



# INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 2142

## ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS

*“Preparing them for the future”*

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**JANUARY 2024**

*"Small Schools With Big Opportunities -- Where Everybody is Somebody!"*

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## SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE



Supt. Reggie Engebritson, Ed.D.

We completed our new Strategic Plan in August. We started working on this new plan last December. During my monthly school board reports, I focus on four key goals that provide us direction on how to improve the work we do. These four goal areas are:

- **Enhancing our systems for the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff.**
- **Providing student-driven, high-quality, rigorous, and relevant instruction that meets students’ academic and cultural needs in each classroom.**
- **Building system efficiencies to ensure resources are allocated to benefit all students and staff.**
- **Strengthening our engagement and connections both internally and externally.**

I’ll share some of the things I have reported on so far this school year.

- **Enhancing our systems for the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff**
  - We have developed Wellness Rooms for staff and Sensory Rooms for students. These are welcoming spaces that allow staff and students to take a break and for students to get regulated so they can

go back to the classroom to learn.

- Our social workers attended the National Mental Health conference to learn more techniques and strategies to help students and staff.
- We have provided a variety of training options to staff so they can add strategies and skills to their toolbox to help students stay regulated and assist students who need support when they are dysregulated.
- When I use the terms “regulated” and “dysregulated” I’m talking about when students are calm and engaged which helps their brains be ready to learn. When students are dysregulated they are not focused on what is going on in the classroom and they may have behaviors that interrupt the learning of others.

- **Providing student-driven, high-quality, rigorous, and relevant instruction that meets students’ academic and cultural needs in each classroom.**
  - Each department and grade level have met to discuss how to align the MN standards that we are required to teach, so that instruction flows and builds on itself from one grade level to the next.
  - Indigenous Day brought a variety of experiences for our students.
  - We have student leadership teams in our four high schools and the principals are working with them to discuss issues in our high schools and find ways to work together to make our schools more successful.

- **Building system efficiencies to ensure resources are allocated to benefit all students and staff.**
  - Scheduling for next year has already begun and we look at ways

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Teachers, staff get new mental health support

*Wellness Rooms at district campuses designed to address well-being*

By Lee Bloomquist

In recent years, the mental health and well-being of every student in St. Louis County Schools has been a major focus of administration and staff.

But now, the district is broadening its mental health programming beyond students.

Beginning this school year, the district has expanded its mental health and well-being services to teachers and staff.

“Each school has a space for teachers and staff members to decompress,” Alicia Dick, ISD 2142 Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) mental health coordinator said. “The spaces are different at each school. Some are designated spaces and some like in Tower are in break rooms.”

The district recognized that teachers and staff need a place to refresh and invigorate themselves during, before, or after the school day, Dick said.

So, the district equipped each campus with a “Wellness Room.”

The “Wellness Rooms” feature a variety of tools designed to help teachers and staff deal with the day-in and day-out rigors of their jobs, Dick said.

“When they do that, they can show

up and support students,” Dick said. “You can’t regulate students if you can’t regulate yourself.”

The rooms feature a wide number of stress relief options such music, sound-canceling headphones, special lighting, light therapy lamps, sound machines, puzzles, and comfortable furnishings.

Reaction to the rooms has been positive among teachers and staff, Dick said.

“People love them and appreciate them,” Dick said. “I think the staff kind of felt like, ‘I didn’t know the district cared about me so much’.”

District teachers and staff already do an amazing job in the classroom and school each day, Dick said.

But the “Wellness Rooms are a recognition by the district that teachers and staff deserve and need support, Dick said.

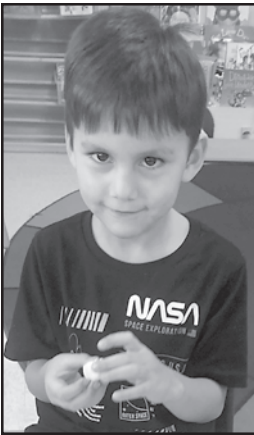
“They’re handling what they’re experiencing,” Dick said. “They’re doing well, but we recognize they’re still struggling.”

Reggie Engebritson, St. Louis County Schools superintendent, said the rooms help teachers and staff meet student

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Preschool 2024-2025

Preschool registration information will be mailed out in February to all families on our Early Childhood census. If you want to be added to the census, please call and leave DaNeil the following information: child’s legal name (first, middle, last), child’s birthday, address, parents’ legal names, phone numbers and email addresses. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2024 to register for the K-Ready Program.



## Kindergarten 2024-2025

Kindergarten registration information will be mailed out in February to all families on our Early Childhood census who are not attending preschool. If you want to be added to the census, please call and leave DaNeil the following information: child’s legal name (first, middle, last), child’s birthday, address, parents’ legal names, phone numbers and email addresses.



*Wishing Everyone a  
Safe, Healthy and  
Happy 2024*

*from all of us at ISD 2142*



# CHERRY SCHOOL HOLDS SPIRIT NIGHT



On Thursday, October 26, the Cherry School welcomed close to 300 people to its School Spirit Night. Members of the school's volleyball and football teams signed autographs for their youngest fans. A free meal was also available to families. Student work was displayed throughout the school, face painting and informational tables provided information for students and families. Special activities such as archery, 8-star quilt demonstrations, and robotics were available in the gym and classrooms.



**BUILD A CHILD A LIBRARY BY AGE 5!**

Donations to United Way of Northeastern Minnesota support our local Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program!

To sign up a child you know for this FREE program, contact 218-254-3329 or [info@uwnemn.org](mailto:info@uwnemn.org)



# Dr. Reggie Engebritson ... *(Continued from front page)*

to be more efficient and share resources, including staff and technology, across the schools and region so we can provide all students with the same opportunities.

- We are exploring a variety of electives and checking in with students to see what their interests are for certain classes.
- Our student count is down from the 2019-2020 school year, which means less dollars coming in from the State. We are looking at ways to be more efficient in all areas of our school system.
- **Strengthening our engagement and connections both internally and externally.**
  - We have had school conferences with parents and guardians which help keep us connected as we need each other to help our children be successful.
  - Weekly newsletters go out from each school to keep parents/guardians informed. They are also on our Facebook pages so community members can stay informed.
  - The holiday season brought us many concerts and programs at our schools for families and community members to come into our

schools and see and hear what our students have been learning.

By staying focused on our key areas, we will be able to see if positive changes are happening and we can adjust along the way if something more or less needs to happen. The end goal is that we want students to learn in a variety of ways and be academically, socially and emotionally ready to face whatever challenges and opportunities come their way as they grow and mature, so they can be productive citizens in society. That's a very long sentence, but I hope it captures the work we are doing in our schools and in partnership with families and our communities.

As we end 2023 and look ahead to 2024, I am excited about the progress we are making in giving staff more knowledge, tools and resources to support our students in a variety of ways. School is no longer just about reading, writing and arithmetic. Our children live in a challenging and complex world and it takes all of us to get them to the finish line of graduation and ready for adulthood. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or ways you can help. I wish each of you a Happy New Year and I hope your 2024 is filled with more laughter, kindness and serenity.

## • Wellness Rooms... *(Continued from front page)*

academic needs, behavioral challenges and help relieve stress and burnout.

A shortage of substitute teachers and support staff create additional pressure on regular staff, Engebritson said.

"Having a place for staff to take a short break and recharge is not only good for them, but also for their students and overall school climate," Engebritson said. "As we all have probably experienced, if we are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, we are not at our best for our jobs and personal life."

Beyond teachers and staff, the entire district benefits from the initiative, Dick said.

"It's a two-part deal," Dick said. "This is important to have a place to support students, but it's also important to recognize that staff are coming in each day with their own lives and they need support as well, especially if we're all there to support students."

The rooms are also a space that builds community among teachers and staff, Dick said.

"The benefit is that relationships are the vehicle of change," Dick said. "Having a place to gather and decompress is the goal. This is a response to support staff."

Dick said similar employee wellness rooms have become a trend across the nation.

"A lot of health care organizations and companies have done this," Dick said. "It's all about the wellness of the individual."

Funding for the rooms comes from a portion of a \$1.8 million federal Project AWARE grant awarded to the district.

"I am grateful for this grant which gave us the opportunity to help reduce stress and offer our staff something that might feel like a luxury, but says 'You are worth it!'" Engebritson said.

Other portions of the grant are already being used to support student mental health and well-being.

## Parents — we are here for you!

Check out the Parenting Resources section on our website at <https://www.isd2142.net/page/3003>.

On the website you will find four different newsletters that are changed monthly, along with a family engagement library full of short brochures on a variety of topics for parents.

**"Small Schools With Big Opportunities -- Where Everybody is Somebody!"**

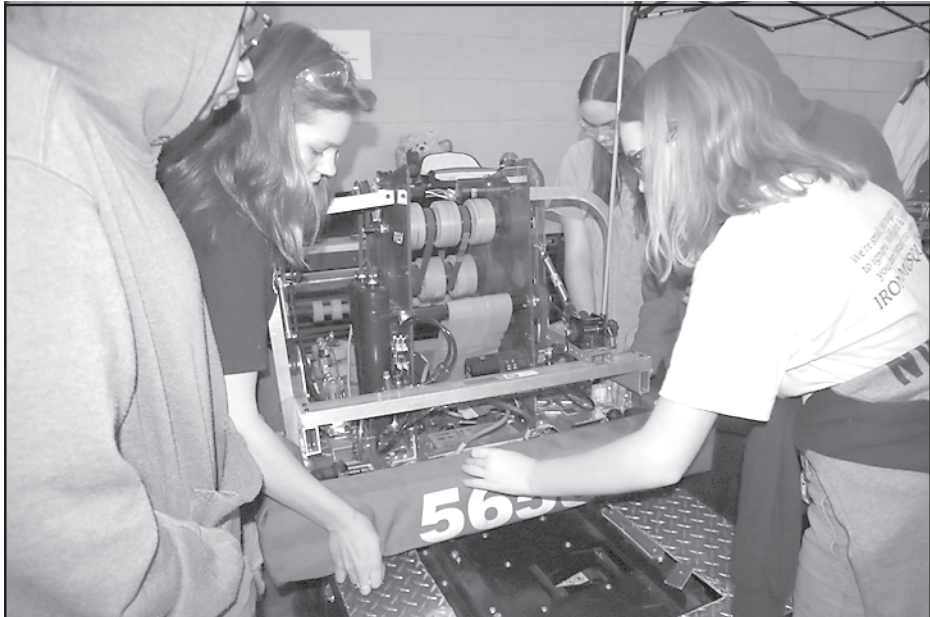


# NE Range hosts Robotics Conference Championship



Northeast Range School hosted the 2023 Northern Minnesota Robotics Conference Championship. Over 200 students from across Minnesota and a team from North Dakota competed at the two-day event. The Iron Mosquitos, NER robotics team 5653, won the event with their alliance partners and also took home the Impact Award.

Great job to the returning team members and a great start for the new recruits!



## Save the Date!

Join us for the  
2nd Annual Evening  
with the Arts

*\*Free to the Public\**

**April 5, 2024**

Arts display and  
refreshments at 6:30 p.m.

Performances begin at 7 p.m.

South Ridge Forum  
8162 Swan Lake Rd  
Culver, MN 55779

**Featuring:**

- Musical performances by state band competitors
- Creative competition speeches
- Art displays
- Raffle and more

**All proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit South Ridge Arts Education**

*Our mission is to promote and develop the arts in the South Ridge community.*

# North Woods Elementary Concert ‘Winter Fun’ packs gym, parking lot

The parking lot at the North Woods School was packed on Dec. 15 for the North Woods Elementary “Winter Fun” Christmas Concert. Parents thronged into the parking lot and along the road outside. They were in for a fantastic display of their youngsters singing. There were nine separate groups on the program for a total of 36 youngsters performing separate songs. Backing them were the students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The concert started out with the second and third grade singing and closed with the All School Choir singing “Go In Peace.” As always, these youngsters performed with spirit and gusto.





# SOUTH RIDGE CROSS-COUNTRY COOPERATIVE TEAM EXCELS!



The South Ridge Cross-Country Cooperative Team capped off a historic season! The girls won their fifth Polar League Conference Championship, while the boys grabbed their 1st Conference title in program history.

Two weeks later, both teams carried that momentum into the Section 7A Championships. The girls qualified for their fourth state meet and the boys qualified for their first-ever state meet in program history. The boys placed 12th and the girls placed 13th at the state meet.

One week later, the girls competed at the Nike Heartland Regional in Sioux Falls, South Dakota against the best runners from Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The girls placed 53rd, beating 78 of the region's top teams.



# North Woods Bands present ‘Sounds of the Season’ Concert



The North Woods Middle School Band played three Christmas numbers at the Dec. 19 “Sounds of the Season” Concert. Director Paige Stanislawski is on the far right.



## Hear the crack of the bat at Target Field in Minneapolis!

Join us on this day trip to see the **Minnesota Twins** play the **Boston Red Sox** on **Saturday, May 4, 2024**, at 1:10 P.M. Transportation on a motorcoach bus and game tickets for the Middle Diamond Box, Sections 103 & 104. We will drop you off at the door and pick you up — no need to worry about parking! Register online and see all the trip details at <https://slc2142.revtrak.net> or scan the QR code and then click on your nearest school program, or contact your local Community Education Coordinator for other registration options or information. All seats must be **reserved and paid in full by Monday, April 1, 2024, at 5:00 P.M.**

Bus leaves Hibbing (Shubat Transportation Parking Lot) at 8:00 A.M., Cherry School at 8:15 A.M., Virginia Village Inn at 8:45 A.M., & South Ridge School at 9:30 A.M. Return to South Ridge School at 7:00 P.M., Virginia Village Inn at 7:45 P.M., Cherry School at 8:15 P.M., and Hibbing at 8:30 P.M. Additional pick-up/drop-off locations available upon request.

**Cost is \$99 per person** — sponsored by Community Education.



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# Students in the NER Film and Television Class putting their skills to the test

This semester, the film and television class at Northeast Range has been learning about film and television history while focusing on documentaries and what goes into putting together this type of film. On December 12, 2023, Jennifer Kaufenberg (NER ELA teacher) took nine students on a mini-manufacturing tour — a field trip to learn about local manufacturing companies and career opportunities in the area. Students have been researching and planning for a film they will enter in the Minnesota Manufactured Video Contest. During the research process, students learned that NER alums across generations are employed at smaller family-owned businesses that impact the manufacturing industry.

The first stop on the tour was Kuuma, Lamppa Manufacturing, in Tower Minnesota, which started over 45 years ago in an old creamery that was transformed into a shop. Today, Lamppa has a new building and manufactures and sells wood furnaces and sauna stoves directly from the factory across the United States and several countries worldwide. The class interviewed Ethan Zaitz, a 2021 graduate who is a welder at Lamppa. Zaitz graduated and studied computer science technology; he quickly realized he could not sit at a desk all day. “I needed to work with my hands,” Zaitz said. He was hired by Lamppa and trained on the job to weld. “I like the schedule, four 10-hour shifts and a three-day weekend,” Zaitz explained. He explained that he liked working for a family-owned business that focused



Kuuma - Lamppa Manufacturing

on quality products and cared about their employees and the work environment.

The tour ended at Razor Edge Systems in Ely, Minnesota, another family-owned manufacturing company that has been locally in business for over 45 years. Razor Edge makes knife-sharpening equipment sold to meat packing plants across the United States and several countries. 1993 NER graduate and lead foreman Eric Sherman showed the students how the company has evolved over the years — from their manual sharpening sta-

tions to the new robotic sharpening technology. During the tour, students met other Babbitt graduates and learned about their different jobs. Sherman explained everything works together, from shipping and receiving to welding and CNC to coding and assembly — every piece is needed.

“The students were engaged during the tours, and they continue to talk about the opportunities right in their backyard,” said Kaufenberg. One of the most valuable lessons during this field trip was learning about the great things happening in our local communities that are having an impact on a greater scale. Lamppa Manufacturing, for example, is the world’s number one forced-air wood-burning gasification furnace that the EPA is using to establish industry standards. Razor Edge is also leading the industry by

using robotic technology designed and built in-house. These new machines are shipped out to plants where they will save companies time and money and help increase worker safety and production. Hailey Lindquist, NER senior, noticed that both companies have systems in place that allow for efficient operations while maintaining an employee-centered work environment. “Yes, there are trade jobs, like welders and machine operators, but it is more than that. There are office workers, shipping and receiving, sales and marketing people are needed to make everything successful,” said Lindquist.

“Now that we have completed the research and planning phase, we are ready to get into the studio and start working on our video,” said Chelsey Nelmark, NER junior.



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Call 211 for immediate assistance or visit [211.org](https://211.org) for more info.

2-1-1

United Way of  
Northeastern MN

United Way



Razor Edge Systems

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# NER COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS ‘BE MY GHOST’



In December, Northeast Range Community Theatre presented "Be My Ghost" by Tim Kelly. It was deemed a smashing success! The actors were tremendous and the dedication, love, and energy were amazing. Director Mr. Joe said, "I am so proud of every single one of you. Keep striving for greatness because greatness is in you."

**Volunteers in Education (VinE)** is excited to work with the St. Louis County Schools during the 2023-2024 school year! VinE is a nonprofit organization that recruits community volunteer tutors and pairs them with students in ISD 2142.

**VinE is grateful** to the many volunteer tutors who support students in the North Woods (Cook), NE Range (Babbitt), Tower-Soudan (Tower), Mt. Iron-Buhl (Mt. Iron), and Cherry (Cherry) Schools.

**Please consider joining the VinE team** of tutors! To volunteer, go to "[www.vine-mn.org/get\\_involved](http://www.vine-mn.org/get_involved)" today!

## ECFE – Early Childhood Family Education

Classes are offered at all of our schools for children infants to kindergarten entrance and their parents.

Classes include a time for parents and children to do activities together and a time apart when parents meet with other parents, and children remain with the teacher and play. This program builds independence, language skills, and group interaction skills. It is a great way to meet families with young children in your community!  
Immunizations must be current to attend classes.

Special events are provided for families in their local school communities for parents with young children. We would love to see you there!



School	Staff	email
Cherry	Lori Udovich, Parent Educator Alyssa Hughes, Child Educator	<a href="mailto:ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us">ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a> <a href="mailto:ahughes@isd2142.k12.mn.us">ahughes@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a>
North Woods	Lori Udovich, Parent Educator Tara Flatley, Child Educator	<a href="mailto:ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us">ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a> <a href="mailto:tflatley@isd2142.k12.mn.us">tflatley@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a>
Northeast Range	Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator Andrea Trembath, Child Educator	<a href="mailto:shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us">shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a> <a href="mailto:atrembath@isd2142.k12.mn.us">atrembath@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a>
South Ridge	Heather Krohn, Child Educator Sara Lorbiecki-Brown, Parent Educator	<a href="mailto:hkrohn@isd2142.k12.mn.us">hkrohn@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a> <a href="mailto:slorbieckibrown@isd2142.k12.mn.us">slorbieckibrown@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a>
Tower-Soudan	Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator Mary Larson, Child Educator	<a href="mailto:shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us">shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a> <a href="mailto:mlarson@isd2142.k12.mn.us">mlarson@isd2142.k12.mn.us</a>

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## Cherry School's Roaring Readers

Several students recently earned their spot on Cherry's "Reading Wall of Fame." They had to reach the milestone of 40 AR points or 900 minutes. These students earned this during September, October, and November:

Dalton Pew (K), Emma Talo (K), Kylie Stern (K), Chloe Robich (K), James Butler (K), Joe Besemann (K), Russell Bentley (K), Spencer Udovich (K), Sunny Clifton (K), Lila Jacobson (1), Nolan Darr (1), Timmy Manzoline (1), Vivian Halley (1), Lottie Tuominen (1), Emersyn Galbreath (1), Bianka Kick (1), Grayson Thumey (1), Avery Mayre (1), Finn Jalonen (1), Aili Adkisson (1), Ayla Kimmes (1), Kaiya Collier (2), Ava Gillum (2), Abigail Raich (2), Kaden Adkisson (3), Charlie Peterson (3), Michael Perpruner (3), Zoey Biles (3), Mia Heitzman (4), Annelise Alesch (4), Louie Courteau (4), Lydia Cossalter (4), Eden Besemann (6), Agacia Majerle (6), Kailee Pink (6), LeRay Cormier (6), Simon Johnson (6).

Congratulations to all of the Roaring Readers!

## Hydroponic Towers at NER

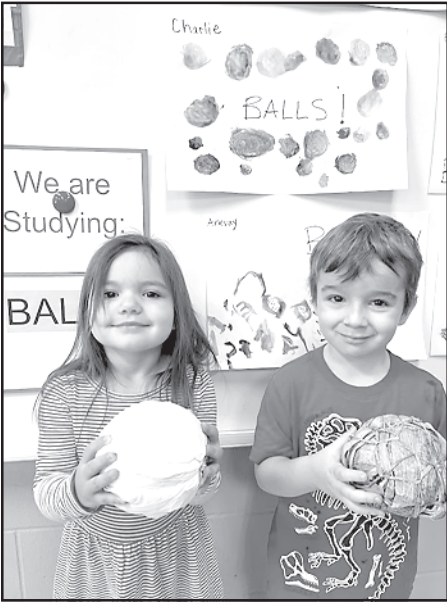


Northeast Range Elementary School has been in the process of developing an agriculture curriculum for all elementary students to learn where their food comes from. In addition to special “Ag Wednesdays” where students learn one type of crop each month in the areas of science, math, reading and sensory stations, the school has been able to purchase a hydroponic tower where students have been able to watch lettuce grow in a water/nutrient me-

dium. The lettuce was sampled by Mrs. Mackai’s STEM classes where it was deemed “really good!” Two more towers and possibly more will be purchased in the near future and the lettuce grown will be served in the cafeteria for lunchtimes.



## NW PRESCHOOL



North Woods preschool students investigated all things BALLS this fall. They learned how Ugandan children make balls to play with. The ball on the left is made from kaveere (plastic grocery bags) and the ball on the right is made from banana tree fibers which come from the trunk of the banana tree.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

Early Childhood Screening is provided by the school district **free** of charge and is required for entrance into Preschool and Kindergarten. Screening offers a snapshot of your child’s health and development and it is recommended that children be screened around age 3-1/2.

If you are not on our Early Childhood mailing list, please contact us so we can add you and your child to the list so that you receive all information related to screening. We need: child’s legal name (first, middle, last), child’s birthday, address, parents’ legal names, phone numbers and email



addresses. You can call 1-218-749-8130 ex 1116 to leave your information on the voice mail for DaNeil or you can email the information to [dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us](mailto:dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us) or you can contact your school office.

As always, if you have concerns about your child’s behavior or development, please contact DaNeil or any of the Early Childhood teachers at your local school. We are here to help!

## Help us build our Early Childhood Mailing List!

Do you have a child under the age of 5? If so, we would like to add you to our Early Childhood mailing list.

Please call or email  
DaNeil at 218-749-8130 or  
[dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us](mailto:dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us).

Or you can contact your school Early Childhood team and ask them to add you to the Early Childhood mailing list. We need: child’s legal name (first, middle, last), child’s birthday, address, parents’ legal names, phone numbers and email addresses.

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# CHERRY PRESCHOOLERS EXPLORE THE SCHOOL FOREST



Cherry preschoolers took advantage of the warm December temps and explored the School Forest. They enjoyed seeing all of the animal tracks, hearing squirrels, and most of the various shelters made by older Cherry School students.

# Cherry Pre-schoolers Are Learning About Pets



Pre-schoolers in Ms. Deb's class at Cherry School have been studying pets. The class recently went on a field trip to the Range Regional Animal Rescue Shelter. Students learned about caring for pets and how to approach pets that do not belong to them. They also gave donations to the shelter.

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