



Excellence in Education Committee

The Excellence in Education Committee is excited for the new school year. We look forward to working on behalf of the Custer County C-1 School District, to help with unmet needs from restricted budgets, find opportunities through collaboration, and ultimately, in our small way, help provide the best chance for the success of all students. As we move forward into this school year we would like to provide you with a summary of last year's accomplishments and ask for your feedback on what you feel is important to the district in our efforts. Along with your input, the committee will be looking to expand our community exposure and ways to improve our fundraising efforts.

During the 2012-2013 school year the Committee focused on three core programs; voice4C1 (volunteer program), GOT-IT (graduate on time with technology), and the inaugural year of adopt- a class. In addition, funding was obtained to support several other priorities identified by the administration. Those included; new algebra books for 8th and 9th grade and several professional development programs for teachers and administrators.

The VOICE4C1 program continues to be that bridge between community members who have talent, expertise, desire, time and enthusiasm to give back to children at this school. The program logged over 1300 hours from our dedicated volunteers. Their efforts could be seen throughout the entire district; from reading time in the first grade to helping with the High School musical; math and science tutors at many levels, to helping teachers file paperwork. Not only did volunteers provide their time and knowledge, they were one more reassuring smile given to our children. Voice coordinator Jacque Keller did an outstanding job; recruiting, matching, organizing, and following up with both the teachers and the volunteers for the success of the program. Jacque's responsibilities expanded this past year with the new adopt-a-class.

Adopt-a-class was the brain child of Walter Van Woudenberg and several other interested parties. Its mission is to bring additional community resources into the school that would directly benefit individual classes, a subject, or grade level, and provide a donor with a specific need that they could fulfill. With several simple procedures put in place, adopt-a-class hit high gear quickly. With the help of Jacque coordinating teacher's requests, Walter and the many community members who contributed, provided the District with over \$11,500.00 in cash and in-kind donations. The high school Art class was able to visit the Van Gogh exhibit in Denver, new kindles were purchased for a high school English class, the band was able to buy reeds, music and fix instruments, wood shop sharpened blades, along with many other requests that were met. Jacque and Walter are gearing up for another successful year, hoping to meet unfilled requests from last year, along with new ones this year.

The District's Got-it program is our shining star. Several students throughout high school were able to utilize the on-line classes to recover credits needed for graduation. This year we had six seniors recover the necessary credits to graduate this past May. Not only did these six graduate; several graduated with honors and scholarships, something they thought unattainable just a year or two ago. We would like to thank Don Weller for making this program such a success, and know the new program director Diane Bohach will continue making a difference in young lives.

Excellence in Education is continually challenged to secure funding. Grant funding from foundations that support K-12 education programs has been harder to obtain. The committee applied for three grants last year, all were denied. These foundations found our programs exceptional, our grant requests in-line with their mission statements, and our community involvement amazing; they were just unable to stretch their dollars to meet all requests. We have been encouraged to reapply for several, and will continue to pursue others. Our two top fundraising events, the spirit campaign and spring dinner, were again big successes for us, raising just under \$14,000.00. We were also fortunate to have some large individual donations to help fund Got-it and Voice4C1. As mentioned, we as a committee will be looking for new opportunities for outreach into the community to increase our local fundraising efforts and collaborate with Walter and the adopt-a-class donors.

The committee is adjusting to a big transition as Monica Backsen steps down as chair of Excellence in Education. Her amazing organizational skills, her strong commitment to our efforts, the District and the students through this committee will be greatly missed. Our gratitude will never be quite enough, but her many accomplishments helped make a difference in many young lives. We know she will continue to provide support and give insight to this committee and the District. We thank her and wish her well in her new endeavors. This leaves us, Donna Durling and Lori Short, as co-chairs; two to fill the shoes of one. We bring enthusiasm and drive to continue the successes and look forward to working with you all.

We are so thankful for the vision of a few that started this committee, the Wet Mountain Valley Community Foundation that continues to support our efforts and the many wonderful local donors that make it all happen.

Respectfully

Lori Short and Donna Durling- Co-Chairs of Excellence in Education.

September 4, 2013

The Excellence in Education Committee is under the umbrella of the Wet Mountain Valley Community Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit in Westcliffe, Colorado. Excellence in Education partners with the K-12 Custer County School to find non-traditional sources of funding to support the school's credit recovery program, coordinated volunteer program, new curriculum and other priorities identified by administration.