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# Alpine MOUNTAINEER



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BRINGING OUR MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER SINCE 1985

December 26, 2024

CEDARPINES PARK • VALLEY OF ENCHANTMENT • CRESTLINE • TWIN PEAKS • RIMFOREST • AGUA FRIA • BLUE JAY • DEER LODGE PARK • LAKE ARROWHEAD • CEDAR GLEN • SKYFOREST • RUNNING SPRINGS • ARROWBEAR • GREEN VALLEY LAKE



Members of the Rim Ed board presented checks to the schools' principals representing their Partnership with Schools awards and AVID contributions. (Photos by Mary-Justine Lanyon)

## RIM OF THE WORLD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

### School district accepts a windfall of donations

By **MARY-JUSTINE LANYON**  
Editor

\$46,998.27

That is the total amount of donations made to the Rim of the World Unified School District at the Dec. 18 meeting of the board of trustees.

The Rim of the World Educational Foundation made presentations to all six campuses, first donating what they call Partnership with Schools awards, based on applications submitted by the schools:

- Charles Hoffman Elementary - \$2,551.90
- Lake Arrowhead Elementary - \$3,641.87
- Valley of Enchantment Elementary - \$4,740.48
- Rim Virtual Academy - \$631.49
- Mountain High School - \$500.00
- Rim of the World High School - \$7,932.53

Mary Putnam Henck Intermediate School had received an award of \$5,060.55 at a previous school board meeting. The amount each school receives is based on the number of students enrolled at that site.

Rim Ed also made its annual donations to the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program: \$20,000 to Rim High and \$5,000 to MPH.

President Jo Bonita Rains shared with the trustees that, since 2010, Rim Ed has donated to the district and the programs the Foundation supports approximately \$750,000. That money comes from fundraisers like Rim Ed's annual gala, Giving Tuesday and grant funds received.

"San Manuel Band of Mission Indians started out donating \$500," Rains said. "We nudged them a bit. This year they donated \$25,000 for two years."

Burrtec has also become a major donor. "The vice president attended our gala two year ago when we have students from AVID and the CTE classes speak. At the last gala he had tears running down his cheeks. He saw the students reflecting his aspirations back in the day. He donated both company and personal money."

Rains also noted she had received a call from Amazon, asking if Rim Ed would be interested in having them donate \$5,000. "I thought it was a hoax," she said. But Amazon has donated \$5,000 twice to Rim Ed.

"We also get support from the district employees through payroll deductions," Rains added. "We really value that support."

Those presentations were followed by a \$2,000 donation from Murphey Arts and Charitable Entertainment (MACE) to the district's theater program. "We promote and raise funds for youth performing arts," Matt Murphey told the trustees.

Prior to moving to the mountain, the Murpheys had started Wraith House, a haunted house experience. "We started it in 2017 as a way to entertain neighbors," Matt said. Then in 2021 they converted it to a fundraiser for local schools down the hill.

The Murpheys had had a home on the mountain since 2012 and moved here fulltime last June.

"Our kids and their friends have a real passion for theater," Matt said. "We have seen the benefits Wraith House has brought. The kids work on it from the beginning – planning how it will look, building the sets and creating the props."

Meghan Murphey added that Dave Bennett and his crew helped build sets. "We hope to get the school more involved," she said. "It's a great opportunity for the kids to learn things they wouldn't learn otherwise. Theater brings a home to people to otherwise don't feel they fit in. We were the home everyone loved to come to. It's a chance for the kids to get out of their shells."

#### Governing board comments

There will be a more comprehensive report on the California School Boards Association (CSBA) convention in January but Trustee Bill Mellinger shared that there are "concerns across the state regarding psychological needs and mental wellness." He also said that "our kids are not reading at grade level. We need to look at what we do across the board to improve."

Trustee Jordan Zarate, who served as president this past year, congratulated Jordana Ridland on being elected president for the coming year. "I think we had a lot of great accomplishments this past year," he said. "We saw improvements in test scores across the district – we outpaced the county and the state."

Trustee Cindy Gardner noted there is a study of going from ADA-based funding to enrollment-based funding. "Our pot of money stays the same," she said. "When you change a formula, there will be winners and losers. We're already not in a winning section. We want to make sure any change doesn't have restrictions. We want true local control; we don't want to be forced into a mandate."

"Scores are up, the bond passed, morale is up," Trustee Scott Craft, the new clerk of the board, said. He



Meghan and Matt Murphey presented the school district with a \$2,000 donation.

urged parents and guardians to get their students involved after the winter break – in band, in sports. "Those are the best ways to make connections," he said.

"There is so much positive from the last year," President Jordana Ridland said. "We started the school year with the same principals who ended the previous school year. That is fantastic for stability. We see increasing community involvement and more opportunities for collaboration – that is making a huge impact."

"It is fantastic the bond passed but even more so that the community provided that level of support and love to the school district. That affirmation is incredibly important. Your money will be spent for the betterment of the district."

*Editor's note: The presentation by Principal Megan Dieli on Charles Hoffman Elementary School will be covered in next week's issue.*