

HopeSource is proud to partner with Rotary and Mt. Stuart Elementary to provide valuable Junior Achievement training to students in Ellensburg. Six HopeSource staff members and one HopeSource board member signed on to teach life skills to local students earlier this year. Read more about the program below...

Junior Achievement helps kids

Students learn life skills from community members

Junior Achievement

Mt. Stuart Elementary School second-graders work on Junior Achievement lessons while volunteer instructor Amy Cziske and teacher help students.

Posted: Tuesday, March 19, 2013 1:53 pm
By JUSTIN PITTMAN staff writer |

About 18 classes at Mount Stuart Elementary School spent six weeks at the end of winter term learning community, business, financial and life skills from local community members.

The students participated in a Junior Achievement program that brings in community members to teach pre-prepared curriculum. The classes give insight into government, business, taxes and other topics.

Amy Cziske, a public relations officer for Solarity Credit Union in Yakima, has taught about six Junior Achievement programs while volunteering with the organization for a number of years. She said her favorite part of the program is teaching students new skills.

“I think it’s just the reward I get from teaching the kids something new and tying it into what they learned in class and the real world,” Cziske said.

Cziske likes being able to make connections with each of her students during the five hour-long sessions that make up a Junior Achievement class. Some pupils end up better understanding their parents, she said.

“Now I know why my mom says that,” Cziske remembers hearing one student say following a Junior Achievement class.



Workforce readiness

Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, according to the group’s website. It includes 382,637 classroom volunteers and helps prepare students for the real world “by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs which make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace.”

Junior Achievement has been active in Yakima since 2010, but the winter term classes at Mount Stuart were the first Junior Achievement program to take place in the Ellensburg School District. Junior Achievement has curriculum for K-12 grade levels, but most work in the Yakima area has focused on reaching elementary-level students.

Cziske, a long-time Ellensburg resident, has a daughter who attends Mount Stuart, and she enjoyed teaching a Junior Achievement program in town.

“That was kind of fun to teach some of the kids I knew from different activities my daughter’s involved with,” Cziske said.

A variety of volunteers including business owners, attorneys and representatives from Central Washington University and HopeSource helped with the Junior Achievement program at Mount Stuart.

“It fits our core values beautifully as far as wanting to educate and empower,” Cziske said.