

Family Maker Space Felicita 2016

It is the end of the school year and 4th & 5th graders and families at Felicita are making and innovating. We have watched as communication, confidence, ability, perseverance and patience have grown as result of our Family Maker Space Nights. Every Rotary dollar donated to support this program will keep this gain train rolling, as we have just been up and running since March 2016.

We have many educational challenges, from a high number of English Language Learners to students who's parents work two and three jobs to make ends meet. These challenges impact family time for communication and fun. Many of our students live in poverty, in a rough area of town and our school offers a safe place where they can belong. Our families are hard working and kind people with a strong sense of community, but few opportunities to problem solve, create and enjoy time together. With your help, we have been able to provide them a 21st-century educational opportunity that both connects families and empowers them to be able to go out into the world with more confidence to innovate and connect, bolstered by skills learned and practiced during our Family Maker Space Nights. The kinds of individual and collaborative capacities cultivated through our Rotary Funded Family Maker Night Project includes (a) elaborating, refining, analyzing, and evaluating ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts; (b) developing, implementing, and communicating new ideas to others effectively; (c) being open and responsive to different perspectives; and (d) viewing failure as an opportunity to learn; understanding that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.

Fourth and fifth grade students and families were selected and invited to attend Family Maker Nights if they had needed extra social-emotional, behavioral and/or academic support during the school day. Twenty-five invitations have been offered. Family Maker Nights have included a range of 5-9 students with an adult. Each night family teams are given a Maker Space Challenge. After an introduction to the challenge, our students and their family members or an invited teacher or community member works with the students start the planning, creating and building process. It is a joyful thing to see.

As President Obama stated in his remarks on the Educate to Innovate campaign, "I want us all to think about new and creative ways to engage young people in science and engineering, whether it's science festivals, robotics competitions, fairs that encourage young people to create and build and invent— to be makers of things, not just consumers of things" (Obama, 2009).

We are so grateful for your generosity toward making this opportunity a reality.

A picture is worth a thousand words.

