

Reaching out to promote fitness

By Paris Narayan, Special to The Placer Herald



Molly Oropallo works out with her class and her mom Kim Oropallo during a Recess Rocks celebration. Oropallo and her third-grade class won \$500 with a video submission that they generated.

Cobblestone Elementary students showed off their obesity-fighting skills through a rhyming video for a national contest. Their two-minute video took third place and also earned the school \$500.

The video contest was open nationally for students in grades second to eighth, either individually or in groups, according to Kim Thibodeau with Recess Rocks. Instructions asked students what they could do about the obesity problem. More than 200 entries came in, 60 of which were group entries. Recess Rocks looked for overall impact, creativity, memorable content, delivery, and how the problem was solved.

“What we liked best (about Cobblestone’s video) was the writing — they rhymed a lot throughout the video; also their idea of integrating movement throughout their school day,” Thibodeau said. “The shots of the children were full of energy and captured the essence of Recess Rocks.”

It was Barbara Sunde’s class that put together and submitted the video and Principal Kathy Goddard who discovered the contest and brought it to Sunde’s attention.

“I was the lucky recipient of some sort of e-mail. I got the e-mail from Recess Rocks and it sounded like a great opportunity,” Goddard said.

The video is one of many of the school’s service learning projects, which have also included visits to Casa de Santa Fe senior living center to interview and write biographies on residents as well as writing persuasive letters to business owners asking them for donations to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

“I want kids to learn that even though they’re 9 years old, they can make a difference,” Goddard said. The Cobblestone Elementary motto is for social, emotional, physical, and academic growth – the whole child not just one aspect of them, Goddard said.

Goddard said that in the state of California, only physical education classes have a time requirement, which is 100 minutes a week.

Sunde said she believes in being physically active and health conscious.

“My classes are really physical; we move around a lot,” Sunde said. “As a school, we’re advocating for healthy snacks. For Valentine’s Day we advocated for pencils and we try to do grapes instead of cupcakes for birthdays.”

The fact that this contest was a collaborative project also inspired Sunde and her class to do it.

“I loved the idea and we had children who were excited and a great principal – she was so positive,” Sunde said. “(We also had) a great, supportive staff and a lot of families helped us.”

Parent Dave Gladden, whose son Will Gladden is in Sunde’s class, used his experience to help with the filming process.

Third-grader Michael Jacona said it was a great experience.

“It was really awesome and fun to win third place and get \$500 for the school,” Jacona said. Sunde said her class was excited to hear the news of their third-place win. “Oh my gosh! You’d think it was like they had just won the Super Bowl,” she said. “They were screaming and cheering. I had tears in my eyes – happy tears. They were so excited.”

To see the winning videos, go to <http://www.recessrocks.com/aboutcontestover.php>