

Sugar Creek Elementary bazaar gets an environmentally friendly twist

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Sugar Creek Elementary School teacher Lizbeth Ramseier shows third-grader Carlos Garcia Martinez a pair of binoculars at the annual bazaar at the school. Fifth-grade students made items with reused material to sell at the bazaar in a lesson on economics.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

VERONA — A tradition for more than 25 years at Sugar Creek Elementary School got updated this year.

The students look forward every year to the school's bazaar, which features products made by fifth-graders — a culminating activity for an economics unit.

This year the fifth-grade teachers decided to let the bazaar reflect the school's focus on equity and make it more environmentally friendly and easier on families.

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Sugar Creek Elementary School fifth-grade students sell items from their desks at the annual bazaar at the school.

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So the rules were changed to allow only products made with materials that were being reused rather than purchased new. Families, staff and others brought in materials and students were shown ideas of things they could make, but they weren't limited to those.

"I actually really think that's pretty good," second-grader and shopper Riley Hensel said of reusing materials. "What's the sense of putting it in the garbage if you can make something new with it?"

If the materials the students wanted weren't part of the supplies, they had to improvise. Fifth-grader Lindsey Pozos wanted to make pencil holders that required zippers, so she took some from clothing she was discarding.

Another change gave students time to finish the products at school, which meant all had something to sell. Fifth-grade teacher JoBeth Kroetz said it was also neat to see the empathy displayed by students helping others who were not finishing.

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In addition, students were limited to spending \$2. Students who didn't have the money were given the same amount from school funds as they have been helped in the past.

The changes also allowed the products to be sold for less money. All prices were set at 50 cents, although students could reduce them to a quarter if their sales were slow. The proceeds will go toward the fifth-grade party at the end of the year.



Sugar Creek Elementary School third-grader Freya Williams, right, buys a game from fifth-grader Sergio Soto at the annual bazaar at the school.

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The economics unit teaches students about topics such as salaries, losing employees, marketing and the costs of production and utilities, principal Todd Brunner said. Business owners come in to speak to the students and students learn about running a business through the bazaar.

The fifth-graders were taught how to be a good store owner by welcoming the shoppers, showing products and maintaining eye contact. Thought also went into how the products would be displayed. For example, fifth-grader Emonie Williams was hawking her flowers made with cardboard egg cartons with a sign advertising them as “a nice, decent flower.”

Fifth-grader Mason Sibley had students pick out a gold button for a “good luck charm,” which he strung on their choice of ribbon or pipe cleaner and then used a pop top for a clip at the end. He thought students would like how it was interactive and personal.

When the fifth-grade teachers met to discuss making changes to the bazaar, Cassondra Lee said she suggested the idea of reusing materials. Reducing waste is a concept that fits into her involvement in a year-long professional development opportunity called the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program, the fifth-grade teacher said.

This year’s changes, which also included holding the bazaar in the fifth-graders’ four classrooms because gymnastics equipment was set up in the gym, took some adjusting.

“I was a little upset by it because it was different,” said fifth-grader Ali Rogers, who was selling decorated plastic cups for pencil holders. “But I like that they are trying to help the environment.”

Second-grader Adalyne Emmanuelli said she “kind of didn’t like it that you can only buy four things.” But she also appreciated that it forced students to be more selective.

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Sugar Creek Elementary School fifth-grader Lorena Cehualtl Tecalero, right, sells one of her "Cute Cups" to fourth-grader Evelin Jimenez Ponce at the annual bazaar at the school.

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“I thought it was OK because we won’t have to spend that much money,” said fifth-grader Luis Munoz, who was selling turtle piggy banks made by cutting off the bottom of a plastic bottle for the shell.