foundation for dubuque public schools response to the COVID-19 crisis

Thanks to the support of generous donors, the Foundation for Dubuque Public Schools was able to step up during these unprecedented times, giving hope to students and families in the district through several projects.

With the quick transition from in-person to remote learning, the Dubuque Community School District felt the responsibility to help all students access the internet. The Foundation applied for an emergency grant through the Morgridge Family Foundation and was able to supply the district with funding to offset the cost of mobile hot spots, allowing students the opportunity to continue their learning online.

Our Student Support Foundations (SSF) at Dubuque Senior and Hempstead recognized a need to support families with bags of essential items. The SSF receives funding from The Morgridge Foundation annually and students make grants to projects and programs in their school community. Students worked with the Asbury Hy-Vee and received items at cost to distribute to families, along with notes of hope. Thanks to these efforts, 50 Dubuque Senior and Hempstead families received bags of food, cleaning, and hygiene items to help them through these difficult times.

With students not being able to attend in-person classes, Andy and Debi Butler and Ed and Susan Butler Ritts provided funding to purchase literacy books and educational activities, along with outdoor activities, that were distributed at two school district meal sites. Families were thrilled to receive these items that brought a much-needed bright spot to their daily routines. The smiles we saw while distributing books, bubbles, and sidewalk chalk were priceless.

As we look toward students returning to school buildings, we aren’t sure what immediate needs the district might encounter. As we look toward students returning to school buildings, we aren’t sure what immediate needs the district might encounter. The Foundation will work closely with the district to meet those needs and continue to enhance the education of the students in the public schools. We will be updating our website and sending out eblasts with funding needs as they arise. If you would like to respond to these needs, donations can be completed on our website – or please feel free to contact Amy Unmacht at 563-588-2700 or amyu@dbqfoundation.org.

Please allocate my gift to:

[ ] FDPS Operating Fund
[ ] FDPS Endowment
[ ] Fund Name

(LEAF, Cress, etc.)

Donate online at www.dbqfoundation.org/FDPS
It seems cliché now to say that we are living in unprecedented times. Since mid-March, we have seen the world around us transform. In the midst of that change, we have also seen public schools rise to the challenge of supporting students and families.

Public schools are at the bedrock of our community, and we are thankful for the great collaboration between the district, the Foundation for Dubuque Public Schools and our community partners to break down barriers and provide equitable resources to all.

STUDENT FOOD RESOURCES
At the onset of school closures in Iowa, and knowing food access for families can be limited, the district immediately began mobilizing community meal sites. Since March, these sites have served almost 111,000 meals (and almost 100,000 when combined with community partners) with services continuing through the summer.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY
Technology and the internet are critical to students and families, yet many in our community are without adequate access. While this equity issue cannot be addressed by the district alone, we have taken significant steps to reduce this barrier.

In addition to 3,300 district-issued computers in use by each of our high school students, we deployed over 490 laptops to middle school students without an adequate computer and purchased over 350 internet hotspots for families without internet access. The district also purchased and installed outdoor wireless access points at all 19 school buildings to provide free internet access in district parking lots.

To prepare for next year, the district is purchasing 1,900 additional tablets and laptops to support elementary instruction and be available for deployment should another school disruption occur.

TRANSLATION SERVICES
Many languages are represented across our community, and to address this potential communication barrier, the district has provided all of its updates and some educational resources in Marshallese and Spanish, or see our Spanish-English glossary. In 12 other languages is available upon request, and interpreters have been reaching out to English Language Learner families to enhance communication during this time.

LOOKING TO NEXT YEAR
The safety of our students and staff is at the forefront of our work. We continue to review best practices and recommendations from federal, state and local health officials regarding health and safety protocols for welcoming students back to school.

It is still too early to know exactly what the beginning of the school year will look like, but we do know the district will be prepared to provide required, continuous learning should another disruption occur. As a district, we will develop a model that makes available three required, continuous learning should another disruption occur. As a district, we will develop a model that makes available three required, continuous learning should another disruption occur. As a district, we will develop a model that makes available three required, continuous learning should another disruption occur.

Regardless of what the beginning of next school year looks like, we are prepared to welcome students, address learning gaps that occurred during the extended closure, and support students’ transition back to school.

As always, we will do it by putting student first – because, as public schools, that’s what we do!