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**Grants fund innovative learning in Gladstone**

From music and welding to physics and wellness, new classroom initiatives have been launched across the Gladstone School District thanks to \$20,500 in grants awarded by the Gladstone Education Foundation [GEF].

Gladstone elementary students will benefit from ukuleles for music class, two reading initiatives, and a sensory path to help kindergarten students learn self-regulation skills.

Kraxberger Middle School will receive a library of diverse musical composers, calming corners for every classroom, flexible seating for math class, and sensory resources for the Student Wellness Center.

Gladstone High School projects include a sound recording system for Jazz Choir, a Welder for technology classes, and carts for motion studies in physics. Grants will also fund headphones for the Tech Academy, tool storage for a freshman engineering class, racks for the weight room, and a new class on Wellness and Happiness.

To support Gladstone schools, donate to the GEF by contacting Executive Director Tammy Tracy at 503.655.2777.

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**Clubs expand middle school connections**

What if there was something to look forward to in middle school? What difference could that make for kids? That’s the question staff at Kraxberger asked.

One idea the Gladstone middle school is trying is a dramatic expansion of after school programs. Five times a year, the school offers a new batch of free six-week clubs and activities. The goal is helping students connect with peers and an adult mentor.

This session, students can choose the Community Outreach Club, which plans games and activities with elders at the Somerset Lodge retirement home. Other options include Spanish, Dungeons and Dragons, Board Games, or 3-on-3 basketball. And for those who find it hard to choose, the KAOS drop-in program offers a variety of activities that change weekly.

Other students may opt for Homework Help, with one group for students in grade six, and another for those in grades 7 and 8.

“We know early adolescents are eager to explore new interests, and they benefit from connecting with an adult mentor,” said Director of Student Supports Lennie Bjornsen. “After school clubs are a fun way for students to find a positive peer group and build their skills.”

**PHOTO: Three-on-three basketball is one after school option open to students at Kraxberger Middle School this season. School leaders hope the expansion of club activities will incentivize good attendance and help students build more positive connections to school.**

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