



**THE WREA FOUNDATION**

The Charitable Arm of the  
Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association

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RELEASE IMMEDIATELY

**OAKLAWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL "ELEMENTARY/COLLEGE ENGINEERING PARTNERSHIP"  
PROJECT**

**WINS WISCONSIN RETIRED EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION AWARD**

Menomonie, WI – Oaklawn Elementary School and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher Matthew Wigdahl have been awarded \$2,000 by the Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association (WREA) Foundation. The award was given for the school's "Elementary/College Engineering Partnership" project.

5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Oaklawn Elementary use Engineering and Design Thinking to solve problems in the classroom and school community. They have formed a partnership to bring elementary students together with college students to work on projects.

Mr. Wigdahl explained, "Our local university – UW Stout – has an engineering department with a class on assistive technology. We have formed a partnership to bring students together with college students to work on projects. The college mentors taught the 5<sup>th</sup> graders about engineering concepts, helped them in their building and coding, and encouraged them through social media and in-person meetings."

What was unexpected, was that college students learned prototyping from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade engineers! Students are currently working on a device to alert the class when someone is at the door using a wireless button – or a paper storage device that alerts someone when they run low.

They hope to grow the collaboration between the college (UW-Stout) and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders were also invited to present their designs at the spring engineering fair on campus. We are always in need of supplies and transportation to bring students together.

## **WHITEHALL MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL “MULTICULTURAL DAY” PROJECT**

### **WINS WISCONSIN RETIRED EDUCATORS’ ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE AWARD**

Whitehall, WI – Whitehall Memorial Elementary School and Elementary School Counselor, Lisa Moore have been awarded \$250.00 by the Wisconsin Retired Educators’ Association (WREA) Foundation. The award was given for the school’s “Multicultural Day” project.

The Whitehall School District is a small rural school district that is proudly becoming more culturally diverse. The mission of the district is to provide learning experiences that empower students to create a positive vision of their future through the interaction of school, family, and the community.

Ms. Moore explained, “On April 12, 2017, Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students used their classroom passport to navigate throughout the elementary school to learn about different cultures. They learned about traditions, music, dance, art projects, and foods of other countries. The day exposed our students to other people, cultures, languages, and food that hopefully sparked them to explore future interests and understandings.”

Multicultural Day was so well received that they plan to make it an annual event and expand the cultural immersion experience with a field trip to the Festival of Nations in St. Paul, MN with the older students. The funds will be used to pay for supplies, gift cards for supporting families, and to expand the program to include a field trip to the Festival of Nations.

The financial award is part of an annual “Challenge Award” program sponsored by the WREA Foundation. It recognizes ten schools each year, in each of the five statewide regional districts that comprise WREA. From year to year, the awards are rotated from elementary schools, to middle schools, to high schools, every third year.

Oaklawn Elementary School is one of five innovative elementary school projects to be awarded \$2,000 this year, for a total of \$10,000 donated by the WREA Foundation. The other projects awarded were Algoma School District (Algoma), Park Falls & Glidden Elementary Schools (Park Falls), The School for Agriculture and Environmental Studies (Fox Lake), and Sandhill Elementary School (Stoughton).

In addition to the first-place winners, five second place winners were awarded \$250.00 each for their innovative projects. The schools include: Lakeview Elementary School (Neenah), Oostburg Elementary School (Oostburg), Whitehall Memorial Elementary School (Whitehall), Forest Ridge Elementary School (Oak Creek), and Rio Elementary School (Rio).

**The WREA and the WREA Foundation are independent, non-profit organizations representing more than 10,000 retired educators across the state of Wisconsin. Their primary focus is to support and protect the retirement interests and needs of its members, and to advocate for public schools. Both organizations are located at 6405 Century Avenue, Suite 201, Middleton, WI 53562.**

WREA, which was organized in 1951, is a statewide association of more than 10,000 members and 62 local units. It is recognized for protecting the public pension fund, promoting public education, and providing member benefits. With a central office in Middleton, WREA maintains a strong lobbying presence to represent the views of the retired educational community.

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