

Local Schools



TOP

St. Jude Fundraising Efforts Exceed \$1.1M

MAY 03RD 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

St. Jude Fundraising Efforts Exceed \$1.1M

Top fundraising students for this year's Math-A-Thon were treated to pizza and a movie for helping to generate almost \$30,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, bringing the district's accumulative contribution to over \$1.1 million.

The students are typically invited to tour St. Jude in Memphis, but since the medical center is not accepting visitors at this time, Pizza Inn opened its game room and a special showing of Disney's "Cars" was arranged on Wednesday, March 24, at Kay Porter Theater

The group of students—three per participating building—included last year's top fundraisers who missed out on the reward due to the district's wellness break. Students also received gift bags with items donated by First Midwest Bank, Lemonade House Grille, McDonald's, Sonic and St. Jude.

The Poplar Bluff School District has been a part of the Math-A-Thon since the 1988/89 academic year under the direction of former O'Neal Principal Lorenzo Sandlin, and the fundraiser went district-wide over the next decade.

Treatments invented at St. Jude have helped push the childhood cancer survival rate from 20 to 80 percent, according to the medical center's website.

Pictured: Students pictured (in alphabetical order, not the order in which they appear) are Madeline Allbritton, Brookelyn Ballow, Liam Bates, Blayne Bell, Bree Blackwell, Karter Brown, Peyton Brumitt, Dalilah Burkeen, Dakota Collins, Austin Crismon, Chandler

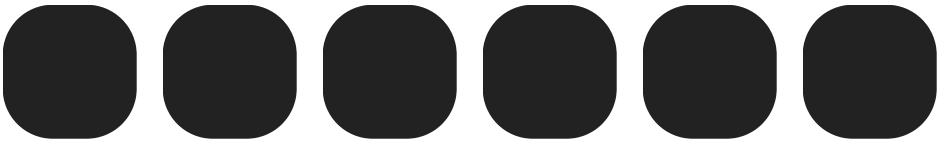
Crunk, Logan Crunk, Stella Cummings, Maddi DeHart, Jake Fickert, Kaitlyn Hillis, Chadrick Joehrs, Natalya Johnson, Nash Ligon, Ace Luecke, Jayden Massa, Natalie Meyer, Kyleigh Moffitt, Macy Mustain, Kayden Robbins, Dalton Rommel, Natalea Rommel, Chloe Rowland, Miles Sandlin, Sheldon Schaefer, Jace Silman, Bailey Smith, Reagan Sparkman, Kerris Taylor, Maddox Wilson and Presley Wilson.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Municipal Library Earns Friend of School Libraries award

APRIL 20TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Municipal Library Earns Friend of School Libraries award

Poplar Bluff Municipal Library Director Sue Crites Szostak received the 2021 Friend of School Libraries award from the Missouri Association of School Libraries during a virtual conference that began on Monday, April 19.

The director was nominated for the statewide award by O'Neal Elementary Librarian Ashley Robertson, who previously worked with Crites Szostak at the public library.

"We are so fortunate to have the PBML in our community," stated Robertson, noting that the materials made available serve the entire district. "From animated books for younger students to electronic resources for older students. They are helping our students inside the library and outside their walls."

The library maintains a website featuring children and teen sections with databases such as Hoopla, OverDrive and Tumblebooks. To access the resources for research or homework, the library has issued eCards, and continues to provide Wi-Fi hotspots and free photocopies for students.

From the district's 1:1 laptop initiative in 2013/14 up until a virtual learning option was offered this school year in response to the public health emergency, library staff has reached out to identify ways to help. "It's just what we do," said Crites Szostak, who credits her team for the award.

"I think we did things any community can copy and emulate, within our budget, using resources we had on hand," she continued. "eCards don't cost anything. We already pay for databases; why not make them available to a broader audience? The website we already had; might as well make it school and parent-friendly. [Our staff] is already here."

The library recently opened up a secondary branch in addition to its historic downtown location, on Kanell Boulevard. According to Crites Szostak, the expansion was designed to create a study space and provide services closer to where the district has shifted along with the population over the decades.

Pictured: Sue Crites Szostak, director of the Poplar Bluff Municipal Library, received the Friend of School Libraries award for her working relationship with the R-I school system.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Student-run Mules Store Opens on PBHS campus

FEBRUARY 10TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Student-run Mules Store Opens on PBHS campus

The Stable held its grand opening during the Basketball Homecoming on Friday, Feb. 5, in the Poplar Bluff High School commons.

The Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the student-run Mules merchandise store, which was originally envisioned during the relocation of the High School around five years ago.

“Several groups have approached me with the idea over the years, but these kids got it done,” stated Mike Owen, PBHS principal.

The effort was led by students Olivia Kirkman, Logan Massey and Isabella Sifford in their leadership elective taught by communication arts instructor Jennie Randolph, who charged the students with working on group projects aimed to benefit the campus community.

“Students leading this project have studied markup, ordering, electric methods of payment, contracts, interviewed local businesses, and so much more,” Randolph reflected.

The retail space is located between the gymnasium and the cafeteria, and sells Mules T-shirts, cups and other school memorabilia, as well as some practical items such as phone chargers and earbuds. Staff voted on the name, The Stable, during the design phase of the building addition, but the area has been used for storage up until now.

The plan, according to student leaders, is to operate the store during varsity basketball games and then hopefully during the school day in 2021/22. If approved, students managing the business would gain credit hours.

“The room has been here since [the facility has] been built and it was meant to be a store, but no one’s ever done anything with it,” Olivia said. “It seemed like a cool project, but we weren’t sure it would become a reality this year,” Isabella noted. Logan added: “We’re very excited to see it finally come together.”

The trio conducted a trial run in the fall, staffing a spirit table during the home football season. For the brick and mortar operation, the high schoolers acquired several manikins from Maurices, and purchased shelving units from Family Video when the chain went out of business.

The entrepreneurship class helped design a T-shirt, after surveying the student body, according to junior Gary Lewis. The Mules Booster Club, along with High School administration, donated some additional gear. All proceeds benefit the Student Council organization.

Pictured: Students (left to right) cut the ribbon for The Stable on Friday, Feb. 5. Also pictured are (from left) Dr. Scott Dill, Valerie Ivy, Mike Owen, Stephanie Hillis, Jennie Randolph and Tammy Deken from Poplar Bluff Schools; and of the Poplar Bluff Chamber.

Article and photo by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Pavilion, Walking Track Added to Middle School Campus Through Partnership

DECEMBER 26TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

Pavilion, Walking Track Added to Middle School Campus Through Partnership

A pavilion has recently been constructed in front of the Poplar Bluff Middle School, connected to an ADA-compliant walking track installed last school year so that students can have expanded recreational space for recess.

The Parent Teacher Organization is responsible for financing the bulk of the project through fundraising efforts over the past few years, mostly from student-led candy bar sales, while the PBHS Class of 1972 made a substantial donation toward the completion.

“It’s been a coordinated effort to enhance safety and accessibility for our students, and the group continues to look at other options to be made available to our kids through this wonderful partnership,” said Dr. Amy Jackson, R-I assistant superintendent of business. “We appreciate the lasting contributions to the Poplar Bluff Middle School.”

The campus has a separate enclosed, outdoor playground, but the concrete surface makes it best suited for basketball, according to Middle School Principal Dr. Josh Teeter. The fenced-in green space out front will allow students to run around, he said. Previously they were walking to the nearby Kiwanis Bacon Memorial Park for special activities.

Future plans include replacing the soccer goals, according to PTO members Kera Hoffman and Candis Maurer, who are credited for initiating the project and seeing it

through until the end. The acreage formerly served as Strenfel Field before the Middle School and the High School swapped locations in 2016.

“This is our old high school baseball field, so it was the perfect opportunity for us to get behind,” said alumnus Rick Berry, on behalf of the Class of 1972. Berry reached out to Jackson, who initially brought the project to his attention. R-I Maintenance Supervisor Colt Sievers led the effort to save the district thousands of dollars with purchasing power and in-kind labor.

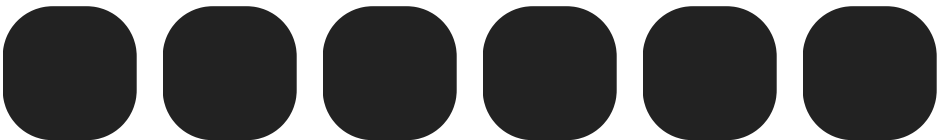
Pictured: Donors, school officials and student representatives gather on Tuesday, Dec. 15, under the new pavilion connected to the walking track at PBMS.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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U.S. Army STEM Trailer Visits PBHS

U.S. Army STEM Trailer Visits PBHS

Poplar Bluff High School students recently learned about STEM opportunities available through the U.S. Army during a special visit from the Mobile Exhibit Company.

JROTC cadets as well as other classes were led through situation, mission, and the research and development rooms of the trailer, called ‘Adventure Semi 7,’ as they were informed about the Army’s role in medical innovations and navigation technology.

Examples of such technologies originally developed for or by the armed forces used by civilians today “for the betterment of society,” according to recruiters, include tissue regeneration, yellow fever vaccination and GPS for services like Google Maps.

“One constant in the Army, and military across the board for that matter, is technological advancements,” stated Maj. Greg Crites, PBHS senior Army instructor. “We’ve been on the forefront over the last 25 plus years, dating back to Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the 1990s really.”

Students learned about a robot that will be capable of leaping known as SARAH, or search and rescue autonomous hardware, with a hover drone attached to it so soldiers can avoid entering certain hazardous situations. Finally the high schoolers had a chance to complete a simulated mission utilizing components of science, technology, engineering and math.

The U.S. Army Mission Support Battalion typically visits larger urban population centers, but since some schools are learning virtually because of the pandemic, PBHS was able to sign up, according to organizers.

Pictured: Students play a video game navigating SARAH through a simulated disaster on Tuesday, Nov. 24, in the JROTC wing of PBHS.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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