

Walking the Walk

Last week we had Friday Enrichment's first "holistic" provider meeting. I sat around the table with 13 providers who give their hearts, souls, and an abundance of energy to this community, and for that, I am thankful! We discussed what is working for Friday Enrichment, and what is not working. We talked about how we can better work together, and what activities need to be "separate". We talked about the challenges of scheduling, and the abundance of excellent opportunities that are being offered. We pondered how we can better communicate about programming. The common goal....children. Every single person at that table wants to positively impact the children of the Salida community. These are individuals, non-profits, private businesses, government entities....and I know that everybody at that table gives a lot more than they get credit for. They are very special and appreciated educators in our community, allowing our children to flourish, through creative approaches, supplementing the already fine education that the children are receiving.

At times, despite the issues that the state of Colorado has with educational funding, I feel like the state and the district gave our children a gift. I know that this may sound peculiar to some, but I wonder if our children would have these same opportunities if we were still on a five-day school week. Some of the offerings that our children have been able to take advantage of include Stream Explorers, GIS class, robotics class with Longfellow Elementary, tumbling, bike club, Kahn Academy, ZUMBA, Rowdy at Riverside, Geospatial Exploration, robotics, fiber arts, farming, ballet, jazz, chess, circus, biking, skiing, music instruction, and the list keeps going! Thank you to our providers who are constantly giving their all to make Friday Enrichment more cohesive, more educational, and more fun! You make our children's experience even more well-rounded!

Challenges still exist in the four-day week model. We need to look more in depth at what more we can create for our five year olds. We need to look at activities for target age groups, while ensuring that there is not one certain age group being left out. We are always trying to figure out how to boost enrollment of various opportunities. Community, you have been patient and understanding. Thank you for making sacrifices and for embracing what was brought to our community. We hope that your children are taking advantage of safe, educational, and exciting programs throughout the year.

We would not be able to promote these programs like we do, or offer some of these programs, without the generous help of High Country Bank. For the second year in a row, HCB has made a significant donation to Friday Enrichment, allowing us to promote and provide to the families in our community. Their funding has also allowed the Youth Scholarship Fund to grow, creating opportunities for participation for more children. You have heard this before, but you can never say thank you enough, thank you High Country Bank for always giving back. Your local staff always welcomes the community with open arms, and you encourage them to pay it forward. Thank you for being models, and for "walking the walk".

To see the latest Friday Enrichment happenings please visit www.salidarec.com/fridays. Check back often, as programs are constantly changing! Wishing you a very Happy Thanksgiving!