

## Fir Grove Elementary School students pick up musical instruments

By Gabby Urenda | January 27 2021

**With help of the Beaverton Education Foundation, the school hosted a musical instrumental distribution event.**

PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Zadie Gonzalez, a first grader at Fir Grove Elementary School, receives a Kazoo from Lindsay Ruhnke. The school hosted an instrument distribution event on Tuesday, Jan. 26.



One by one, Fir Grove Elementary School students greeted their teachers while receiving a special item in return.

On Tuesday, Jan. 26, the school held a musical instrument distribution event with the help of Fir Grove's parent teacher organization and the Beaverton Education Foundation. Some students also picked up meals and books while on site.

About 150 instruments, including kazoos and xylophones, were handed out to students. The xylophones will be returned in time for summer, but the children will be able to keep the kazoos.

"Music is an important part of education," said Beaverton Education Foundation executive director Kristine Baggett. "It's play, music, joy and overall expressing yourself. For many, it's also something to do. The whole family can join in, even if it's with a kindergartner."

According to the foundation, earlier this year, Fir Grove music teacher Jennifer Mohr Colett set her sights on purchasing instruments for more than 350 of her students to continue their music education during distance learning.

The recorders, xylophones, and kazoos cost \$5,000, far exceeding the school's music budget. Fir Grove's Parent Teacher Organization was able to commit an additional \$1,000, but that still left the music department short of the funds they needed.

Colett turned to the Beaverton Education Foundation.

"The initiative was a perfect fit for the organization's crowd funding website, Beaverton's Choice," said the Beaverton Education Foundation in an announcement. "Colett and BEF worked to pull the pieces together and in short time launched 'A Musical Instrument for Every Student.' Thanks to a BEF matching grant and individual contributions, the campaign quickly funded." Baggett says the children were happy to see Colett after not seeing her in-person for months.

"As exciting as it was for them to leave the house, what I really saw was how much the kids and the families wanted the instruments and to see their fabulous music teacher because they miss her," she said. "They also miss doing the music. That was a big part of why everybody came together to make sure the kids had what they needed."

Colett says the children are able to thrive when learning is playful and hands-on.

the gift of music during distance learning to this group of very deserving children," she added in the announcement. "This could not have happened without our partnership with BEF."

Fir Grove is a Title I school, meaning more than half of its students live below the federal poverty line. Those students include children in foster care, children whose families are homeless, special education students, and students who are English language learners.

The Beaverton Education Foundation's goal is to give teachers the opportunity to accomplish big projects inside of their schools.

Other projects the foundation is hoping to get funding for include a new tuba for Aloha High School's band and a schoolwide initiative program for Mountain View Middle School.

"This is one of the many projects BEF has helped happen," said Baggett about the instrument distribution. "BEF is continually seeking new and creative ways to engage and share our work with the community to better serve all of Beaverton's public schools."



PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Students and their parents wait in line to receive musical instruments at Fir Grove Elementary School.