

Kraxberger Rising celebrates middle school's 50th year

For the past year, the Gladstone community has been preparing for a milestone celebration in 2019, when Kraxberger Middle School will mark its 50th year serving students. School leaders are enacting a series of Kraxberger Rising initiatives as an opportunity to transform the school in ways that maximize student potential.

“Many of us remember our own middle school years as a rough patch, an awkward time of transition,” said Principal Len Reed. “Today’s middle school must be so much more: a collaborative learning space where students grow academically, socially, and emotionally in a supportive community.”

Family involvement is key to student success, and Reed has found several ways to draw parents in. The school’s Parent & Family Organization gives parents ways to connect with school leaders, support students, and get involved as volunteers. A new Parent Welcome Center provides coffee, social service resources, and a place to swap parenting strategies during the turbulent years of early adolescence.

“We are actively inviting parents to stay involved in our school,” said Reed. “Whether they join us for Science Night or lead an after school club, this provides opportunities to engage with kids in fun ways that support learning.”

Kraxberger’s Student Leadership plays an active role in building a positive and inclusive school culture. Last year the group helped dedicate a Peace Pole in the school courtyard and created a kindness tree, where students could leave paper hearts thanking others for acts of kindness.

“We find that young teens are often influenced by their peers, so when students speak up about values like inclusiveness and kindness, kids listen better,” explained Mr. Waters, Assistant Principal. “Students learn that they are stakeholders and giving them the opportunity to advocate for change in their school -- including policies -- is also part of the learning process.”

A \$12,000 donation from the Gladstone Education Foundation is transforming the main gym into a vibrant Celebration Hall for assemblies that recognize academic achievement, good attendance, and student accomplishments in community service, kindness, and perseverance.

“We’re creating a magical space with colorful, inspirational banners and upbeat music that energize students and bring us together as a community,” said Reed. “I want every student to realize their own potential and our collective power to make Kraxberger a school to watch.”

PHOTO: Kraxberger student Ben Lau works with his mother on a science project during the school’s science night for families. The spring event was one of many ways the school is involving parents in their child’s education.