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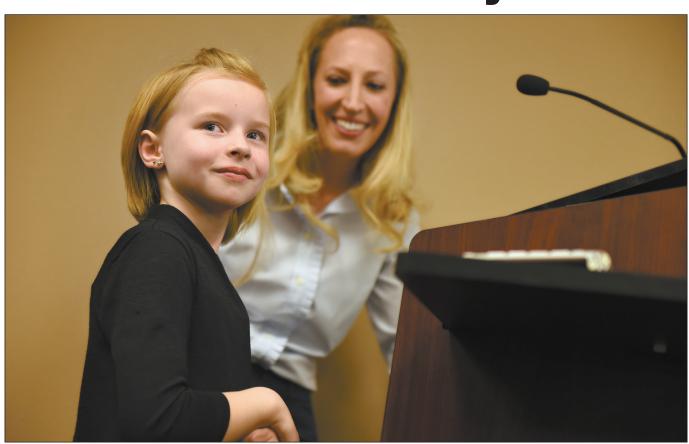
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Dispatch

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BOE Honors Elementary School Achievements



District

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Natalia Roach, 8, a second-grader at Odyssey Elementary School, is honored during "Fantastic 49" recognition Feb. 9, ahead of a Board of Education meeting. While it was longterm substitute teacher Brittany Michaud who recommended Natalia, it was teacher Ashley Bergland who joined her during the public recognition. Bergland had recently returned from an extended absence. "From the very first week of school I knew that this little girl was going to capture my heart," said Bergland, wrapping her right arm around Natalia's shoulder. "I had no idea how much she would teach me about courage, strength and resilience." Natalia's advice to other students is to simply be themselves, because that's what makes them special. (District 49/Dustin Senger)

By Dustin Senger

Digital Communications Manager

Elementary school students lined up for "Fantastic 49" recognition Feb. 9, ahead of a Board of Education meeting.

The students, selected for various reasons, took turns approaching the panel of Board of Education directors. Each time, teachers stood at a podium to explain why a student demonstrates amazing potential, as a learner and a leader.

Tailor Fecteau, 11, a fifth-grader at Stetson Elementary School, was recommended for recognition from the Board of Education by music teacher, Becca Garner.

"Tailor excels in all she does," says Garner. "She sang a solo during the fifth-grade musical, and went above and beyond helping others with their costumes. Tailor comes highly recommended (for recognition) by not only me, but also by every teacher she visits."

Ingrid Daniel, a gifted and talented education teacher, joined Tailor during the public recognition.

"She is constantly working hard and challenging herself," says Daniel. "She is an amazing musician, and she is a very creative thinker."

Laiyla Brewer, 6, a kindergartner at Remington Elementary School, was recommended by teacher Bonnie Bonser. She became the youngest student to achieve formal recognition from the district's Board of Education.

"I have a pretty remarkable child," says Bonser, highlighting Laiyla as a caregiver, from her family to her peers. After Bonser asked Laiyla to explain what

See Elementary Honors page 8

Kids' Corner to Expand into POWER Zone, Falcon Zone

By Dustin SengerDigital Communications Manager

With nearly three years of success in Sand Creek Zone, District 49's Kids' Corner is set to become the district's premier choice for before and after school activities and care.

Kids' Corner will officially open districtwide June 1, as summer camps kick off. The before and after school program will replace Champions in POWER Zone and Falcon Zone, effectively operating in all of the district's coordinated elementary schools.

"With Kids' Corner, we gain an increased ability to shape our before and after school opportunities, so they best accommodate changing educational priorities," said Dr. Michael Pickering, POWER Zone superintendent.

"We'll also achieve important fiscal benefits for our students, so we're becoming more effective and efficient in our support for families," said Pickering. "We're taking advantage of economies of scale."

Kids' Corner Pilot

During meetings in 2014, district administrators and Board of Education directors discussed the establishment of Kids' Corner in Sand Creek Zone. In June 2014, they unanimously approved a separate fund to help measure its financial efficiencies.

Sean Dorsey, Sand Creek Zone superintendent, had explained a goal to provide elementary school families quality

See Kids' Corner page 7



Alijan Wright, left, 7, and Nora Alyousefi, 6, Remington Elementary School first-graders, sprint as the school's fun run begins March 9. More than 100 parents attended the annual run, held at Remington Park next to the school. Students raised more than \$13,000 for teacher development programs and classroom grants. (District 49/Matt Meister)

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Kindergartner Izabella Lane, 6, cuts out an outline of her hand March 14 at Woodmen Hills Elementary School. The leprechaun project, ahead of St. Patrick's Day, called for cooperation to achieve a goal, rather than copy a template. It was part of a makerspace curriculum, where inspiration happens by constructing things, and then reflecting on those experiences to find new ideas or connect existing ideas. Mary Hopper, a project-based learning teacher, is part of the school's specials rotations. Throughout each school year, students from kindergarten to fifth grade enter her classroom to progressively explore and lead hands-on, collaborative opportunities.

Kindergartners Construct Knowledge with Cooperation

By Dustin Senger

Digital Communications Manager

As kindergartners strolled into Mary Hopper's classroom March 14, they found themselves surrounded by tables with construction paper, cardboard, markers, crayons, felt, yarn, glue, scissors – items typically found in elementary schools.

However, she didn't give the students of Woodmen Hills Elementary School a typical set of patterns and instructions. After putting them into small groups, she gave them a goal, and encouraged creative thinking and social skills to reach it.

"What's the word we've been learning this year?" said Hopper, walking between the tables of students, each 5-6 years old. Together, the children said, "cooperating."

Hopper, a project-based learning teacher, is part of the school's specials rotations. Throughout each school year, students from kindergarten to fifth grade enter her classroom to progressively explore and lead hands-on, collaborative opportunities.

Ahead of St. Patrick's Day, she divided kinder garten classes into three groups.

One group created a leprechaun, requiring individual at-

tention on a hat, a face, a beard, a shirt, a buckle, pants and shoes. Students had to coordinate their efforts to ensure all the parts would fit together, logically and proportionally.

As a leprechaun formed, two other groups would focus on mushrooms and a rainbow. As Hopper toured tables, she asked students to explain what they're working on, and why. She looked for understandings emerging from interactions.

"I thought Riley wanted hands on him?" said Hopper, mitigating disagreements and ensuring all student ideas are heard. Two students started tracing an outline of their hands, and then cut them out, as another collected scraps and stacked pencils.

"I really want the students to learn that strong collaboration definitely involves speaking — sharing input with others — but most importantly, listening to what other group members have to contribute," said Hopper.

"The best ideas tend to come from shared decision-making," she says.

As students identified problems and solved them, a diversity of personalities surfaced, from organizers to leaders. Hopper says kindergartners use collaborative projects to learn more about how they best relate and coordinate with others.

"Working together toward a common goal is a skill that's critical for students to practice early," says Hopper. Many kindergartners initially choose to listen, and then they discover independence and self-advocacy, and comfort in asking for help.

"Sure, there are arguments and hurt feelings at times," she says, "but disagreeing with one another is a normal part of life. Working through that develops leadership as well as the ability to compromise."

By fifth grade, students in her project-based learning class are applying design thinking and launch cycles, while networking and mentoring in other classrooms.

The St. Patrick's Day project was part of a makerspace curriculum, which follows an educational philosophy rooted in constructivist pedagogy. It applies a learning theory that suggests students are inspired by constructing things, and then reflecting on those experiences to find new ideas or connect existing ideas.

"It's so important for me to step back at times, and let that process play out," said Hopper about the kindergartners. "Five-year-olds can actually be quite efficient and creative in their problem-solving."

DISPATCH

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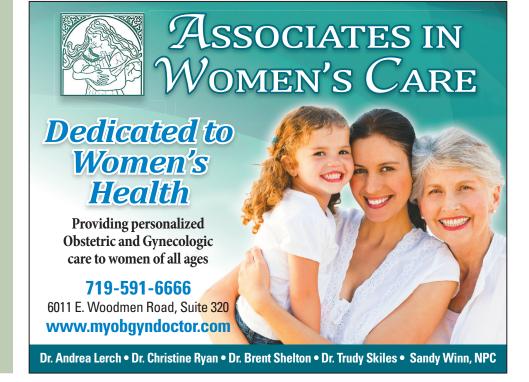
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Yo-yos Help Students Display Virtuous Character Traits Through Ups and Downs of Life

By Matt Meister

Communications Director

Students at Rocky Mountain Classical Academy attended "The NED Show" March 17 in the charter school's commons area. Kindergarten through fourth grade students attended a show to begin the school day. A second performance for older students was scheduled prior to the lunch period.

"The NED Show" features a cartoon character named NED who helps teach three important skills to students. NED's name serves as an acronym that makes the show's message easy to remember – "Never give up. Encourage others. Do your best."

"'The NED Show' has been performed across the world,

in Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and here in Colorado," said Mike Wedor, Rocky Mountain Classical Academy principal, introducing the show.

A banner above the commons displays character traits RMCA students are expected to develop and model. The traits create an acronym for the school's mascot: Kindness, Nobility, Initiative, Generosity, Honesty, Trustworthy, and Self-Awareness.

"We want to motivate our kids to display quality character in every aspect of their life," said Wedor. "This is yet another opportunity to learn how to model those character traits whether they are at school or somewhere else."

The show, a production of the All for Kidz Company, combines humor, magic and yo-yo tricks with a story about

the benefits of displaying quality character traits.

"It's a character motivation assembly teaching the kids how to be champions at school and in life," said Andrew Booth, the solo performer of the "The NED Show," when asked what the performance would mean for students.

"Good morning Andrew!" students screamed in unison at the beginning of the assembly.

During the performance, the students met NED, who wants to be a yo-yo trickster. Booth told the students a story about NED's "around the world" journey meeting different people.

"NED made poor choices that day and those choices made him feel bad," said Booth.

As the show continued, students learned how NED makes changes and becomes a champion in life. Like NED, students are inspired to "Never give up. Encourage others. Do your best."

In a magic trick involving two different colored strings, a knot tied in a white string, representing the knowledge and wisdom of teachers, "moves" to a red string, representing students, as they intertwine.

"You keep trying, because you're a champion," said Booth, twirling the strings together. "So you listen to your teacher, cause that's the plan. You do your homework the best you can, and you ask questions when you don't understand."

"When you do those things," continued the performer, "you create learning magic between you and your teacher and you have something you've never had before."

"Whoa!" yelled the students in unison as Booth untangled the strings, yielding the transfer of knowledge, or the "learning magic."

The show encouraged students to learn from mistakes, rely

on teachers and others adults for support, and to persevere when things become difficult.

"If you want to be awesome at something, to be a champion at something, you've got to work at it," said Booth, performing a series of yo-yo tricks. "You can't just learn to walk the dog with your yo-yo right away, you have to practice."

RMCA students were able to purchase "The NED Show" yo-yos in the weeks after the performance.

"The yo-yos aren't just a way to learn to persevere," said Booth. "It's a way to pay it forward. Proceeds will go to bring the message of 'The NED Show' to another school for free, just like we've been able to do here at RMCA."

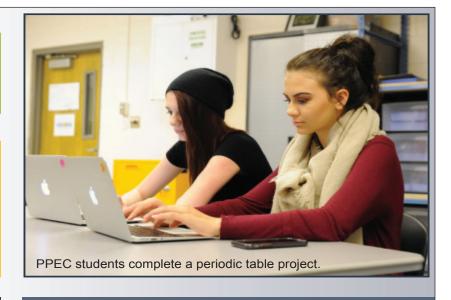


Cameron Lewis, left, 6, and Jayda Joe, 7, both first-graders at Rocky Mountain Classical Academy in District 49, react to a magic trick March 17 during "The NED Show." Performed by Andrew Booth of All for Kidz Company, "'The NED Show'" features a cartoon character named NED who helps teach three important skills to students. NED's name serves as an acronym that makes the show's message easy to remember — "Never give up, Encourage others. Do your best." The show encouraged students to learn from mistakes, rely on teachers and others adults for support, and to persevere when things become difficult. (District 49/Matt Meister)



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Brian Happerle, Springs Ranch Elementary School third grade teacher, appreciates one of the Dr. Seuss decorations set up around the Sand Creek Zone Elementary School Feb. 28. Students and staff celebrated Read Across America week in honor of the author's March 2 birthday. (District 49/Matt Meister)

Hats and Socks, Hams and Fox, **Celebrating Dr. Seuss at SRES**

By Matt Meister

Communications Director

"Today is my favorite day," said Gabriel Ben, 8, Springs Ranch Elementary School third-grader. "It's mismatched socks day because of 'Fox in Socks' who does a lot of silly stuff."

On Feb. 27, students and staff began celebrating Read Across America in honor of Dr. Seuss' March 2 birthday. The Sand Creek Zone school's front office, hallways, classrooms and lunch room were bursting with characters and decorations based on Seuss' books.

Special classroom activities and a school assembly helped mark the celebration.

Falling between Christmas break and spring break, Dr. Seuss' birthday comes during the longest academic stretch of the year. Teachers welcome the opportunity to shake things up.

"They get to see us in a different light," said Brian Happerle, Gabriel's teacher. "We get to tie in the fun with the academics and it's a good way to freshen up what's important."

The third grade class was kicking off the week dedicated to celebrating the joy of reading by creating trees inspired by Seuss' book, "The Lorax." Students hung their completed projects up in the hallway outside the classroom.

Even through the fun, the importance of reading isn't lost on the learners.

"We've got to read well," said Gabriel. "If there's a sign, like, 'do not disturb for testing,' you need to be able to know what that means."

"And there's something a little extra special about having fun while learning," said Happerle. "Plus, I look normal when my socks don't match this week!"



Military Family Appreciation Day

Come join District 49 staff, families, and community members for a fun event to celebrate the military family. Many organizations will be on hand with exciting activities for kids and adults to enjoy, including:

> **Civil Air Patrol Hot Air Balloon Space Foundation**

Colorado Springs Rocket Society

When: Saturday, April 22

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Where: Creekside Success Center 3850 Pony Tracks Drive **Colorado Springs**

More Information: D49.org/MFamAppreciation



Odyssey Elementary School fourth-grader Hayden Newberg, 9, digs in to a creme brulee dessert March 16. More than a dozen students assembled in the library celebrate the conclusion of a school-wide community reading experience by eating creme brulee, a favorite of Grahame, a dragon in the novel "Kenny and the Dragon" by Tony DeTerlizzi. The students did extra work at the end of the novel, creating sunset artwork inspired by DeTerlizzi's retelling of "The Reluctant Dragon". Students, staff and families at the Power Zone elementary school read the book together as a community during the first three months of the year.

By Matt Meister

Communications Director

More than a dozen students assembled in the Odyssey Elementary School library March 16 to celebrate the conclusion of a schoolwide community reading experience.

Students, staff and families at the Power Zone elementary school read "Kenny and the Dragon" together during the first three months of the year. The book, written by Tony DiTerlizzi, is a retelling of the literary classic "The Reluctant Dragon," originally published by Kenneth Grahame in 1898.

"You get a united sense of sharing the experience of the book," said Katherine Nunn, library paraprofessional, who led the schoolwide efforts to read the novel. "The students know they can talk about it with each other and with their

POWER Zone schools, and District 49 leaders joined Odyssey Elementary School staff in recording chapters for students to follow along with at home.

"We know parents may be working at night or have other responsibilities to attend to so we wanted to make sure that our students had someone to read along with them in the evening," said Nunn.

As the experience of reading the novel came to an end, Nunn invited interested students to paint or draw a sunset, just like Grahame, the dragon character in the story.

"Kenny went to visit Grahame and he would be sitting on a hill painting sunsets and listening to music," Nunn said while describing the inspiration from the novel. "Kenny normally came to see the dragon after school when the sun was setting and it was getting dark."

As a reward for this extra effort, Nunn hosted the student

"We are all going to try this," said Nunn, lighting a kitchen torch to caramelize sugar on the top of several creme brulee desserts. "Do you think Grahame did it faster?"

"He blew fire from his nose," said first-grader Carter Oliveto, 7. "If we make this dessert, maybe Grahame will come to our house."

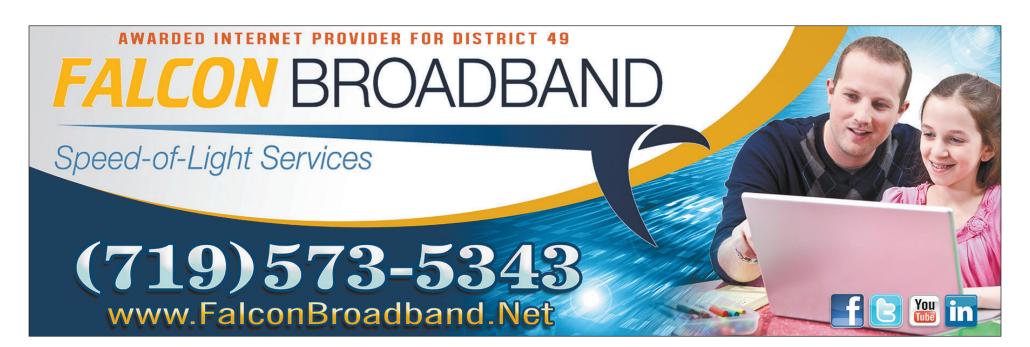
"It smells like s'mores because it has sugar in it," said fourth-grader Hayden Newberg, 9.

"In the book it talks about how other dragons are mean," said Hayden, "but Grahame isn't."

"So what do you think that tells us about our life?" asked Nunn, handing the creme brulee to the students.

"Don't judge something by its cover," said Hayden. "Something may look mean, but if you get to know it, it may be nice. That applies to people too."

That's a sweet lesson to take away from the community Community members, English instructors at other artists in the library to enjoy one of Grahame's favorite treats. reading experience. The sweet treat is a nice little touch too.



April 17, 2017

District 49 Dispatch



ALLIES to Open in August

The tuition-free public school of choice will serve struggling readers in second through fifth grade, helping them overcome learning differences and finally 'take flight.'

By Matt Meister

Communications Director

A specialized program that started as an innovation within one elementary school will expand and open in August as the Academy of Literacy, Learning & Innovation Excellence in District 49's POWER Zone.

"ALLIES aims to make a difference in the lives of students with language based learning difficulties and characteristics of Dyslexia," said Rebecca Thompson, director of academic services.

The school will use the Orton-Gillingham based Take Flight intervention, delivered by certified academic language therapists, in 50-minute sessions each day to help students overcome their struggles. Core classes will be taught by instructors who understand and accommodate for characteristics of dyslexia.

"Students at ALLIES will succeed in a caring and supportive environment that accommodates for their needs and draws on their strengths," said Thompson.

For more information about ALLIES and to fill out an expression of interest form, visit D49.org/ChooseAllies.

Falcon Education Foundation to Host 18th Annual Awards, Fundraising Dinner

By District 49 Communications Department

Falcon Education Foundation will host its 18th annual awards and fundraising dinner April 21 at Hotel Eleganté in Colorado Springs.

The annual event honors District 49's most outstanding students, teachers and staff. Retiring employees are also honored and thanked for their dedicated service during the celebration.

This year's fi-s-h (fantastic innovation stars here) themed event promises to be an inspiring night full of fun and laughter. Everyone is invited to participate, even if not able to attend. Visit D49.org/FEF for information about participating in the silent auction from your mobile device. Items are already open for bid.

The Falcon Education Foundation is a non-profit, community-led organization

committed to raising funds to support unique learning opportunities for District 49 students and teachers to reach their full potential, now and into the future.

Financial support for the Falcon Education Foundation funds the organization's annual mini grant program. At the District 49 Board of Education meeting in November, Falcon Education Foundation representatives awarded \$23,500 to teachers across the district. More than 70 teachers proposed innovative projects, each requiring funding outside traditional means.

Cat Giadone, an art teacher at Ridgeview Elementary School, received \$995 for "Glamorous Glazes for Ridgeview Roses," where approximately 130 fifth-graders will use Laguna pottery glazes for rose creations. After 8 years as an art teacher, it'll be the first time she's shown children the vibrancy of low-fired glazes.

Lura Moore, a science teacher at Skyview Middle School,

received \$1,554 to fund two projects, titled "SeaPerch Design Challenge" and "Operation Montserrat e-Mission."

Mary Lougee, a science teacher at Vista Ridge High School, received \$615 for "Build a Bovine," which will allow 11th-and 12th-graders to reconstruct a cow skeleton.

Lougee says future anatomy and boomed students will be able to continuously deconstruct and re-articulate the skeleton.

"This program is 'udderly' unique," said Lougee in her application.

"To my knowledge it has never been done before with high school students, and only rarely with college students. We will be re-assembling a cow skeleton in such way that it can be taken apart, and put together again, over and over. It will be displayed in a plexiglass case."

Learn more about supporting the efforts of the Falcon Education Foundation at D49.org/FEF.





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Fun Run Boosts Character, Physical Activity and Financial Support at RES

By Matt Meister

Communications Director

More than 100 parents joined Remington Elementary School students and staff in Remington Park March 9 for the school's second annual fun run. The run is part of a two-week fundraising campaign that includes leadership and character development in daily classroom huddles.

"It's great that they are keeping kids active," said Amanda Rhea, a parent of three students at the Sand Creek Zone elementary school. "The kids get to be involved in fundraising, earning things for their classroom and teachers."

Students raised \$13,000 in pledges for teacher development and classroom grants before the run. To reach their goal of \$15,000, the children will continue to collect sponsorships and donations for one week after the run. Students request

a sponsorship amount for each lap they complete.

Students aim to complete 35 laps during the event. Each student wears a fun run grid on the back of their shirt to keep track of their progress. Parent volunteers and teachers make a mark on the grid each time a lap is completed.

Parents and grandparents cheered the Remington Elementary School student body on during the fun run and walk. "The parental support today gives the kids an extra boost to keep going and shows the kids so much love," said Rhea

"I love it, it's highly organized," said Rocio Padilla, RES school counselor and parent. "The people that come have so much energy and the kids love it."

Representatives from Boosterthon, a company that helps organize the fundraising efforts, also promote leadership through character development lessons in each classroom

leading up to the event.

"They have huddles in each classroom," said Padilla, "just yesterday my daughter was talking about the importance of grit, even if things are hard."

The broad scope of activities related to the program provide benefits for the entire school community.

"It's a community event for the kids, parents and teachers," said Lisa Fillo, principal. "We're all involved. Kids are getting physical activity for an hour and then we've got time for learning the rest of the day."

Students say the physical activity is a highlight of the program.

"We get popsicles," said first-grader Nora Alyousefi, 6.

"I remember this from last year," said first-grader Kayah Jones, 6. "I know I'm running faster than last year!"



Tucker Mulberger, 8, RES second-grader, runs during the fun run at Remington Park March 9. More than 100 parents attended the annual run, held at Remington Park next to the school. Students raised more than \$13,000 for teacher development programs and classroom grants. (District 49/Matt Meister)

Kids' Corner

From page 1

activities and care on scheduled school days, as well as during early release, assessment and professional development days.

By operating as an internal non-profit entity, rather than through vendor contracts, the program stood to make a positive impact on revenue earmarked for professional development and instructional technology, after paying operating expenses

A dedicated team began delivering daily hands-on science and art experiences, as well as movement activities, like soccer, jump rope and basketball. With weekly themes, Kids' Corner activities were orientated to engage diverse age groups with choices.

"We offer a choice to participate in one or all of our daily activities, such as art, drama, science, sports, group activities and homework help," said Kayla Martinez, Kids' Corner program manager, who has helped lead the initiative since 2014.

"We provide a daily exploration curriculum that keeps children engaged, making healthy choices and interacting

with friends," said Martinez, while explaining how enrollment numbers have doubled since the initiative began.

She says Sand Creek Zone parents frequently praise the positive relationships the program helps facilitate between schools and their communities.

"Our staff members are highly qualified and trained district personnel," says Martinez. "Everyone receives 15-plus hours of professional development each year, creating a growth mindset that will continue to build a great before and after school program."

Martinez says the program has realized significant revenue streams for classrooms. During the 2016-2017 school year in Sand Creek Zone, located in the district's urban southwest area, Kids' Corner generated tens of thousands of dollars in direct benefit to host schools.

Kids' Corner Expands

Throughout summer break, children enrolled in each zone's Kids' Corner summer camp will travel on field trips, learn from guest speakers, make new friends and engage in activities. Daily choices will focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and math. Families who register early benefit from lower registration fees.

During the 2017-2018 school year, Kids' Corner will be

open from 6 a.m. until the school bell rings, and then after school until 6 p.m. It's also available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on non-school days, including seasonal breaks.

Kids' Corner is licensed by the State of Colorado. All services are unavailable during federal holidays, and when adverse weather conditions result in a district closure. For more information, to include enrollment, visit D49.org/KidsCorner

To get the Kids' Corner link in a text message, send keyword KidsCorner (one word) to 332-33.



April 17, 2017

District 49 Dispatch

2017 District 49 Graduation Ceremonies

Congratulations to District 49's Class of 2017 graduates and their families. Go to D49. org/2017 for additional information regarding Class of 2017 events and schedules.



FALCON HIGH SCHOOL Saturday, May 2 • 5 p.m. Broadmoor World Arena



GOAL ACADEMY
June 10 & 11
Multiple Locations
Goalac.ord/Graduation



PATRIOT HIGH SCHOOL Thursday, May 25 • 6 p.m. Creekside Success Center



SAND CREEK HIGH SCHOOL Saturday, May 27 • 1 p.m. Broadmoor World Arena

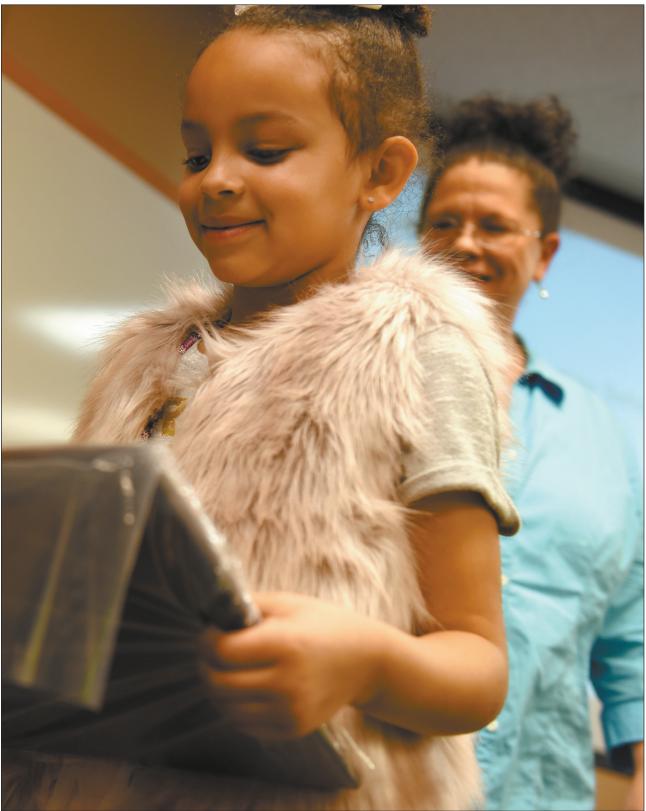


SPRINGS STUDIO FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Friday, May 19 • 10 a.m. DoubleTree Hotel - World Arena



VISTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL Saturday, May 27 • 9 a.m. Broadmoor World Arena



Laiyla Brewer, 6, a kindergartner at Remington Elementary School, walks with a token of appreciation after "Fantastic 49" recognition Feb. 9, ahead of a Board of Education meeting. Laiyla was recommended for recognition from the BOE directors by teacher Bonnie Bonser. "I have a pretty remarkable child," says Bonser, highlighting Laiyla as a caregiver, from her family to her peers. After Bonser asked Laiyla to explain what she likes most about school, she said, "When you read to me. ... I like to make friends and be nice." (District 49/Dustin Senger)

Elementary Honors

From page 1

she likes most about school, she said, "When you read to me," and "I like to make friends and be nice."

While it was long-term substitute teacher Brittany Michaud who recommended Natalia Roach, 8, a second-grader at Odyssey Elementary School, it was teacher Ashley Bergland who joined her during the public recognition. Bergland had recently returned from an extended absence.

"From the very first week of school I knew that this little girl was going to capture my heart," said Bergland, wrapping her right arm around Natalia's shoulder.

"I had no idea how much she would teach me about courage, strength and resilience," she said, explaining how they both recently experienced a loss in their families.

"When I had to step out of the classroom for a period of time," said Bergland, "she continued to impress as she demonstrated courageous leadership qualities in my absence. ... Instead of giving up when she struggles, she finds a way to work through the frustration and reach a solution."

"She also has a contagious passion for learning. When she shows excitement during a lesson, other students follow suit and become excited as well."

Natalia's advice to other students is to simply be themselves, because that's what makes them special.

Madison Nahrgang, 10, a fifth-grader at Springs Ranch Elementary School was recommended by Principal Jim Kyner, who cited her commitments to reading, like registering more than 1,500 hours in the school's master reader's program, and passing a quiz for all 40 books used during Battle of the Books, a competition that tests character knowledge and story comprehension.

Madison is also known as a top innovator and problem-

solver in the school's robotics club, and an enthusiastic member of school choruses and plays.

Teacher Lani Bryan faced Madison, and listed the teachers who've felt most fortunate to work with her, from kindergarten to fifth grade.

"Maddie has just been an all-around wonderful kid," said Bryan. "She just has the most positive attitude — she is a wonderful learner. ... Every time that she does any assignment, she's extremely thorough. She is very open to constructive criticism, and she has a very growth-minded mindset, where she knows she can always improve."

"But what really impresses me is her compassion for other students."

When Bryan asked for her advice to new students, Madison said, "You just need to always be positive and try hard, and never give up because you may regret it."

Melissa Ardolf, physical education teacher at Falcon Elementary School of Technology, introduced second graders participating in the school's first year of Drums Alive. Ardolf had coached a two-week lesson in Drums Alive this school year for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

The second graders from FESoT demonstrated a performance of Drums Alive, a research-based program combines general education, personal fitness, cardiovascular conditioning, neuromuscular coordination and musical rhythms. The drumming exercises are designed to socially improve physical, emotional and mental health in children.

The school's student council raised the funds to purchase the curriculum, while a Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools grant helped with securing the equipment, like the drumsticks, fitness balls and plastic tubs.

"It's a fun and different way of exercising — kids love to dance and listen to music," says Ardolf.