



## What's Up for May? Take a Look Inside...

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## Students to be Visited by Author in Effort to Prevent Summer Reading Loss

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

Summer means sun, trips to the lake, family vacations, and overall relaxation. But it can also mean reading loss for some school kids. The South Dakota Humanities Council's Young Readers Initiative, Rapid City Public School Foundation, and the RCAS Elementary Literacy Office are working together with the Humanities Council to make sure that does not happen for area students by offering them a unique initiative.

Current second graders will receive a special edition copy of *Stink: Twice as Incredible* by author Megan McDonald to read over the summer. The book is a compilation of the first two books about the popular Judy Moody's little brother, Stink. In September, author McDonald will be visiting with the new third graders about the book and the importance of reading.

"The hope is that students will be encouraged to read during the summer and not think reading is just a 'school thing,'" Literacy Trainer and Reading Recovery Teacher Cathy Boehler said. "By having their own copy of this special book and knowing the author will be coming to visit will hopefully inspire students to read and perhaps reread this book, and choose other books to read as well. Additionally, the visit with Megan Mc-



Donald could motivate students to think of themselves as authors and illustrators in a way that they haven't before."

Boehler said the Judy Moody and Stink books are a big hit for students because they are relatable. With their sibling rivalry, teasing, sarcasm, and caring, students find they can relate to them. The books feature facts on topics ranging from algebra to pirate lore and historical times like the Revolutionary War, giving them a new level of knowledge.

*Jump to A2: Stink*

## DonorsChoose.org Give Teachers Chance to Fundraise for Specific Needs

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

Equipping a classroom for students takes a lot of work and money, as does certain experiences like field trips. But ask any teacher and these things are crucial to any student going to school. For those teachers who struggle to be able to provide those things for their students, there is DonorsChoose.org.

DonorsChoose.org is a nonprofit organization that allows public school teachers

to submit their equipment or experience needs to the website and allows individual donors to help donate to their need. Teachers are able to submit anything from equipment for their classroom like chairs, books, and rugs, to money for a field trip. As long as it is student-centered and provide learning and life opportunities, teachers can submit it.

Currently only teachers or educators who spend 75% of their time working with students are eligible. Administrators, staff

*Jump to A3: DonorsChoose.org*

**Cont. from A1: Stink**

“They feature facts about these events and/or people in such a way that young readers can easily grasp their significance and learn while reading for fun,” Boehler said. “The books play with language in ways so kids are introduced to idioms, puns, metaphors, and other types of figurative language. The author also includes elements such as letter writing and comics, so again, kids are learning about many topics through fun and engaging text.”

The Grade Level Reading Initiative, sponsored by the United Way and the Literacy Staff Leadership from RCAS, and funded by a grant from the John T. Vucurevich Foundation is what helped make this event possible for students.



# Survival Corps Donates 50 Backpacks to Arise Youth Services

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

After raising money and gathering supplies, students at Central High School in Heather Hoeye’s class were able to donate 50 backpacks to Arise Youth Services to hand out to homeless teens that come in looking for help. Half of the backpacks are for girls and half are for boys and the bags are filled with survival supplies such as toiletries and sweatshirts and blankets, as well as school supplies such as pencils and notebooks.

“A lot of kids walk through these doors that don’t have what they need and you can’t get ahead if you don’t have what you need,” Arise Program Director Staci Jonson said. “We have kids who walk through our doors with no hope. This gives them something to hold onto. A basic item can mean the world to someone who has

nothing.”

Students in the class said that is why they wanted to do this; because a lot of them had experienced homelessness and they know the importance of simple items.

“Some of us have been homeless so I’m glad we chose this project,” Jay Black Bear said. “I feel proud that we were able to

help someone.”

Haiden Quillen echoed his sentiments, adding that he likes knowing that they made a big impact on a lot of people.

“We’re helping out a ton of people and it feels good,” Quillen said. “It’s pretty life changing. It made my heart happy.”



In addition to the 50 backpacks, SAMS Club also donated two boxes of toilet paper for the shelter and the students also collected various toiletry items for women, such as body spray and lotion.

“I can’t even describe how this makes me feel,” Jonson said. “It’s fantastic to see them taking initiative. You see a lot of sadness in the world, but then you see things like this where kids want to come help their peers.”

# Students Receive Community Dough Fund from Colonial House for Wheelchair Swing

By **Amanda Rombough**  
Information Services Officer

The importance of giving is not lost on Rapid Valley’s elementary students. Thanks to some thoughtful letters written by students, Colonial House chose the school to be the recipient of the Community Dough Grant. Colonial House donated \$4,500 to help purchase swings for students in wheelchairs to enjoy on the playground.

“We like to give back to the community that helps us,” said Colonial House CEO and owner Kevin Beshara. “It helps us bond with the community that gives back to us.”

Students from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms wrote letters to Colonial House explain-

ing why they needed the wheelchair swing, even though the students will not benefit from it in the future. Rapid Valley is one of the three schools in the district with a wheelchair room. Some reasons students wrote in their letters for the swing included “swinging helps them take their mind off things when they’re mad” and “it’s the only thing they can play on besides walking on the sidewalk.”

“It’s very special that they decided to do something for another group of students,” Beshara said, adding that the letters tugged on the staff’s heartstrings a little bit because the students wanted something for someone else and not for themselves.

The money will go towards purchasing a pendulum swing that can be used with a wheelchair. Beshara said they like to use the Community Dough Fund for education. Students are asked to write in letters of what they’d use the money for and a school is chosen from the entries.



# Students Give Stuffed Animals to Kids in Need for Comfort

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

A stuffed animal can often serve as a sign of hope for a student in times of need. Students from both Meadowbrook and General Beadle understand that and worked to collect as many stuffed animals as possible to give to kids in need in the area. Between 700 and 1,000 stuffed animals were collected between the two schools and were distributed to various agencies across the city who can hand them out to kids, and animals as well.

“We wanted to do something cool and this is something they can do besides asking for money,” Meadowbrook Counselor Dana Livermont said. “Everyone can give

a stuffed animal.”

Stuffed animals were taken to WAVI, Mommy’s Closet, Children’s Miracle Network, the Rapid City Fire Department, and even the Humane Society, because sometimes furry friends need comfort too.

“Even though these two schools may seem very different, because of their populations and locations, we still have a lot in common,”

Livermont said. “Kids are kids, and they love to give. I’m really proud of how these students came together to do something great.”



“They’ve done a lot of hard work putting these together,” Public Information Officer for the Rapid City Fire Department Oliver White said.

## Elementary Students Explore World of Music First Hand

By Amanda Rombough  
Information Services Officer

Over 150 elementary level students district wide got to participate in an once-in-a-lifetime music lesson last month that included the Black Hills Symphony Orchestra and local vocalists. The 18<sup>th</sup> annual Music Memory City-Wide Extravaganza was the culmination of a year-long study of history’s greatest composers, their music, and their lives.

Students in grades 3-5 listened to 10 compositions throughout the school year and were later tested on them. Following

the test, students competed to show off their skills learning the compositions. Excerpts of the compositions were played by the Black Hills Symphony Orchestra for students to hear it live.

“The program introduces students to great works from history,” event organizer Christy Leichtnam said. “The students make connections between music and the history of the time. It heightens their ability to hear details in music, rather than a general overview. Students come away from the program excited to listen to great music.”

The program started 18 years ago under the leadership of Dr. Rosalie Bindel. After her daughter-in-law participated in a similar program in Texas, Bindel thought it would be a good program to adopt.

“It has been successful beyond our imaginations at that time,” Leichtnam said.

Music selections studied included pieces from composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Vivaldi, Puccini, and Pachelbel, among many others.

*Cont. from A1: DonorsChoose.org* developers, and teachers’ aides are not eligible.

“DonorsChoose.org is a way for teachers to obtain free classroom materials for educational projects that help spark the children’s imagination and interests in learning, without cutting into the teachers’ pocket book,” said Rob Bickett, an agent with Bickett Insurance Agency, part of The Horace Mann Companies.

Bickett said on average, teachers spend \$400 a year out of their own pockets for educational projects for their students.

“The impact to the educators is that they can complete these educational projects without utilizing any of their personal funds or the district funds,” he said. “The end result is that everyone is a winner with this program. Especially the kids, it

allows learning to be associated with fun activities.”

Currently there are eight projects in Rapid City on the site that need funding. Some of the projects currently on the site include books for a classroom library at General Beadle, stability balls for a classroom at Valley View, the paper theater Kamishibai for a classroom at General Beadle, a carpet to sit on during story time at Canyon Lake, and Hokki stools for a classroom on the move at South Canyon, among many others.

Anyone is welcome to donate to any of the projects on the site. For more information, visit [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org) and view various projects that need funding.

**Teachers:** Have a student who wrote something awesome, took a great photo, or made an amazing art project? Share it with the rest of us by emailing it to [RapidCityDistrictCommunications@](mailto:RapidCityDistrictCommunications@k12.sd.us)

[k12.sd.us](mailto:k12.sd.us)

and it could be featured in an upcoming issue of *The Reporter!*

Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!

# Career Days



General Beadle Elementary



Black Hawk Elementary



Horace Mann Elementary



The Rockin' Raptors Jazz Band from East Middle School performed at Main Street Square on their tour of the town.



The Stevens High School Cycling Club won the trophy for Bike to School Day for having the most students between Central and Stevens who had students bike to school.

# Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!



Members of the Rapid City Police Department have been spending time with students teaching them how to play soccer after school at Knollwood. The Police Department and Fire Department brought their trucks and cars one day to show the students.



## Grandview Spring Carnival



# Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!

*Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for your years of service to the district and the students of Rapid City Area Schools!*



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Check out the great things our staff & students are doing!

## South Canyon Run/Walk



## Meadowbrook Bike Rodeo



## Partnership Rapid City Sweet Success

