

Dudley tops \$2,200 mark for Sun Theatre improvements

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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If you think kids these days are self absorbed in playing video games and texting friends, think again.

Many from Dudley Elementary are ridding yards of walnuts, stepping up household chores and thinking of other ways to raise money for a digital projector for the Sun Theatre.

A band of sixth-grade girls circled Lake Helen several times Saturday to raise money while a fifth grader asked for donations for the projector instead of birthday presents.

Since the elementary kicked off a "Dimes for Digital" campaign two weeks ago, students have raised \$2,217.

The realization that Gothenburg will lose its only theatre, without a digital projector, is the driving force behind the campaign, according to a handful of fifth graders.

All new movie releases will become digital in a couple of years and the 35-millimeter film the theater uses now will become obsolete.

TOTALS	
Money raised by each Dudley Elementary class since Friday, Oct. 14.	
Kindergarten.....	\$160.10
First grade.....	\$298.47
Second grade.....	\$318.45
Third grade.....	\$316.93
Fourth grade.....	\$288.06
Fifth grade.....	\$562.15
Sixth grade.....	\$582.40
Total.....	\$2,217.46

The Gothenburg Community Playhouse is hoping to raise at least \$100,000 to buy a projector and drop-down screen.

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Music teacher Ernie Blecha, who is also a playhouse board member, suggested the campaign at Dudley so youngsters could take ownership in the project.

The class that raises the most money will be treated to a free movie with popcorn and pop.

Several fifth graders were interviewed about the project.

Lauren Johnson said she's been motivated because "everybody loves watching movies at the theatre."

Johnson noted that Gothenburg's theatre, operated by volunteer help on weekend nights, is the only place to watch movies between North Platte and Kearney.

"I don't like to drive all the way to North Platte to see a movie," Max Jinks said.

Blecha noted that Arnold's theatre recently bought a digital projector with a \$75,000 individual donation.

Ryan Healey asked for donations for the projector, instead of gifts for his birthday, and raised about \$200 he plans to give to the campaign.

"I got the idea from my brother who had done it to raise money for the earthquake victims in Haiti," Healey explained. "I thought it was a good time for the theatre to be getting a new projector so I'd have a good thing to donate to."

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The Sun Theatre has topped the \$2,200 mark for improvements to the building, thanks to the efforts of the young women who make up the group. The group has been working hard to raise money for the theatre, and their efforts have been rewarded with a significant amount of funding. The improvements will include new seating, lighting, and sound equipment, which will greatly enhance the quality of the performances. The group is proud of their achievement and looks forward to continuing their work in the future.