

Classroom Books For Change serves local schools

By Kirby Neumann-Rea
Columbia Gorge News

QUIETLY, DURING THE pandemic, parents on both sides of the Columbia River raised funds independently to expand horizons in classrooms in Hood River and White Salmon.

At its start, the Classroom Books For Change project yielded more than \$6,000 for Hood River County schools, through 71 donations, allowing organizer Denice Bukanovsky to work with schools to purchase books from Black, Latino and Indigenous perspectives for every elementary classroom and libraries in Hood River County School District. It's about 600 books, with more to come, all selected by teachers.

She's expanded the monetary goal and has plans to create a statewide foundation to help other schools do the same.

"I wanted to do something that will help truly work toward change," Bukanovsky told the Hood River County School Board in a recent meeting, where she was honored for her project.

"What Denice did was contagious, in a good way," said District Curriculum Director Bill Newton, formerly Westside Elementary principal through the 2019-20 school year, when Bukanovsky developed the project.

Much of the fundraising happened through the Go Fund Me/ Classroom Books for Change account, which is still live and accepting donations.

"It really has been the highlight of my year," Bukanovsky said. "It is a project the kids have helped me with, too," referring to her daughter and son, who are in high school and middle school.

But Bukanovsky's outreach went beyond Hood River; she contacted parents Dale Pytel and Lee Lloyd in White Salmon, who are duplicating the same effort there.

"Lee worked with a teacher who submitted a request to the education foundation and they funded another \$3,000. Lee and Dale coordinated with the schools and purchased books through Waucoma exclusively. Their efforts ignited

one of the teachers, and she requested money from White Salmon Education Foundation, which is very active and many community members go directly to them and it's pretty seamless," Bukanovsky said.

"It was a wonderful success in White Salmon," Pytel said. "We were able to raise close to \$1,600 from private donors and due to the community support, we received a generous donation from the White Salmon Education Foundation. So far, we have purchased hundreds of books for Whitson and the intermediate school. And have plans to purchase more in the near future. The books were requested by the teachers. It's an honor to be a part of getting these important and beautiful books in the hands of our children."

Bukanovsky said that after George Floyd and the protests gained momentum, "I felt like I wanted to do something productive and change hearts and minds of kids. They can learn in two places, in the home and school. And I wanted to find a place to impact them for years to come."

Bukanovsky said the books selected "intend to develop pride in racial diversity and compassion and understanding of others." Bukanovsky's long-term goal is to create a foundation and expand the project statewide, if not nationwide. She has an immediate \$10,000 goal for Hood River County schools. Donations are still welcome — at gofund.me/f6c659bf — and anything exceeding the goal places many welcome titles in the elementary schools and expands the project into the middle schools, where she was unable to fill all the teacher requests.

"Friends in other communities out of state reached out and we'll see where it goes," Bukanovsky said. "It can certainly be a wonderful thing for our kids, for years to come."

Anyone wishing to contact her about making a direct donation



Denice Bukanovsky



Sample books purchased by Hood River and White Salmon volunteers for local schools' classrooms and libraries. Denice Bukanovsky photo

can do so at classroombooks-forchange@gmail.com.

Many books for the upper valley are Spanish translations or Spanish originals, and many books received Caldecott, Newbery Medal, Coretta Scott King and Pura Belpre awards. She focused the collection on Black, Latino and Indigenous topics and authors, as well as multi-racial authors and illustrators.

Roughly half the books are in Spanish or relate to the Hispanic experience.

"I think a lot of the Hispanic stories are going to resonate," she said. "There a lot of beautiful stories that, for the Hispanic community, I want to feel empowered, and for the white community, I want to feel a sense of understanding."

"I wanted to make it very clear to our community these were not books I was choosing. The premise

and scope I chose, but the teachers chose the books."

She started at Westside Elementary, where her kids had attended.

"It started with me emailing one teacher, and I thought, 'I can buy books for all the teachers,' starting with Westside only, and with the goal that if that was quickly funded, I would expand it," Bukanovsky said. "And within two days I had \$700, just through emailing and texting, and I knew."

She expanded the goal to \$6,000, and emailed all principals to ask teachers if they wanted Black, Latino and Indigenous stories "that develop compassion and head us down the road to social justice, and immediately, I got an expansive list from Westside teachers and shared with principals a sample list and a reading list from a middle school

teacher, and there was such quick response and they were very enthusiastic, so I knew I had to make my goal of getting the money then, so I worked all summer (2020), one contact at a time."

Help came via proceeds from organized events involving donated auction items, as well as individual donations — many word-of-mouth — and a Hood River Rotary gift.

Bukanovsky spent \$3,000 at Waucoma Bookstore in Hood River and researched Black-owned bookstores in the Bay Area and Tulsa. On May 21, the Oklahoma town observes the 100th anniversary of the 1921 massacre of more than 100 Black citizens and destruction by white mobs of the Greenwood district.

See **BOOKS**, page 11

Today's Kid Scoop

is sponsored by:

Happy Kids, Healthy Smiles for a Lifetime

Pediatric Dental Clinic Designed for Your Children

Now offering dental laser technology anesthesia & pain free dentistry

1935 E. 19th St. Suite 200 The Dalles, OR 541-296-8901

419 State Street Suite 4 Hood River, OR 541-387-8688

Save for a Rainy Day!

Why have a rainy-day fund?

Tomas's parents gave him \$2 every week for allowance. But when the pandemic caused his father's company to close for a few months, his dad could no longer give Tomas an allowance.

Tomas had been putting 50¢ of his weekly allowance into a Rainy-Day Fund jar for a year. That totaled \$26. So even though he wasn't getting an allowance, Tomas still had some money if he needed it.

When his dad's company opened back up, Tomas started getting his allowance again. But this time, he started adding 75¢ to his rainy day jar every week.

By saving 75¢ each week, how much will be in Tomas' jar after one year?

How much is in Alma's bank?

Alma's grandmother sends her \$25 every year on her birthday. Alma is 11 years old, and her grandmother started sending the money to her on her 5th birthday. Alma saved half of the money each year in her Rainy-Day Fund piggy bank. **How much is in Alma's piggy bank now? Write the amount on the bank's label.**

Martina's Money Mistakes

Martina earned \$5.00 each week watering and weeding her neighbor's garden. Unfortunately, Martina spent almost all of that money every week building up her sticker collection.

Martina's neighbor moved away last month. Martina's bike got a flat tire and she doesn't have the money to get it replaced. She now wishes she had saved money in her Rainy-Day Fund jar like her cousin Tomas.

Can you think of a time when you could have used a Rainy-Day Fund jar of your own?

Save for a rainy day is a phrase that reminds people to save money when times are good so they have money to use when there is a big expense, or the ability to earn money stops.

Most people save for a rainy day by putting a little money aside each week, or each month. They put these "savings" into a bank account or a piggy bank or even a jar.

Can you draw lines to connect each umbrella's twin?

How much should go into a "rainy-day" fund?

You don't have to put a lot of money into your rainy-day fund all at once. What matters most is putting a little bit of money into your fund on a regular basis. For example, if you get an allowance once a week, put part of your weekly allowance into your rainy-day fund every time you get your allowance.

Put the coins in the jar.

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

ALLOWANCE	PANDEMIC	REGULAR	NUMBERS	EXPENSE	ACCOUNT	SAVING	RAINY	MONEY	CHORE	COINS	PIGGY	BASIS	GIVE	PART																																																																										
R	R	G	S	R	E	B	M	U	N	A	E	C	N	A	W	O	L	L	A	C	G	O	A	I	N	E	I	N	E	C	U	I	Y	E	V	S	R	Y	R	O	L	N	Y	I	A	D	G	O	U	A	S	G	S	I	A	S	G	H	N	R	P	A	N	D	E	M	I	C	T	Y	B	Y	M	T	R	A	P	O	E	S	N	E	P	X	E	N	E	Y

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Describe Dollars

Look through the newspaper for words that can be used to describe money. How many can you find? Now have a parent try. Try to use as many as you can in one long sentence.

Standards Link: Vocabulary Development: Identify adjectives.

Write On!

How I Earn Money

How do you earn money? Do you do chores? What kind of jobs do you do?

Kid Scoop Together: Idioms

"Save for a rainy day" is an idiom. An idiom is a phrase that doesn't literally mean what it says. Work with a parent to write the number of each idiom's definition in the circles.

Idioms

Back to the drawing board

Missed the boat

Fit as a fiddle

Costs an arm and a leg

Wild goose chase

Once in a blue moon

By the skin of your teeth

Piece of cake

Definitions

- In good health
- Just barely achieving
- Starting over
- Something very expensive
- A task that's easy to do
- Lost an opportunity
- A rare occurrence
- A pointless activity

KID SCOOP'S MISSION

Children are born curious. From their earliest days, sensory exploration brings delight and wonder. New discoveries expand their minds. When they unlock the joy of reading, their world widens further. Magic happens.

Kid Scoop opens the doors of discovery for elementary school children by providing interactive, engaging and relevant age-appropriate materials designed to awaken the magic of reading at school, at home, and throughout their lives.

For more information about our literacy non-profit, visit kidscoopnews.org