

12-15-14 Savaloja Grant Report Harambee Elementary

Submitted by Jenny Eckman, Environmental Science Teacher

Goals

During the 2013-14 school year, I was made aware of the MOU Savaloja Grant program. With a goal of benefiting birds, increasing understanding of birds, and diversification and expansion of the MN birding community, this grant was a perfect match for Harambee. We are a unique magnet school with a diverse population and a desire to use the natural world as a context for learning. The goal for us to increase and improve the ways we used birds as an integrating theme. We hoped to use the engaging and motivating topic of birds to connect standards in science, language arts, social studies, and math as well as our magnet foci of community cultures and environmental science.

While I think we already had a good foundation of learning with a bird focus, the grant funding allowed us to do 3 important things;

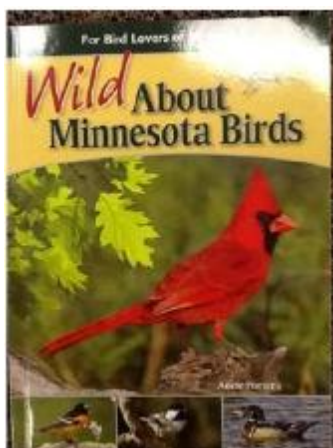
I. Resources

We were able to purchase resources for both student and staff use. We started with a classroom set of high quality binoculars and field guides.

Our previous set was almost 20 years old and showing a great deal of wear and tear. Because of Eagle Optics' generous school discount, we were also able to purchase curricular materials through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. We also bought each 2nd grade classroom teacher a Wild About MN Birds resource guide. Lastly each student got his/her own copy of the Birds of the Northwoods Activity guide. This book is designed for students to complete activities and collect information about 50 different bird species. We also included time for the author of the book to visit classrooms, talk to the students about the book and birding as well as take them outside to look for good

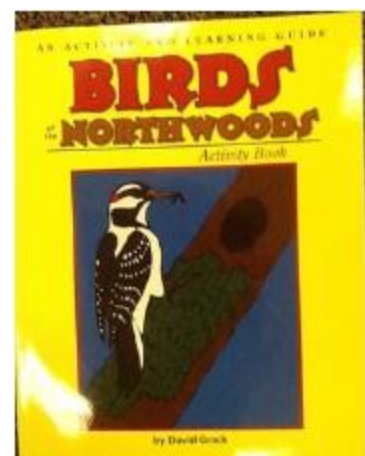


Binoculars and field guides arrive!



bird habitat in the Harambee backyard. Our plan is for the students to keep their copies as learning tools throughout 2nd and 3rd grade.

Great Resources!



2. Training

David Grack, the author of the activity guide, spent a half day in classrooms and a half day working with teachers. This was a very critical piece. For the classroom teachers, this was a chance to learn more about the activity guide and how to use it, but also really was an introduction to the many ways birds could be integrated into the curriculum. David worked with Jenny to plan a session that was individualized for the team and connected to the other elements of the 2nd grade curriculum.

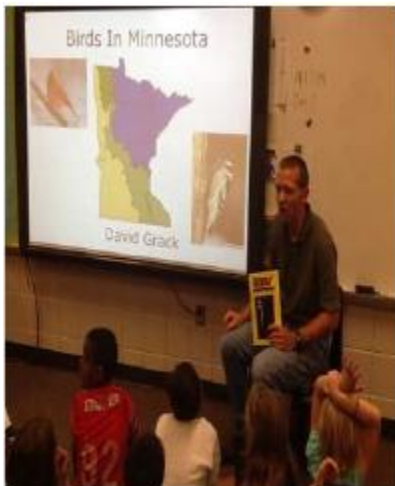
3. Following the training, the classroom teachers met with Jenny for a half day to check in about progress so far and to make a solid plan for how we would use the bird theme throughout the year. This is another element that is crucial to make the bird work a reality. With multiple initiatives going on in our school and a district focus on reading and math, we needed time to work together and create a working plan.



Teacher as learner too!

Outcomes

We are feeling really excited and proud about the way the bird project has “taken flight” at Harambee☺! To kick off our work with binoculars, we called on a volunteer who has worked with Harambee in the past. Steve Johnson is a volunteer for the St. Paul Audubon society who



was able to make the introduction to the new tools fun and engaging for the students. Shortly after trying the binoculars, we were able to distribute the activity books and hosted author David Grack. The students were thrilled to meet a real author and to find out the books were theirs to KEEP! David talked to the classes about his interest in birding and how his observations of the natural world



led him to create the book. Then he got us all outside to find out more about where we could look for birds in the Harambee backyard.

Finally, the classroom teachers met with the environmental science teacher and made a plan for how we would keep the momentum going. We looked at where we could use the bird theme to make connections across subject area standards and how the bird theme could help us create meaningful and authentic learning for students. We are just getting started and enthusiastic about continuing this project through the rest of this school year and into the next. With our “looping” model, these 2nd graders will stay with their current classroom teachers for another year and move to 3rd grade together in 2015-16. We look forward to continuing our work with this group of students and to making birding an integral piece of the Harambee 2nd/3rd grade experience.



MOU SAVALOJA GRANT: HARAMBEE SCHOOL		13-14	14-15
01 R 525 293 247 000 099			
Beginning balance 4/2014		3,815.00	
Spent as of 6/30/14 (Optic Outfitters 5251410055)		1,928.35	
Carry Forward			1,886.65
145 (Sub) substitute teacher costs			632.00
211 (FICA) tax Federal Insurance Contributions Act			48.40
218 (TRA) Teacher Retirement Account			47.38
270 (WC) Workers Comp			3.75
311 (Prof Services) David Grack training/in house field trip			300.00
430 (Instructional Supplies)			849.72
Adventure Publications Wild About Books 1 copy	17.36		
Cornell Lab 5251510012 Bird Sleuth curriculum materials	331.47		
David Grack books	455.00		
Amazon books 5251510005 Wild About Books 1 copy	27.10		
Amazon Book 5251510048 Wild About Books 1 copy	18.79		
	849.72		
BALANCE			5.40