



GIVING feels good

Whether they help coach skiing, work with the Wood River Land Trust or Environmental Resource Center to clean or clear trails, assist artists and vendors at the Ketchum Arts Festival, or walk shelter dogs, Community School students are a formidable volunteer presence in the Wood River Valley. From canned food and coat drives spearheaded by the youngest Cutthroats, to the 207 Middle and Upper School students who performed a cumulative 5,300 hours of service during the 2011-2012 school year, it is clear that the school is serious about helping to make a difference beyond the confines of campus.

Community service has always been a pillar of the school's mission, and an exciting new countywide initiative, aptly called WOW, will expand upon Community School's existing program. The WOW Foundation, under the leadership of Morley Golden and Community School parent Louise Stumph, has raised funds to promote philanthropy and generosity by students. Through this program, each budding benefactor—every student in the Wood River Valley—will be given \$25 to support a local nonprofit (or “social profit,” as coined by Golden) classified as a 501 © 3. There are dozens of social profits from which to choose.

In order to make each child's donation more impactful, Community School is building upon WOW's commitment with the Generosity Initiative. This new pro-

gram will pool the resources of students in kindergarten through eighth grade, as they collectively partner by class with the social profit of their choice. In this manner, each \$25 donation is multiplied by the number of children in the class.

Time, talent, and treasure are all factored into the Generosity Initiative that will launch in the fall. Elementary and Middle School students will work with faculty and parent volunteers to select their nonprofit and brainstorm appropriate projects. These grade level projects will then be presented to the Upper School. The Generosity Initiative is not a requirement for high school students, but Student Body President, Taylor Figge, thinks many will get involved.

“The Generosity Initiative will launch on Community Service day in the fall and everyone in the Upper School will hear the

projects the kids in kindergarten through eighth grade have chosen,” explained Taylor. “This will help get the older kids excited about the projects and about helping out. They will pick one to support with their \$25 and will also, hopefully, volunteer their time and energy to the project.”

In the spring, all of the year's hard work will be documented in a video created by media teacher Tom Nash, and project presentations will be given to the greater school community.

“The Generosity Initiative, working in conjunction with WOW, will clarify and give purpose and direction to the school's existing mission to involve the kids in meaningful community service,” said Louise. “We are excited to hear the student's ideas and see the impact in the greater Wood River Valley once the ideas are transferred into action. We also are excited to witness how empowering the kids in this way will help them see their community and themselves differently.”

Ninth grader, Olivia Ott, is one of the student leaders of the Generosity Initiative. Already very involved in community service, Olivia is excited about this program. “I think the Generosity Initiative is really worthwhile because it's a great way for students to get involved with community service,” Olivia said. “It will be fun for everyone because they'll be with their friends and will hopefully stay involved in the future if they like their projects.”

These initiatives promise to expose students to what exists outside campus. “I think it will help every student see how important helping others is, and motivate them to start doing community service and helping people on their own,” explained ninth grader Hannah Conn, another student leader of the Generosity Initiative. Expected outcomes include encouraging teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, project-based learning, and helping students discover and hone their interests.

“This is a huge, exciting opportunity for us to advance the community service component of the school,” said Ben Pettit, MS Head and Assistant Head of School. “WOW complements Community School's long-standing goal of 100 percent service participation from all Middle and Upper School students. We have long held that one person can make a big difference, and with the addition of WOW, an entire student body can move mountains.”