

Sisters Schools Foundation makes big impact in community

By **Jim Cornelius**
Editor in Chief

Sisters schools punch above their weight when it comes to providing enhanced and enriched education programs. That's thanks in large part to the support of the Sisters Schools Foundation (SSF), which funds materials and activities that are beyond the scope of the regular school district budget.

SSF is currently in the middle of its annual giving campaign, providing the opportunity for members of the community to support educational opportunities for Sisters youth.

"It's an annual giving campaign," said SSF Board Chair Treasure Lewis. "This is our third year. It's a two-week push, but obviously people can give all year long... Our goal is \$20,000."

Since 1997, Sisters Schools Foundation has supported the Sisters School District through direct donations to teachers and staff from monies raised from Starry Nights concerts, private donations, and partnerships with local community foundations.

A few of the program's past donations have supported: equipment for the district's athletic trainer; educational field trips; musical instruments; vocational equipment; Outdoor School; The Oregon History Field Trip; art materials and equipment.

"There's things outside the classroom budget that the budget just can't support," Lewis said.

SSF strives to distribute its funding equally among all three Sisters schools.

One thing the Foundation does NOT do is fund teaching or staff positions.

Board member Ross Kennedy explained the allocation process. Teachers make requests, including background on need and educational benefit, which are collated and reviewed by the board. Distributions are made once or twice a year, depending on funding and the volume of requests.

"Honestly, we don't say no to much," Kennedy said.

"We want as many requests to come in as people who have ideas, needs and wants," Lewis said.

Those ideas, needs and

wants are often creative and innovative, the foundation board members said.

"They (teachers) think outside the box, which is great," Kennedy said.

Donors can make targeted donations, aimed at a particular program, school or classroom. Such requests are always honored. And, since SSF is an all-volunteer organization with close to zero overhead, "100 percent of our donations go to the students and the programs," Lewis said.

Lewis emphasized the critical nature of SSF's partnerships with the community. Starry Nights has been, for decades, a major fundraising engine for SSF.

"They have supported the Sisters Schools Foundation for the past 30 years and have been just critical in continuing the good work that happens," she said.

She also noted that SSF has important partnerships with the Roundhouse Foundation and SPTC (Sisters Parent-Teacher Community).

For more information on donating to SSF, visit <http://ssd6.org/ssf> and click on the big, red "Donate" button.



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Providing equipment to help athletic trainer Alex Walker – through a partnership with The Center – is one of many support roles played by Sisters Schools Foundation.

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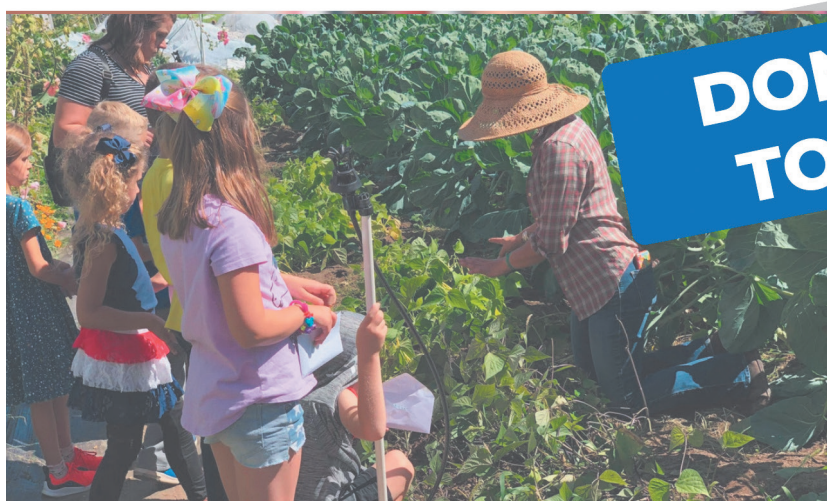
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