



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Weaving instructor Lois Olund shows Colin Linford the photo of him posing with his finished weaving project as a beard on Thursday at Kings Valley Charter School.

# Craft weaves more than rugs

## *Ancient art sparks creativity, storytelling, learning at Kings Valley Charter School*

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

**K**ING VALLEY — Colin Linford didn't know he was making a lounging spot for a guinea pig when the first-grader began his pint-sized weaving project on Thursday.

His multi-colored rug is made from strips of recycled clothing and turned out to be just the right size for the King Valley Charter School's first/second-grade class pet.

Jannet Kohanek, first/second-grade teacher, took the guinea pig out of his cage and placed him on Colin's newly made weaving creation.

"Oh, my goodness, it's perfect. It's a perfect rug for a pig," she said to her excited class. "It could be a flying carpet for a pig."

Then she asked her class to dream up wild travels for the class mascot, who settled calmly on Colin's desk.

"You think we could write an amazing fairy tale about the adventures the pig goes on its flying carpet?" Kohanek asked.

Colin and his classmates have been participating in a two-part gardening project, half the time spent with gardening teacher Lua Siegel making birdhouses and the other with Lois Olund, the school's boost reading program coordinator.

Olund also owns a farm nearby raising sheep and alpacas, and has been teaching spinning and weaving classes at her farm for several years.

Last year, she brought a kid-version of that to Kings Valley — teaching students about wool harvesting and spinning.

The weaving activities are a continuation of that.

"This is a follow-up to the fiber art project from last

year," said Robert Siegel, with the Benton County Cultural Coalition, which helps pay for the project. "Kids understand a lot more about where their clothing comes from."

Next time someone asks them where do rugs come from, they won't say K-Mart, he said. They'll say animals.

"Being an educator — retired educator — I really appreciate that," Siegel added.

Siegel visited the first- and second-grade session on Thursday to observe and take photos on behalf of the coalition.

Funding was provided in part by the Oregon Cultural Trust, one of more than a dozen projects selected by the coalition.

The weaving classes focus on art, but also recycling.

Olund said the 80 students in the first- through sixth-grade participating are using recycled clothing on their projects. Any extra bits of strings and scraps are placed outside for birds to use as nesting material.

"Nothing goes to waste," Olund said.

She has her younger students working on small lap looms, just the perfect size for a doll blanket — or guinea pig rug, as the case may be.

Clayton Warren finished his fourth weaving Thursday.

Warren, who sat on a chair against the wall, concentrated on his work, weaving the fabric over and under the strings, pulling it tight at the end.

"I'm making a blanket," he said. "A small one for a stuffed animal, a lamb."

Older students graduate to tabletop looms. The oldest have a chance to use bigger floor looms. No two unfinished works look the same.

"I have begged and borrowed looms from everyone



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As snug as a guinea pig on a rug, the KVSC first- and second-grade class mascot rests comfortably on a woven rug.

I know," Olund said.

In addition to the hands-on training, Olund provided a little history about weaving, which archeologists say is a surprisingly old craft, dating to 15,000 years ago.

"People lived in caves and had animal skins to wrap themselves. When they wanted to move somewhere, they could always find a cave, so what you do think they did?" Olund explained in a teacherly fashion. "They started weaving branches and placed the animal skins on top of that. They think that the first weaving might have been for housing."

The project ends this week, but students with interest in the art can continue.

"After spring break, we will be doing a group project for the (school) auction," Olund said. "They are just volunteering, whichever ones want to come weave on the big loom, I'll have it ready."



Photo courtesy of Kings Valley Charter School/for Itemizer-Observer

Students work on projects on larger looms in the weaving room in the KVCS gym during the 10-week project split between learning to weave and make birdhouses.



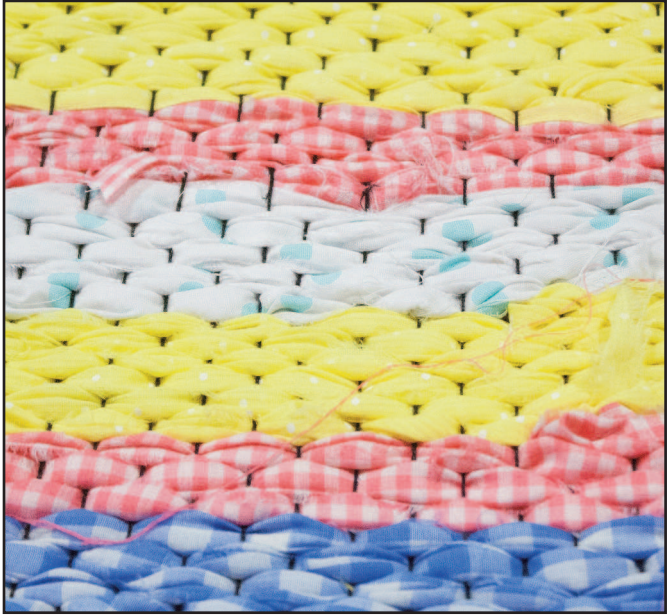
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Lois Olund talks to a student about which scraps of material she should use on her next project.



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The KVCS weaving and birdhouse projects also focused on how to recycle. Students used recycled clothing.



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No two projects looked the same as students were able to pick from a large selection of recycled material.