although there are many formats for how a school might implement Rtl to best serve the needs of its students, in New Prague, our Response to Intervention program has been established to be a district-wide framework for efficiently allocating resources to improve student outcomes.

Strategic Plan Focuses Efforts

AS THE DISTRICT NEARS THE END OF ITS 18-MONTH STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS, PRIORITIES AND WORK PLANS ARE IN PLACE AND EFFORT IS SHIFTING TO IMPLEMENTATION.

Information gathering began in Spring 2009 with initial direction from the Board of Education and input from district administrators. Superintendent Menozzi reached out to several community groups to gather input through surveys and analysis. The American Legion, Council of Catholic Women, Emergency Responders, Knights of Columbus and Auxiliary, Ministerial Group, Rotary Club, and VFW provided specific input on strengths and weaknesses of the district and completed a community survey. Parents, students, and staff were invited to participate in surveys to gather similar data. All were invited to a Community Wide Meeting to dig further into themes that emerged through the survey process.

Drs. Candace Raskin and Jerry Robicheau from Minnesota State University Mankato assisted with the process. "The conversation changed," says Dr. Raskin. "District leaders became very focused in the priority areas, and their conversation about goal setting and achievement began to come into alignment. It's a very powerful process, and district leaders embraced it."

From this data gathering, several areas of concentration emerged. A committee of community members, Board members, district staff, and administrators gathered to update the district's mission statement and define its vision and values. The Board

of Education then established three priority areas, to focus the planning work. All these efforts resulted in the following:

Mission

To engage and support everyone in high levels of learning.

Vision

To be a premier school district that models excellence and embraces the challenges of the 21st Century.

Values

- Allocate time and support to best practice research and implementation
- Respect diverse thinking
- Model appropriate, positive interactions
- Think globally
- Learn and apply supportive, interactive technologies

Priorities

- High Academic Achievement
- Maintain Fiscal Integrity
- Effective, Engaging Communications

In Summer 2010, district leaders began to develop work plans in the priority areas, and building leaders developed goals and plans aligned with those.

"I'm extremely pleased with the progress we have made in focusing the work of the district on the Board's three key priorities," says Superintendent Menozzi. "These are critical factors to future success, and this work will help us achieve great outcomes, manage our resources, and communicate better with our constituents."

Preliminary work has begun in several key areas, and the final plan document moves forward for Board approval this month.

Community Read

My Antonia BY WILLA CATHER

Join your neighbors, friends, and family this February for a Community Read of the classic novel *My Antonia* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather. This is the story of a spirited young Bohemian girl whose immigrant family builds a life in the untamed plains of late 19th Century Nebraska. With striking similarities to the history of our area, this novel's many characters and stories will resonate with local readers.

Copies of the novel are available now at the New Prague Library for free check-out and through Community Education for a suggested donation of \$5 each.

Note to Parents: As characters in the story face life's challenges, this novel touches on issues that may not be comfortable for readers younger than middle school.

Dates to Note

Jan 4	8th Grade Information Night at NPHS
Jan 13	PAC Meeting for Falcon Ridge and Raven Stream (at Raven Stream)
Jan 17	Staff Development – No School K-12
Jan 20	PAC Meeting at Eagle View
Jan 22	District Spelling Bee at NPHS
Jan 27	No School K-5 Early Release Grades 6-12
Jan 28	No School K-12
Jan 31	PAC Meeting at NPMS
Feb 5	Snowball Dance at NPHS
Feb 7	PAC Meeting at NPHS
Feb 10	PAC Meeting at Raven Stream
Feb 17	SEPAC Meeting at CEC
Feb 21	Presidents' Day – No School
Feb 27	Panorama of Bands at NPHS
Mar 5	Elementary Science Fair
Mar 7	PAC Meeting at NPHS
Mar 10	End of Trimester 2
Mar 10	Festival Band Concert at NPHS
Mar 11	Staff Development – No School K-12
Mar 11-12	Middle School Musical
Mar 13	My Antonia Performance at NPHS
Mar 18-19	Middle School Musical
Mar 24	PAC Meetings at Eagle View and Falcon Ridge
Mar 25-26	High School Spring Play

Collaborative Projects Inspire Community Arts

NPAS Mission – To engage and support everyone in high levels of learning.



'Spring' by Cindi Gordon



'Summer' by Cindi Gordon

The school district's mission reaches beyond the classroom, out into the community we serve. Several recent learning projects have brought new energy and attention to Community Arts in the area, providing top notch learning opportunities to participants, artists, and consumers of art, alike.

New Prague Area Schools – Community Education, in concert with the New Prague Arts Council and the New Prague Chamber of Commerce, is currently engaged in the second round of a project called, "Creative Intersections."

In this project, Cindi Gordon created two large-format Czech folk style paintings, the third and fourth in a series called Seasons of Tradition. "What I most love about studying and working with designs from the Decorative Arts are the deep meanings found within. Usually all art work holds confessions of the heart, and it's fun to discern just what that is," Gordon shares. The four paintings are currently on display at Schumachers Hotel and Grill 212.

Also in this project, Kiersten Dahl-Shetka helped community members create bronze plaques to adorn the sculpture she created, "Towering To Our Future," which now stands in Philipps Park. The first 12 of 44 plaques are complete, and several others are in process. Plaque artists to date include Carrie and Kaitlin Bruder, Dahl-Shetka, Adam Ilkka, Abby Kallal, George Kukacka, Cindy and Richard Shepard, Sagan and Cairo Shetka, and Igor and Sophia Vilensky. Additional plaques by Elizabeth and Jack Bentson, Carter Larson, Caitlin Tallent, and Ava Vilensky are in various stages of the process.

The Creative Intersections projects were possible because of an \$8,000 grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC), a contribution of \$5,500 from the New Prague Arts Council, individual donations of nearly \$1,600, and significant assistance from Community Education.

Arts Council Past-President Larry Pint shared the group's view of these projects, "The New Prague Arts Council is proud to have been a part of these exciting art projects. The scope of the projects and the number of people of all ages that are involved, make this a wonderful endeavor. We are thrilled to be able to encourage and support the work of these talented local artists."



By Igor Vilensky



By Carrie Bruder



By Abby Kallal