

Making a Difference with Classroom Grants

Michaela Koenig is a Resource Teacher at Sagewood Elementary. She has been a teacher in the Elkhorn Public Schools District for eight years, providing special education services for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. She also is a “Battle of the Books” sponsor for fourth and fifth graders, and a 2022-2023 Elkhorn Public Schools Foundation (EPSF) Classroom Grant recipient.

The Community Field Trip & Books Classroom Grant for Sagewood Elementary allows

her language group students to learn about their community and develop new communication skills using their voice or communication devices.

“Our students are able to use the books they read to learn about different places in our community,” said Koenig. “As they read the books, they learn valuable early literacy skills such as turning pages and using their fingers to track words as we read.”

In October, the students were able to apply their newly



Michaela Koenig's Language Group outside of the Lied Jungle at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo.

acquired communication skills and knowledge about their community at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. The students practiced labeling and describing animals while observing their actions at each animal exhibit that they toured. The students also utilized the opportunity to engage in conversations with each other about the animals and their habitats.

Later this year, Koenig's students will have the opportunity to follow a grocery list to purchase items for a recipe. They will also visit Sam and Louie's Italian Restaurant in the spring to order or make a slice of pizza while practicing their social skills using their voices or communication devices while out and about in the community.

“This grant provides valuable opportunities for my students to use their language skills in different environments,” said Koenig.

“We practice language at school, but so much of what we practice applies to places outside of school. This grant allows our students to use what they are learning at school and apply it in different, exciting places.”

In the future, Koenig said that she would love to continue the Community Field Trips and Books Classroom Grant for her language groups. There are also some additional programs

that she would like to consider purchasing that would be beneficial to building language and literacy skills.

Koenig's grant is just one of 63 EPSF Classroom Grants totaling \$157,000 that were awarded to all 20 Elkhorn Public Schools during the 2022-2023 school year. Our annual Golf Fore Grants

event is the main fundraiser for our Classroom Grants program. This year, the event raised over \$56,000, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and participants.

If you are interested in making a contribution to our Classroom Grants program, please visit our website.



After observing the giraffes, students had the opportunity to use their voices or communication device to talk about and describe them.