

Excellence in Education Grant Application - October 2015
Title: Sagehen 5th to 1st Grade Exploration and Collaboration

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Statement of Need:

We are requesting funding to purchase science books for a cooperative endeavor between the students in 5th grade and 1st grade. These books will bridge the knowledge 5th grade students learned while at the Sagehen Field Station enabling the 5th grade students to pass on their knowledge to the younger children.

Program/Project Description:

Sagehen Outdoor Education is excited to expand its vision, for a 2nd year, to include a 5th grade/ 1st grade collaborative component in which the 5th grade students will be:

1. Reading informational books with the 1st graders as a means of building understanding of science concepts that were a part of the 5th graders Sagehen experience.
2. Helping solidify understanding of these science concepts by helping 1st grade students with hands-on observation techniques.
3. Assisting 1st grade students with producing writing about their learning.

Culminating event will be joint field trips to Sagehen Field Station where the 5th graders will provide at least three science lessons for the 1st graders.

Sets of books being requested will allow multiple reading opportunities for all 5th graders (95 students) and all 1st graders (70 students) at Truckee Elementary.

Program Objectives/Application to State Standards:

The following objectives directly correspond to the Common Core State Standards and to the Next Generation Science Standards. An extensive number of standards will be covered.

To increase collaborative conversations with diverse partners on 5th and 1st grade topics which build on ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly.

To instruct younger students about topics 5th grade students have studied.

To follow agreed upon rules of discussions and carry out assigned roles.

To read and write informational text as we explore science topics.

To gain a deeper appreciation of our immediate bioregion after studying topics we read through exploration and observation.

To gain hands-on experience with the Next Generation Science Standards under the heading:

From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Methods:

Over the course of 6 weeks 5th grade students will be partnered with 1st grade students. The 5th graders will come to 1st grade classrooms for 30 minutes a week and work 1 on 1 or 1 on 2 with children teaching what they know about the following topics: insects, birds, plants, and camouflage. If this grant is approved, 5th grade students will review purchased texts in their homeroom classes and then instruct the 1st grade children on the content of the text through reading, questioning, discussion and explaining. The children will also work collaboratively to complete science journals about the topics in the texts being read. After the 8 weeks of building background the students will have the opportunity to explore these topics at Sagehen Field Station with the older students being the instructors and mentors to the younger students.

Assessments:

The assessments will be ongoing through:

Observation of how well the older students communicate their knowledge to the 1st graders

Analysis of writing in the science journals

Knowledge in Action - The final Sagehen Field Station science learning day where 5th graders provide lessons and 1st graders have opportunities to relate their learning to hands on experiences.

Future Funding:

This project was a huge success last year. The first grade students benefitted from 1 to 1 instruction from the 5th grade students. This was evidence through their work in journaling, their discussion and participation in the Sagehen project, and their written reflections following the program. Last year we received funding for books through Truckee Elementary's PTO. We anticipated that we would continue this program and are now in need of 6 new titles of texts for the topics we will cover this year. We anticipate that the books purchased last year and this year will carry us for many years to come, but know that topics at the Sagehen Outdoor Education Program change and there may be need to purchase new titles from time to time. We view this as building a student library of our local fauna and flora and this is a timeless investment.