

# Tiger Cub News

Delano Elementary School Newsletter



December 2022-January 2023

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## Dates to remember

### December

14.....DQ Night, 5-8 p.m.  
(Goudy and Emmerich)

19..School board mtg., 5:45 p.m.

21.....Two-hour early release

22-31....Winter break, no school

### January

1-2.....Winter break, no school

3.....Classes resume

9.....DES medallion hunt begins

11.....DQ Night, 5-8 p.m.  
(Uselding and Kurth)

16.....MLK Jr. Day, no school

20..End Quarter 2, early release



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and Instagram.

# The magic of music



Two members of the cello quartet “Delphia” played for Delano Elementary students on Thursday, Nov. 3.

By Paul Downer  
Communications Coordinator

Try to think of an instrument most likely to enthrall a group of 7-year-olds, and the cello might not top your list.

But for a pair of hour-long sessions in the Delano Elementary School gym, that’s exactly what happened when the cello quartet “Delphia” visited on Thursday, Nov. 3.

“Many of the students were AMAZED at how well Delphia played the cellos,” said DES music teacher Penny Koets, who arranged for the visit through Minnesota Public Radio’s free Class Notes Concerts program. “Many students commented about how Delphia sometimes played their cellos like a drum. The students also thought it was cool that the

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# Mentorship program begins

By Rachel Schultz  
Principal

Mentoring can help youth as they go through life transitions at home or school. Close, healthy, supportive relationships between mentors and mentees that last for a significant portion of time are central to success.

We have been fortunate to build a partnership with Kids Hope USA and begin a mentorship program within our school.

Our lead facilitators of this program have been Jon Wissink, teacher at Delano



Rachel Schultz

Elementary, and Lona Jose, retired educator and member of a local church. There are a

few other staff and classroom teachers who help initiate the mentor/mentee partnerships, schedule days and times of the visits, set aside space for them, and get them checked in when they arrive.

It’s a group effort that we know will be beneficial. We see the students light up knowing they have some time with someone that is just for them.

I have been so impressed by the organization of Kids Hope and the kindness and dedication of our mentors who Lona

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# Graham, others honored for leadership

By Paul Downer

Communications Coordinator

Each year Delano Public Schools staff members honor a few outstanding individuals with Leadership in Educational Excellence Awards.

On Nov. 2, DES physical education teacher Mollie Graham, DIS social worker Nicole Gohman, DHS language arts teacher Kellie Makela, and 2021-22 Delano Teacher of the Year Ashley Johnson, who teaches English Language Learners, received their awards at the regional award banquet in St. Cloud.

Gohman and Makela will be featured in their respective building newsletters. A full feature about Johnson as the Teacher of the Year is available at <https://bit.ly/TeacheroftheYear22>.

## Mollie Graham

Graham, a fourth-year teacher who began her career in Delano, received multiple nominations for the LEEA honor. Co-workers highlighted her upbeat, organized and creative approach to class time, school events and special projects, and said she is a consistent “speak-up leader.”

“In addition to planning and implementing dynamic learning experiences for her physical education and DAPE students, she also takes on every extra project available to her at the elementary,” said one nomination. “[Last year she] led multiple school-wide events, including our winter medallion hunt and Olympics events, a bicycling unit in PE, a reading carnival, and our upcoming field day and Tiger Dash 5K events. As if that’s not enough, she also puts together spectacular video packages for DES in her free time any time admin.



Delano educators receiving Leadership in Educational Excellence Awards on Nov. 2 included, from left, DIS social worker Nicole Gohman, English Language Learner Instructor Ashley Johnson, DHS language arts teacher Kellie Makela and DES physical educational instructor Mollie Graham.

calls on her. Mollie is a consummate professional who always exhibits excellence and remains tirelessly dedicated to her students and team members.”

Graham said she became a physical education teacher because she wanted to ensure positive experiences for students.

“I love sharing my passion for physical activity and helping others discover enjoyment through their preferred mode of movement,” she said, adding that her favorite aspects of the job include seeing the excitement of students as they enter her class each day.

Another thing Graham has appreciated about her role is “the flexibility to be creative and implement unique units and activities into the curriculum, like building forts in the woods, wheel week, world culture, snowshoeing, and sledding.”

Another nomination said that Graham “brings a room to life.”

“She volunteers for every challenge without hesitation and produces amazing results,” the nomination continued. “Mollie’s dedication to her craft and to this building don’t go unnoticed. She is what we look for in someone who leads with her words and actions.”

For her part, Graham said that she could not have found a better professional home.

“Our elementary school is unlike any other and it is because of our staff, students and families,” she said. “It is an honor to be a part of Delano Elementary School, and I am most grateful for having the opportunity to work alongside our incredible teams of people.”

## Announcements

### Volunteer at our schools

Delano Public Schools welcomes volunteers and appreciates their efforts on behalf of our students.

Registration can be completed at [www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun](http://www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun) and consists of two parts.

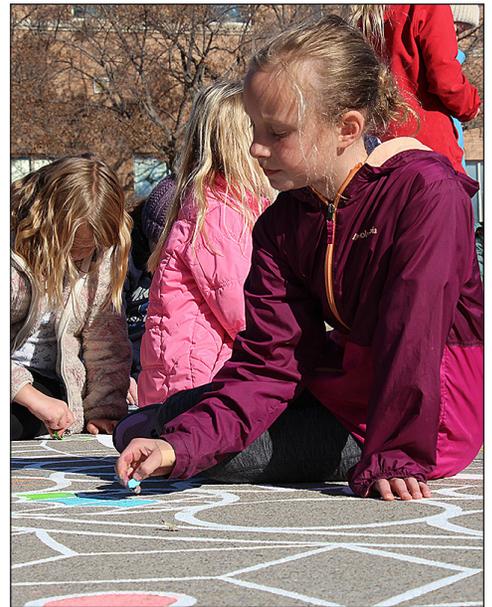
1. Volunteers MUST have a secure background check on file with District 879. The background check is valid for three calendar years and can be accessed via a link on the volunteer page of the district website. The cost of the secure background check is \$12, payable by the volunteer.

2. Volunteers MUST complete -- every school year -- a volunteer application form, which can be accessed and completed at [www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun](http://www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun).

If you have any questions, please contact Wendie Scanlon at 763.972.6200 ext. 1312, or [wendie.scanlon@delanoschools.org](mailto:wendie.scanlon@delanoschools.org).

### End-of-day changes

If you need to change your child’s end of day routine and have forgotten to send a note to school, you will need to contact the school office before 11 a.m. This deadline allows the office to give teachers this information during lunch times so instruction is not interrupted. We understand that emergencies may occur after this time and we will do our best in getting that information to your child. For more information on end-of-day changes and other school procedures, see the Student-Parent Handbook under the Elementary tab on the district website: [www.delano.k12.mn.us](http://www.delano.k12.mn.us).



Delano Elementary School recently added two 'mandala' sites for students to color in during recess time. Their efforts, and the final product near both playgrounds, are shown here.



# PIE partnership boosts school experience

By Paul Ludwig  
Dean of Students

We are often asked by parents and families how they can be more involved with their students' education and Delano Elementary School.

One of the ways DES partners with our families and community is through our DES PIE (Partners In Education) group. DES PIE is made up of parents, teachers and community members who work together for our students.

Throughout the years parents, teachers and our community help raise approximately \$50,000 annually for our students by holding a wide variety of events and fundraisers. Some current events and activities being sponsored by PIE are: Tiger Fun Fair, family fun nights, collecting Box Tops, Target Guest Cards, and DQ Nights, just to name a few.

DES PIE holds one fund-



**Paul Ludwig**

raiser each year, which has traditionally been done in the fall. This year's fundraiser just wrapped up, and again the staff and students had a fun time earning lots of rewards for their efforts. We will be using a portion of the money raised this year to provide materials for classroom teachers, as well as updating the Imaginarium with some new activities.



PIE funds raised by events like the Tiger Fun Fair shown here help enhance many aspects of student experience.

With the funds, PIE has also proudly purchased state-of-the-art technology for every classroom. In addition, these funds have helped provide field trips, books/magazines, school-wide residency programs and much more! In the past couple of years, we were able to help build a collection of books for our elementary school classrooms and purchase new playground equipment. We

recently added two mandala designs for students to color with chalk at recess.

DES PIE meetings occur every third Tuesday of the month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the elementary school library. We encourage you to come and see what PIE is all about! Your thoughts and opinions are

**See Ludwig**  
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Students enjoyed a festive fun run on Friday, Nov. 18, to mark the end of the fundraising period.

# DES Boosterthon surpasses goal

The DES Boosterthon fundraiser was held from Nov. 7-18, and concluded with a fun run on Friday, Nov. 18. The goal for the event was to raise \$50,000, and the final tally surpassed that objective with \$61,000 raised.

“The Fun Run is our main fundraiser to help us purchase items for students and our school that our current budget doesn’t allow for,” said DES Principal Rachel Schultz. “The students love hearing who is

in the lead, watching our ‘goal tracker’ go up, earning classroom rewards, earning prizes for various goals, dress up days, and having the fun run. There is a lot of pride surrounding the fundraiser, and the kids like to earn the prizes, of course.”

This year’s funds will be used primarily to purchase STEM items for the Imaginarium, in addition to providing classroom materials to meet different student needs.



## Ludwig from Page 3

valued! It is also a great way to meet our wonderful elementary staff.

If you haven’t already done so, we recommend that you like Delano Elementary PIE on Facebook. This is a great way to keep up on current events in the entire district, and DES PIE will use this page to send reminders of our monthly meetings and other important announcements.

There are many volunteer opportunities at our school this year. Whether you have just

one hour to spare or many, find out how you can help!

We would like to thank DES PIE for all of their hard work and time over the years. We appreciate the connection and working relationship we have between us, and look forward to many more years of continued partnership for the betterment of our DES students.

If you would like to learn more, please contact Dianne Pohlmann or Becky Barnett (co-PIE presidents), or see the DES PIE website at: <https://www.delano.k12.mn.us/elementary-school/miscellaneous/des-pie/des-pie>.

# Visits to the senior center resume

By Paul Downer  
Communications Coordinator

For the first time since COVID put a multi-year halt to the regular exchange of pleasantries between Delano Elementary School students and longtime area residents at the Delano Senior Center, the connection was restored on Tuesday, Nov. 22.

Charlene Warne's group of third-graders stopped in over the lunch hour to present an "A to Z Thanksgiving Story" complete with illustrated posters. They also shared lunch and conversation, helped with puzzles, and enjoyed a round of trivia with an "Are you smarter than a third-grader?" theme.

"During their conversations they learn about what life was like for senior citizens when they were third-graders," Warne said. "Students learn about the Delano community. It brings joy to both senior citizens and the third-graders."

Prior to COVID's arrival in the spring of 2020, elementary teachers could fill out a sign-up sheet to do one class visit per month, and that has resumed this year. Warne said



Students from Charlene Warne's third-grade class visited the Delano Senior Center on Nov. 22 for the first time since COVID arrived in the spring of 2020.

the visit was educational as well as social.

"Students learn about what a person can do at the community center: attend a school board meeting, city council meeting, vote, or attend Old Fashion Christmas," she said.



# Farm to School highlights local food

Intensity, First Kiss, Zestar and Honeycrisp! Each of these unique, Minnesota-grown apples made an appearance in the Delano schools cafeterias last month, in celebration of National Farm to School Month.

All of the apples were supplied by local growers: Knapton's in Greenfield, Yellow Dog in Delano and Gilchrist Orchard in Buffalo.

Now, as we move into the winter months, school meals will feature hot dogs from local beef producers at Thousand Hills Cattle Company. Watch for these on an upcoming menu!

We have been able to highlight these great local products in our menus thanks to a grant we received from the Minnesota Farm to School program.

Farm to School, run by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, connects students to our regional farmers by serving locally grown foods in school meals and teaching students about local agriculture.

We have applied for additional grant-funding for 2023 and are excited to feature even more locally grown items on future menus. Stay tuned

for more delicious details in the coming months! In the meantime, check out Farm to School in Minnesota to learn more (<https://extension.umn.edu/about-farm-school/farm-school-minnesota>), and be sure to ask your kids what they had for lunch!



## Visit from veterans

Kindergarten students enjoyed a special Veterans Day program on Friday, Nov. 11. They learned about branches of the military, the jobs done in the service, and welcomed family members who have served and are serving. Taryn Marschall (top right), a parent of one of the kindergartners, shared about her experiences serving as a nurse in the Navy.



## ‘Chill Out and Read’ book fair runs through Dec. 9

Delano Elementary School’s 2022 Chill Out and Read Book Fair began Monday, Nov. 28, and continues through Friday, Dec. 9.

The book fair’s website is <https://bit.ly/DESbookfair22>.

Students will fill out wish lists during media time the first week, then the next week come with money to purchase books from the book fair.

There are three ways to purchase books and items from the book fair (we will be charging sales tax this year):

1. Send cash with your student. If you do this, please put it in an envelope with your child’s name and the amount. If they have a wish list or something from the flyer that they



**The DES book fair runs through Friday, Dec. 9.**

want, please include this. If you send a check, please make it out to DES. Students will only have one opportunity to

shop at the Book Fair and that will be during their scheduled media class.

2. Put money into an

eWallet that they can spend at school. This is all virtual so the kids don’t have to worry about losing money. Go to the website listed above to set up an eWallet. If there is any extra money or change left on the eWallet (\$2 or less) we will donate this to the DES Media Center to purchase books. If you do not want us to do this, please contact us.

3. Shop online at the website listed above. The books are purchased online and shipped to you for FREE if you spend more than \$25 in books.

If you have any questions, contact Jennah Verhey at [jennah.verhey@delanoschools.org](mailto:jennah.verhey@delanoschools.org).

# Record DASA scholarships this year

## Student support organization seeking new members

Delano Area Scholarship Association (DASA), formally known as Dollars for Scholars, is a well-established, volunteer-run organization that provides scholarships to Delano High School seniors for post-secondary education.

Since 1986 this group has awarded over \$1 million dollars in scholarships to students that have participated in our program.

The scholarship money is raised through a combination of efforts between student fundraising activities and generous donations from Delano community businesses and private individuals.

This year, a record 69 stu-



**The Delano Area Scholarship Association is seeking new members to help students continue their schooling.**

dents have started the process of qualifying for a scholarship by taking part in our fundraising. Later this spring, each student will complete an application highlighting their school, community and work

activities. Applications will be reviewed anonymously by the DASA committee and awarded scholarships at the DHS Senior Awards event in May.

The Delano Area Scholarship Association commit-

tee (DASA) is comprised of parents, teachers and local residents dedicated to helping students fund their post-secondary education. Many of our current members have served over 15 years with this organization. Due to this longevity, the DASA committee has become a highly successful, well-organized program.

DASA is currently seeking new members from all parents in the district to replace outgoing members and lead this committee into the future. If you are interested in this rewarding and fulfilling opportunity, please contact us at [delano.scholarship@gmail.com](mailto:delano.scholarship@gmail.com).

LUNCH					DECEMBER 2022					Delano Elementary School \$3.50									
Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Hot Dog-from local beef family		Beef Nachos		Macaroni and Cheese		Taco Joe		Polish Sausage		Hamburger		Chicken Chompers		Spaghetti – Meat Sauce		Corn Dog		French Toast Sticks	
A)BBQ Rib Sandwich		Nacho Cheese / Salsa		Steamed Carrots		Tortilla Chips		Mashed Potatoes		Sun Chips		Romaine Lettuce – toppings		Green Beans		Potato Smiles		Sausage Links	
Potato Smiles		Refried Beans		Lettuce Salad		Black Beans		Peas		Corn		Sh Carrots / Tomatoes / Cukes		Lettuce Salad		Baked Beans		Hashbrown	
Baked Beans		Lettuce Salad		Orange Wedges		Salsa		Roll / Pears		Lettuce / Tomatoes / Pickles		Cheddar Goldfish		Lettuce Salad		Baby Carrots		Steamed Broccoli	
Baby Carrots		Fresh Fruit		Orange Wedges		Lettuce Salad		Chocolate Chip Cookie		Fruit Cocktail		Peaches		Lettuce Salad		Rosy Applesauce		Orange Wedges	
Rosy Applesauce						Pears													
12		13		14		8		9		15		16		17		18		19	
20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29	
26		27		28		29		30		31		1		2		3		4	
No School		No School		No School		No School		No School		No School		No School		No School		No School		No School	

This Institute is an equal opportunity provider  
Menu subject to change based on product availability

# Quartet

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cello had the same parts that we have on our body, such as the 'head' and the 'neck.'"

Koets learned about Class Notes Concerts through former DES music teacher Hannah Rosholt, and quickly set about researching the opportunity. MPR offers more than a dozen musical acts that educators can schedule, and after listening to them all Koets selected Delphia.

"I was looking for a group that played music that our students would recognize, that our students would enjoy and that our students would be inspired by," Koets said. "I chose Delphia because of their amazing sound and their great contemporary music selections, as well as their great classical music selections. Delphia opened up their performance for us with 'Chandelier' by Sia. The group started with a solo cellist playing her cello as a percussive instrument. It was such a cool sound!"

Not limited to the classical genre one might expect, Delphia also put their own unique spin on other popular songs like the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," "Forget You" by Bruno Mars and "Zombie" by the Cranberries.



**Delphia members enjoyed interacting with the audience.**



**Four members of the Delphia cello ensemble entertained students with classical and contemporary music on Thursday, Nov. 3.**



**From the opening song to the end of the show, students were engaged with the performance.**

Between numbers, the musicians taught students about the string family of instruments, musical terms, capabilities of their instruments, tone and timbre, and more. They also answered questions about how they started in music at young ages.

"I hope students took away that music playing is a lifelong joy!" said Koets. "You can play instruments forever, even when you are out of school! The cello players shared that they started cello or piano in first grade and have played the cello ever since!"

While elementary students have enjoyed some unique musical visits from opera singers, bucket drumming artists-in-residence and more, this was the first such experience since the onset of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020. The performance was also a new beginning for Delphia, which was performing for a live school audience for the first time since the pandemic began.

Koets said the performance emphasized to students how teamwork and dedicated practice can "make magic happen," and said she hoped that the

experience sparked an interest that could lead students to explore musical possibilities in the future.

"Cool opportunities can happen through just a single conversation," she said. "Who knows? Maybe a student asked their parents for a cello for Christmas, or perhaps they'd like to go see a concert. Inspiration is priceless, and this concert was free. As far as I'm concerned, these kids got a steal of a deal!"



**Students had the chance to ask questions of the musicians.**

# Support staff honored with awards

## Paraprofessionals, bus driver recognized for service

By Paul Downer  
Communications Coordinator

Along with a few valuable co-workers elsewhere in the district, Delano Elementary School special education paraprofessional Barb Kenison was honored with an Educational Support Staff Award on Nov. 16.

Other local winners included DIS paraprofessional Joelle Strandquist, DHS paraprofessional Kim Muckenhirn, and bus driver Janet Berzins. Each individual honoree will be featured in their respective school newsletter.

### Barb Kenison

Kenison has been on staff at Delano Elementary for 15 years. How did she get her start?

“Our youngest son had a medical diagnosis of autism and received services through MAWSECO and Delano Elementary School,” Kenison said. “I was so grateful for the social support, love and learning he received through each staff



**Barb Kenison**

member. Being hired as a para gave me the opportunity to give back to the community and work with these amazing individuals who supported us through our journey. It was a bonus to have the same schedule as our boys so I could enjoy our time off together.”

An anonymous nomination on Kenison’s behalf noted her cheerful disposition and ready laugh that is shared with students on a daily basis.

“She seeks out ways to keep our special education students



**Janet Berzins**

included in their classroom activities,” the nomination said. “She models and supports communication for kids using speech-generating devices. She contributes to our school climate with her work with the social committee, and working on fundraisers that benefit families in our community.”

Kenison said her favorite aspect of the job is the constant interaction with those she serves.

“I love going to work each day and seeing the smiles on

my students’ faces. Working in special education helps you appreciate each small success they have,” she said. “I’m honored to receive this recognition and thank my co-workers who took the time to write these kind words.”

### Janet Berzins

School staff have taken note of Berzins, who drives a special education bus for Delano students and also worked as a paraprofessional for extended school year classes in 2020-21.

“She thoroughly understands what the needs of each of her students are and what things they enjoy,” said an anonymous nomination statement. “She has a kind heart, hard work ethic and truly shows passion for her job.”

Berzins has also driven the bus for Unified Basketball events in recent years.

“She cares for everyone that enters her bus with appropriate accommodations and a positive attitude,” said the nomination.

# Another successful drive to aid vets

The eighth annual clothing drive for veterans was a success.

The effort by school staff and families netted 350 new clothing items, and monetary donations were used to purchase winter boots for 10 female veterans who are undergoing treatment at the Eagles Healing Nest. The boots were purchased at the request of that facility’s director.

“On behalf of Delano Schools, I would like to thank the Delano community and staff for your continued support of our Annual New Clothing Drive,” said drive coordinator Ginny Schuelke. “Thanks to your generosity, we will be supporting male and female veterans undergoing treatment and healing at the Eagles Healing Nest, as well as veterans receiving treatment at the St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA Hospitals. Donations will be delivered over the next two weeks.”



# Join the classroom as a substitute teacher

Delano Public Schools is among many area districts seeking additional assistance from substitute teachers.

Interested, but not sure how to get started? Contact Teachers on Call at 800.713.4439 or see [www.teachersoncall.com](http://www.teachersoncall.com) for information on training and more.

The application process is almost completely online and can be completed in less than one week.

Substitutes do not need to have a teaching license, although substitute roles are available for both licensed and un-licensed roles.

Substitute positions allow you the freedom to choose where, when, and how

much you work. You also enjoy work-free nights, weekends, holidays, summers, and other breaks throughout the school year. There are also opportunities for summer employment.

Substitutes can choose which jobs they take, and are free to explore a variety of districts or only take work from schools on their preference list. They can also choose the grade levels they work.

More information about training, requirements, pay, benefits, frequently asked questions, and more can be found at [www.teachersoncall.com](http://www.teachersoncall.com).

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## Schultz

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has recruited. The communication is frequent and open, with all efforts focused on supporting our mentors and students. Lona was able to share more in the following related article that gives more detail about what Kids Hope USA is and what it provides for students through mentorship.

### About Kids Hope USA By Lona Jose

Kids Hope USA, which is a national mentoring program for elementary children, came to Delano Elementary this fall. Jon Wissink, a Delano Elementary teacher, mentored with this program while he attended college in Michigan where the national offices are located. The benefits he saw children receive from Kids Hope led him to recommend that Delano seek it out.

This mentoring program has been working with children for over 25 years in almost 40 states and has proven to be a life-changing program for chil-

KIDS HOPE USA

WALKING TOGETHER  
Mentoring makes a difference

Visit [kidshopeusa.org/volunteer](http://kidshopeusa.org/volunteer) to learn more

mentor

one child

one hour a week

dren. There are currently four additional Minnesota school districts that are connected with Kids Hope.

When any outside program enters a school there is a process. Kids Hope has a detailed and supportive process to connect students with mentors. A school district teams with one church in the community, and that church recruits mentors who are committed to meet with one child for one hour per week for the school year.

School staff make student referrals (grades K-3 at

Delano); parents are provided details and are asked for their permission for their child to participate. Upon approval, mentor volunteers are matched with one of the children.

Parents are encouraged to meet their child's mentor, ask any questions and share any information about the child that would be helpful for the mentor. The mentor is not a tutor or a counselor but a friend whose primary role is to develop a relationship that will enhance the child's school experience and strengthen their ability and

confidence to learn.

Research from Kids Hope has shown that after a single year of mentoring, 80% of the children improve socially and emotionally and at least 65% improve academically. Weekly sessions will include reading together, creative play, games, drawing and other fun activities. The sessions take place in designated open classrooms in the elementary.

Light of Christ in Delano is the church that is recruiting the elementary's mentors; thus far there are 10 mentors who are very excited to work with the designated children. The background experiences of these 10 mentors will be such an asset in connecting with these children.

These sessions are not at all of a religious nature, but focus on "growing and learning together" and having fun. If you would like more information about Kids Hope, please contact the elementary school. Thank you to the parents who have approved their child's participation. We look forward to giving you updates throughout the school year.



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