



## News release

Jan. 23, 2020

### Cascade High School 'creatures' visit Emerson Elementary!

*High school students create stuffed 'creatures' for elementary buddies*



*The friendly creature sits comfortably between Emerson student Josiah Hyllengren and Cascade student Jordon Harris. Both buddies beaming with pride and joy.*

The *Creature Collaboration Project*, brainchild of Jennifer Himstedt, English teacher at Cascade High School, began last summer with lots of coordination. Her senior students were studying *Frankenstein* while Emerson Elementary first-grade students were reading from a selection of books with creatures. All students were involved with reading, writing, reflecting and classroom discussions around their texts and Himstedt set out to connect the older and younger students through a shared experience.

The project began with Himstedt's students putting their crafting skills to use by sewing creatures from a kit. Pictures of the creatures were

provided to the first-grade students to help inspire them while they wrote a creature story of their own. The high school "buddies" then visited Emerson and gave the creatures to the first graders. The buddies used their district laptop devices to take selfies and record videos of the Emerson students reading their creature stories aloud.

"The first graders were so proud of the stories they wrote, and the high schoolers really honored their hard work," shared Maggie Doud, teacher librarian at Emerson. "I overheard one high school student saying, 'You wrote a really good story.' You should have seen that first grader beaming!"

Cascade senior Alejandro Garcia-Guzman shared, "Interacting with the kids on a personal level was awesome." Senior Edward Loing noted, "It was great building bonds and inspiring the younger generation." "It was cool to be able to relate and remember being their age," added Tekhia Jones, also a senior.

"The Emerson/Cascade creature story project warmed my heart," shared Dr. Sally Lancaster, regional superintendent. "Love the smiles!"

Instructional Tech Facilitator Jennifer Russell was inspired by the, "amazing collaboration that included reading, writing, discussion, creating video posts and even a little sewing!"

Himstedt noted, "It was a ton of work to prepare, but seeing the photos and hearing my students' experiences with the whole thing from start to finish made it all worth it. I have to say thank you to the Cascade Bruin Community Parents as well for providing the funds and Cascade High Teacher Librarian, Amalia Pimenta for all the help as well!"

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**For more information:**

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