

Birdhouse Project – McKenzie Lake School as described by Grade 3 teacher



The Grade 3 students at McKenzie Lake School set out on an Entrepreneurial Adventure. This was a program offered by the Learning Partnership under the sponsorship of BMO. The students were engaged in a study of the mountain bluebird and the loss of its habitat due to the encroaching city on their territory and unnatural enemies that have been introduced to the area. The students were involved in all aspects of the business venture, including securing a bank loan, approaching parent council for monetary assistance, keeping financial records, writing receipts and other related business activities. They also wrote letters to construction companies and home supply stores to collect donations of wood, paint, brushes, nails and all supplies needed.

Under the direction of Andrew Stiles, a local expert on bluebirds, each of the 117 students built, painted and decorated a bluebird house according to set specifications. The birdhouses were then sold at a Silent Auction at the McKenzie Lake School. As well, 120 birdhouse kits were assembled by the students and sold for people to complete at home. The final profit was \$3486.75.



As the aim of the project was for all money to be donated to charity, each of the five classes selected their own organization such as the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, The World Wildlife Fund, UNICEF and Inn From the Cold to receive close to \$700.00. While 2 classes of students experienced the Open Minds Program at Cross Conservation Area, they donated and erected 2 birdhouses that had been made to replace old, damaged ones. This project made many wonderful connections to curriculum as it integrated Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Math and Art. It gave our students a true sense of what it meant to be a global citizen and will have life-long impact on them. As an added bonus for all of their hard work the students received 1 of 10



national awards given by BMO. Their award of a plaque and \$500.00 was won in the category of "Enterprising Spirit" for the way they worked together in aid of an environmental cause. The students were very proud of themselves and the work they had accomplished and were thrilled with the final outcome.

On Wednesday, May 21, 2008 some of our Grade 3 students went downtown to the Bank of Montreal and saw the projects that 18 other schools in Calgary had done. At the showcase some awards were given out. There are only 10 awards given out in the whole country of Canada and our Birdhouse Company won one of them. The award was called Enterprising Spirit for the way we worked together, organized our donations and built birdhouses to help save the endangered mountain bluebird. We won a plaque and \$500.

