

Eight \$500 Mini-Grants Bring Big Innovation

Impact: More than 1,000 Students Benefit

Eight teachers won Armstrong School District Foundation \$500 mini-grants this school year, which brought innovative educational opportunities to more than 1,000 school district youth.

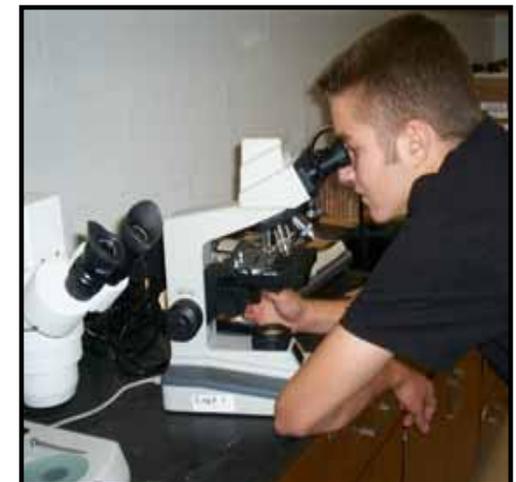
That doubles the number of grants the Foundation awarded last school year, the first year of the mini-grants program.

This growth was made possible by generous financial support from sponsors and players at the Foundation's first golf outing in June 2006, and from teacher and administrator payroll deductions this school year, among other contributors.

The ASD Foundation hopes to enable more educational opportunities for our youth through continued growth of the mini-grant program, and by offering a new district-wide educational grant worth a maximum of \$2,000 (see **Page 2**).



Above: Teacher Robert Cieslinski's students at West Hills Intermediate School learned to play jazz this school year. The project was enabled by a \$500 ASD Foundation mini-grant.



Above: Students in Christie Orlosky's biology class at Elderton High School studied how bacteria spread through the "Fight Bac" project. The project was enabled by a \$500 ASD Foundation mini-grant.

Read more about the eight mini-grant projects and see more pictures on **Pages 4 — 8**

Inside this issue:

New Grant: Maximum \$2,000 for District-Wide Project	Page 2
Hello from Trustees / Trustees' Wish List	Page 2
School & Community Service Award	Page 3
Retired Teacher Breakfast	Page 3

June 22 Golf Outing at Kittanning Country Club: Thanks, Gold Sponsors!	Page 3
Bruce and Candace Hall Scholarship	Page 3
Educators Give Back Through Payroll Deduction	Page 3
Great Tales from the Classroom: More Stories and Photos of Mini-Grants	Pages 4-8
Do-Re-Mi: Musical Instrument Drive	Page 8

Max \$2,000 Grant: New Money to Support a District-Wide Project

During the past school year, the ASD Foundation Board of Trustees asked: "How can we make even more of an impact for our students?"

The answer: Offer educators a grant or grants worth up to \$2,000 to enable some district-wide innovative educational project.

That's how the Educational Innovations "mega-grant" was born. The Foundation has allocated a maximum of \$2,000 to support a grant or grants that would have a major educational impact across the school

district. First announced in January, 2007, the ASD Foundation Trustees are hopeful that many Armstrong School District educators will take advantage of this awesome opportunity to reach students with an innovative educational project.

Armstrong School District educators are asked to apply by June 30, 2007. They are asked to download the grant application on the ASD Foundation Web site.

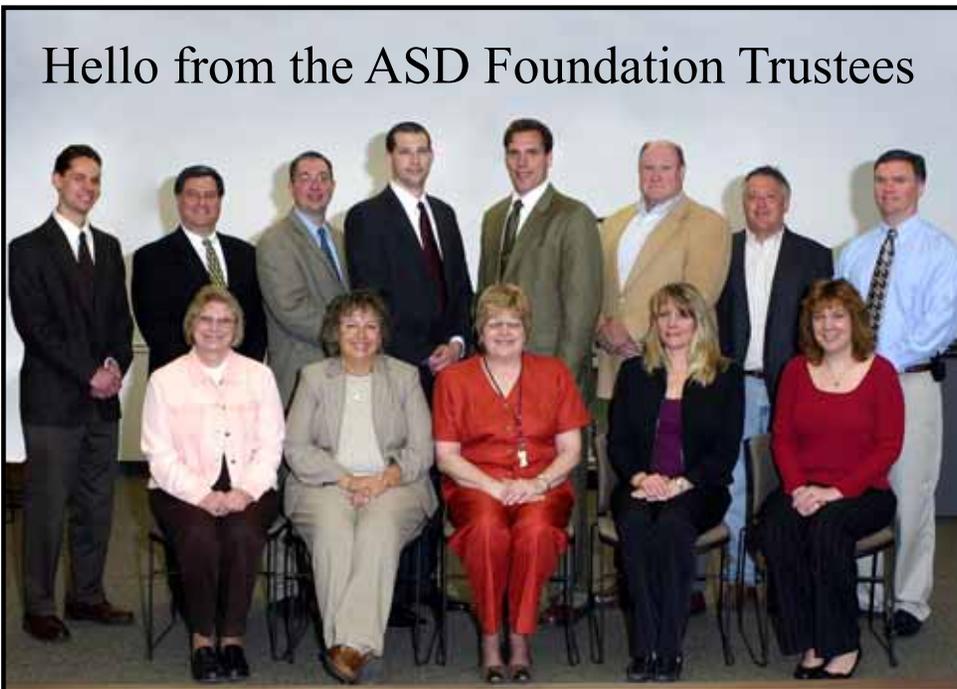
Winners will be announced in August, 2007.

Educators: Apply by June 30, 2007 for:

- A \$500 mini-grant
- An Educational Innovations district-wide grant worth up to \$2,000

www.asd.k12.pa.us/asdfoundation

Hello from the ASD Foundation Trustees



The ASD Foundation Trustees are, from left:
Front row: Saundy Smith, Dr. Sharon Porterfield, Mary Ferrara (secretary), Lisa Lambert (vice president), Rose Stitt. Back row: Jonathan Szish, Dr. William Kerr, Chris Suppo, Clem Rosenberger, Dave Kristofic, Bruce Hall (president), Tom Toy, Dale Kirsch (treasurer). Not pictured: Tom Dinga

Got Vision? Trustees Dream up "Wish List" to Benefit ASD Students

One cold January day, the ASD Foundation Trustees "waxed visionary" and brainstormed a few big ideas that, if funded, would truly revolutionize educational opportunities for our students. Wouldn't it be great if we could help enable....:

- A district-wide jazz band
- An Armstrong County astronomy observatory in which students get priority telescope time
- An after-school activity center in the district
- A summer school enrichment program offering classes in model rocketry, foreign language, theater arts, etc.
- Artist-in-residence programs that would bring professional cartoonists, musicians,

animators, writers, actors, into classrooms on a rotating basis for a week of special instruction

- Scholarships for seniors
- A "Summer in the Park" series in which a different band plays for the public every Friday evening

Trustees agreed this was a great start, and that this "wish list" should be promoted so that interested donors could see where their dollars could help.

Why don't you join the discussion? If there's some educational opportunity you'd like to see funded, drop us a line. Visit our Web site or email Jon Szish at szij@asd.k12.pa.us.

To donate money to make any of these projects a reality, visit our Web site.

Retired Teachers' Breakfast Brings Laughs, Camaraderie, Nostalgia

Good memories — and even some side-splitting laughs — marked the second-annual ASD Foundation Retired Teachers' Breakfast.

Some 40 people gathered Friday, October 20, 2006 to enjoy the festivities, which are organized each year to salute our retired teachers.

The keynote speaker was retired Armstrong School District administrator Ernest O. Punchard,



Punchard

who often had the crowd in an uproar with his humorous memories of Armstrong School District's early years from its formation in 1966.

The event was held at the new West Hills Intermediate School near Kittanning.

After being treated to a complimentary breakfast and a short program about ASD Foundation initiatives, the retired teachers toured the new school with Principal Sue Kreidler.



Retired teachers enjoy each other's company Friday, October 20, 2006 at West Hills Intermediate School during the Retired Teachers' Breakfast.

Golf Outing June 22: Thanks to Gold Sponsors!

After a successful first golf outing in 2006, the ASD Foundation Golf Outing will return Friday, June 22, 2007 at Kittanning Country Club. We'd like to thank all our supporters and sponsors, but

especially this year's Gold (\$1,000) Sponsors: **The Farmers National Bank of Kittanning** and **TJS Mining, Inc.** Thank you for expanding educational opportunities for our youth!

Educators Give Back Through Payroll Deduction

Some 88 teachers and administrators from across Armstrong School District pledged a total of \$5,700 to the Armstrong School District Foundation for 2006-2007. This was through payroll giving cards

that were distributed at teacher in-service day in September, 2006. The ASD Foundation Trustees would like to say "Thank you!" The money goes directly back to benefiting students and innovative educational projects.

Dr. Kerr Receives School Community Service Award

The ASD Foundation gave Superintendent William Kerr the 2006-2007 School and Community Service Award, surprising him with a small trophy at the teacher in-service

in September, 2006. Vice President Lisa Lambert cited his numerous contributions, including helping to start the Foundation in 2001. 500 teachers gave him a standing ovation.

Bruce and Candace Hall Scholarship Awarded to Ford City High Senior

This spring, a number of deserving applications came in for the \$500 Bruce and Candace Hall Scholarship.

After a careful review of these worthy applications, ASD Foundation Trustees chose Leslie A. Campbell of Ford City High School as the recipient this year. In presenting her the scholarship, Bruce Hall said he was most impressed with her essay about how being a swimming instructor to twelve little children led her to see how teaching would be her calling.

"This world is in need of good

leaders and I am determined to help our future by beginning the lives of many children in a way that will positively affect them and their communities, maybe even the world," she wrote in her essay.

She plans to study elementary education at Penn State New Kensington.

The scholarship is in its second year. Applicants must have a 3.0 or better grade point average and be accepted

into a four-year college or university to study education. Scholarship applications are available at high school guidance offices.



Campbell

Mini-Grants in Action: Great Tales from the Classroom

Dayton Elementary Kindergarten Students Jump into Storytelling Activities Through Props

Teachers Suzanne Safranyos and Carrie Patterson were awarded a \$500 mini-grant to launch their "Storytelling Activities" project that benefited 50 kindergarten and extended-day kindergarten students. Storytelling kits (including props, child and teacher aprons, and storytelling boards) allowed students to manipulate pieces to retell popular children's books.

Each month, a different story was the focus for varied activities. The activities included teacher-led, whole group, small group, and individual storytelling.

Students were encouraged to maneuver pieces from their individual storytelling folders while a classmate led the group using the aprons and boards. After successfully individually retelling the entire story using the manipulatives, students

earned an award to place on the "Storytelling Wall of Fame." This display was in the main hallway, allowing all students and teachers the opportunity to view and acknowledge the children's accomplishments.

Parents were also invited to witness their child's newly-developed literary skills. As a culminating activity, a Reading Booknic was held outdoors in May.

At the Booknic, students were able to showcase their oral language skills, sequencing skills, and listening comprehension skills in a fun, unique way. They traveled from station to station telling stories, listening to books, performing puppet shows, making crafts, and enjoying picnic foods. This well-attended event was indicative of both the students' and parents' interest in this worthwhile project.

This alternative method to



Dayton Elementary kindergarten students showcase their oral language skills, sequencing skills, and listening comprehension skills in a fun way at the Booknic (Book Picnic) in May.

traditional teacher-led storytelling was an exciting process to watch unfold, as the very youngest of students developed a true love of reading. Students could often be found, during free-choice time, retelling these stories by themselves

and with friends. They could not wait until a storyboard or apron was free for their use. This grant enabled stories to come to life during a child's first school experience, a critical block in the foundation for life-long learning.

West Hills Students Jazz Things Up A Bit

Teacher Robert Cieslinski's students at West Hills Intermediate School (*see Page 1*) received Jazz Ensemble Books through a \$500 mini-grant. Using these books, 25 students in grades 4-6 began a Jazz Band in October. The students used the books and CD accompaniments to help them learn how to articulate

Jazz music. The students began to incorporate these articulations into their jazz music as the year progressed.

Students also learned to improvise using the examples from these books. They played "Jazzy Jingle Bells," "Ants in the Pants" and "London Bridge" from their book at the school

Christmas Concert. "London Bridge" gave the students a chance to showcase their improvising skills.

The second half of the year, the Jazz Band concentrated primarily on three songs while incorporating all of our lessons from the Jazz Book. The Jazz Band played "Ants in the Pants," "Spinning Wheel" and "Street Dance" at their spring concert. The band has grown in their

ability to understand what Jazz is and how to interpret this type of music. Their performances have showcased this learning through the year.

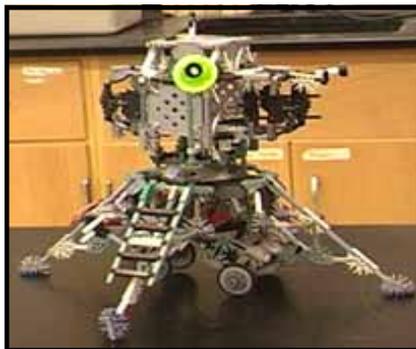
Next year the Jazz Band will hopefully grow and gain more students who want to learn and experience this type of music. This grant enabled the Jazz Band to grow by using these books.

Mini-Grants in Action: Great Tales from the Classroom

Ford City High School Students Explore Space with K'NEX Vehicles and a Star Party

Teacher Victoria Orr's students at Ford City High School embarked on space exploration with K'NEX vehicles and a star party through a mini-grant.

Small teams of students built various space exploration vehicles with the K'NEX sets (*see right*) and a few cardstock models found online. The teams researched their vehicle and created a visual display in the hallway that explained the mission, the vehicle, and its accomplishments.



The teams taught other students from the seventh-grade earth science class as well as the other members of their astronomy class.

There was a great deal of interest from the school population in general. Many students asked about the displays during the changing of classes. Some of the displays were hung from the ceiling. The ceiling panels were covered with the black poster board and pictures and facts were suspended like mobiles. Larger models were placed above the hallway lights and the informative backgrounds, also done in black to represent space, were placed on the wall behind the models. The display stayed up during the high school musical production so that the general public could view them and learn about space.

The students also organized and participated in a star party. Indiana University of Pennsylvania Professor Dr. Kenneth Coles brought his telescope and one from the IUP

geoscience department. Student enthusiasm soared after seeing celestial objects with the telescopes. A student teacher brought his own telescope, and the class also borrowed one from the Clarion Science in Motion program. Students viewed Venus, Saturn, the Beehive star cluster and other objects through the telescopes. Students also did some "star hopping" to review the circumpolar constellations and to view some of the brighter stars visible that night. Students were amazed at the sight of Saturn's rings in the telescope and the green laser pointer used to direct them to stars.

At the end of the star party, Ms. Orr asked the students to clap if they "learned something tonight." There was a thunderous round of applause in response. Many students wanted to continue the discussion the next day in classes, and several students said that they took family members outside to teach them what they had learned.

Biological Scavenger Hunt at Kittanning High

Dr. Deborah Snyder's students at Kittanning Senior High School took the classroom outdoors and snapped pictures of animals on a "Science for Practical Living" project made possible by a mini-grant. They learned more about nature, plant types, ecosystems, and the relationship between people and nature.

It began in Fall, 2006. They went outdoors to identify trees, plants, and insects. They marked off a rectangular plot of land, called a quadrat, for the study of plants and animals, and concluded with a giant photographic scavenger hunt.

They also collected specimens of trees, plants and insects and used field guides to identify what they had collected. Students created a leaf collection, a poster of wildflowers and weeds, and an insect collection to demonstrate their knowledge.

The students compared quadrats from a lawn area to a river bank area, examining the different plants, insects and animals. They did a detailed soil test of each area, looking at mineral content, how easily it crumbled, and perk time. Students then made a map of their quadrat and included their findings. They wrote a paper comparing the two areas.

The scavenger hunt was their final fall activity. Students each got

a disposable camera and a list of 26 plants, trees, weeds, wildflowers, and insects. They were sent along the Kittanning rails-to-trails and riverbank to collect photos. In two class periods, they had to locate and photograph all of the items on their lists. The film was developed and they placed their photographs on a poster and identified each item or animal photographed.

For a spring activity, students did a pond and forest ecosystem study at Dr. Snyder's residence. They looked at frogs, tadpoles, and eggs as well as plant and insect life in the pond ecosystem. Students then went to the State Game Lands to study forest life including birds, mammals, insects, streams and succession, which refers to the gradual replacement of one type of ecological community by another in the same area, especially in the dominant vegetation.

Again, students took pictures and collected specimens, ultimately making a poster of their findings and identifying all specimens.

Dr. Snyder has been happy with the learning in this project. Students from other classes have been asking to sign up next year.



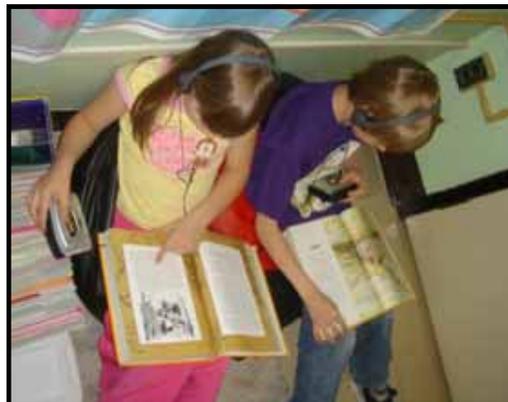
Mini-Grants in Action: Great Tales from the Classroom

Lenape Elementary Students Meet ‘The Weasel’

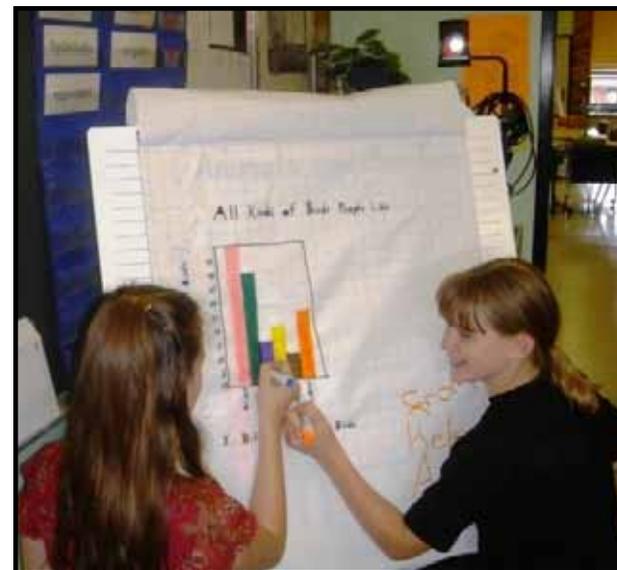
Students in teacher Susan Close’s fourth-grade classes at Lenape Elementary School enjoyed structured learning opportunities at literacy, writing and math centers, and they especially enjoyed using a Weasel (Reading/Writing Center).

One side of the Weasel is a dry erase board and one side holds a large tablet. Although both sides were used for whole group instruction, they were mainly used for small group and independent reinforcement. The students were always eager to gather data and create line and bar graphs using the large ruled tablets. Ms. Close used the dry erase side to help during small group instruction with struggling students. Also, she would use the dry erase side as a morning board to display reading and math questions tied to the state academic standards.

The grant also paid for milk crates used to store student materials. The crates enabled students to use round tables for small group instruction instead of individual desks. It was advantageous to have the tables available for flexible grouping throughout the day. When Ms. Close worked with individual groups, the remainder of the students



Students in Susan Close’s classroom at Lenape Elementary School enjoyed structured learning opportunities at literacy, writing and math centers, including a Weasel reading/writing center (right).



would complete their work at their desks and then use any remaining class time to work on centers. The plastic boxes that contained the math and reading centers were placed at the back of the room and throughout the day the students had continual access to them. Also, beanbag chairs provided by the grant came in handy when the students chose to relax and read a book back on the carpet.

Students had this to say about the project:
"I liked the dry erase board because we would use it when we learned something new in math."

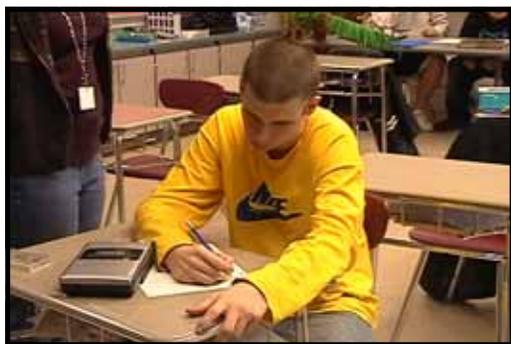
— Hannah Bielski

"The math centers helped me count big numbers."

— Marron Naugle

"The easel is better than the chalkboard."

— Adam Marcinek



A West Shamokin student captures his thought on tape while writing.

West Shamokin Students “Catch” Their Thoughts to Improve Writing

Thirty students in grades nine through 12 in teacher Brigitte Kennedy’s class at West Shamokin High School benefited from a project called “Writing ‘Think-Alouds.’”

This project provided desktop tape recorders to help special education students with their writing skills. For students who have attention deficits or get caught up in the mechanics of what they’re writing, using a tape

recorder allowed them to “catch” their thought, write it down at their own pace and go back to check for grammar.

At first, their reaction was mixed. Some students were happy to have this opportunity while others giggled and had a hard time being serious using the tape recorders. The first assignment with the tape recorders was chaotic — between the giggling

and the general noise, it was hard to get a lot of work done. But when the students saw their improvements — which were immediately noticeable to Ms. Kennedy — they became more serious about the tape recorders. As the year progressed, Ms. Kennedy let some students write without them, while those who showed the most improvement continued to use this resource.

Mini-Grants in Action: Great Tales from the Classroom

Elderton High School Students Fight ‘Bac’ Against Bacteria

Students in Teacher Christie Orlosky’s biology classes, as well as several classes of Elderton Elementary students, learned about bacteria and how it affects their everyday living through the grant-funded “Fight Bac (teria)” project.

Students began with an overview of microbiology, with their first activity being a bacteriology simulation lab. Students learned how lab technicians use Gram staining to identify bacteria.

The next lab showed students areas in the school where bacteria could thrive. This lab was followed up by taking additional swabbings, but this time a disinfectant was applied to half of the Petri dishes to see how effective the disinfectant was. The students discovered that hand sanitizers really do work. Students made a PowerPoint lab report and displayed it on a bulletin board near the cafeteria.

The next activity involved Ms. Orlosky’s AP biology students teaching the elementary students how important it is to wash their hands. Each student was given a “germ” to apply to their hands (hand cream that glows under a ultraviolet light). They were then instructed to wash their hands thoroughly. The lights were turned out and the room was darkened enough to see under an ultraviolet light where the germs might be hiding. The elementary students were amazed to see that germs can be under fingernails and in the cracks of their skin.

In another lab, all of Ms. Orlosky’s students were involved in a food poisoning simulation. This lab covered eating at a

buffet-style restaurant. Students discussed possibilities of cross-contamination, food spoilage, and unhealthy hygiene acts at the buffet such as coughing or sneezing. This lesson was videotaped for the ASD “Education Today” TV show. Several students also set up a booth at the annual health fair and presented this activity to anyone who wanted to test it.

The final lab showed students how bacteria are beneficial in the field of genetic engineering. A glowing gene from a jellyfish was inserted into bacteria to make the bacteria glow. This transformation lab had rave reviews.

Speaking of reviews, here are some student comments about the labs:

- “I feel more comfortable knowing the utensils in the cafeteria really are clean!”
- “I would do this (swabbing lab) more often to see if the school gets dirtier or cleaner throughout the year.”
- “I’m surprised at how clean the school is.”
- “It was nice to know that the things we thought were dirty are actually clean.”
- “It (food poisoning simulation) really showed how quickly food can be contaminated and spread to a whole bunch of people.”
- “I felt like a detective trying to figure out how the food was contaminated.”
- “Their (the elementary students) reaction to see how dirty their hands were after washing off the germs was priceless. Maybe they’ll learn to wash their hands more often.”



Elderton High School students swab bacteria samples and study them in the “Fight Bac” project.

Why did the Germ cross the Microscope?

To get to the other slide

Mini-Grants in Action: Great Tales from the Classroom

Walk This Way at Dayton Elementary School

Dayton Elementary School's Wellness Committee used its \$500 mini-grant to buy pedometers for all 325 students and about 20 staff. They also bought gift cards to be used as monthly rewards for students who participated in the school walking program.

The walking program was a school-wide initiative. Each classroom walked five to 10 minutes at least three times per week while wearing their pedometers. During good weather, students walked outside. During times of inclement weather, students walked in the halls or gymnasium. Students were entered into a monthly drawing for a \$10 Wal-Mart gift card for participating. Two names were selected each month — one student from kindergarten through grade 3 and another representative from grades

4 through 6.

The walking program complemented Dayton Elementary School's other wellness initiatives, such as a daily exercise program each morning after the announcements, the fresh fruit or vegetable of the day offered to students, a healthy food fair, and two assemblies during the school year that focused on health and wellness.

"The mini-grant helped us to purchase the pedometers and gift cards for our students and better enabled us to promote health and wellness through good nutrition and exercise," said Principal Andy Miller. "On behalf of the Dayton Elementary School Wellness Committee, I would like to thank the ASD Foundation for their generous support of our walking program."



Above: The walking program at Dayton Elementary. Right: Walking Program Drawing Winners from November included Willis Bearfield (grade 4) and Jared Doerr (grade 1).



Do-Re-MI: Donated, Refurbished Musical Instruments

The ASD Foundation is once again asking the public to donate gently used brass and woodwind instruments to get them into the hands of students whose families may not have the funds to buy an instrument.

For the public, it's a chance to get rid of unused musical instruments around the house.

The program is called "Do-Re-MI." That stands for Donated, Refurbished Musical Instruments. It is in its second year and is made possible through a partnership with Murphy's Music Center of Leechburg.

During this first year, people donated 16 instruments to the

program. Five instruments were immediately usable, benefiting five Armstrong School District elementary students who can borrow the instrument until they quit the instrument, graduate from high school or move out of the district, whichever comes first. The rest of the donated

instruments from last spring's drive are being refurbished and are in the pipeline to be given to eligible students this fall. ASD Foundation Trustees are hoping more usable instruments will be donated during this spring's instrument drive to reach more students.

Gently used instruments should be dropped off at any Armstrong School District ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

For more information, please call Jonathan Szish at 724-763-5268 or visit our Web site for more information.