BEACON after-school programs ready to enroll K-8 students for fall

August 17, 2017

Now in its 12th year of serving Grand County schools, Moab’s BEACON Afterschool Program is ready to start enrolling students in its fall programs.

BEACON offers a blend of free academic assistance and enrichment programs at three schools within Moab: Helen M. Knight Elementary School, Grand County Middle School and the Moab Charter School.

Registration information will be sent out the first week after school starts on Aug. 17. Registration deadlines are Aug. 23 for HMK and Aug. 25 for Moab Charter School, while Grand County Middle School has open enrollment. The fall programs will begin the day after Labor Day, on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Roughly 60 percent of Grand County's students in grades K-8 participated in BEACON programs this past year, program officials said.

“We just want to emphasize how important this program is and that it's not just for children of working parents,” said BEACON director Edith Sage. “Each day, 150 to 200 children are in BEACON’s care. Without this program, a significant number of these children would be home alone, many unsupervised.”

Program manager Kaitlin Thomas also said that BEACON has been recognized as one of the best rural after-school organizations in Utah.

“We reach out to families, host fun family events and provide educational workshops and information to help our families,” Thomas said.
According to Thomas, 58 percent of parent survey respondents report that BEACON is helping their children learn to work in a team, strengthen communication skills, make new friends and that the program provides positive role models.

Additionally, Thomas said that 75 percent of teachers who responded to the BEACON end-of-year survey at HMK agreed that enrichment programming has had a positive effect on students’ academic achievement.

During the 2016-17 school year, 44 percent of students who were at risk of failure in academic subjects were able to boost their grades in language arts and 43 percent increased grades in math, through BEACON tutoring and support programs, Thomas said.

BEACON’s variety of program offerings include enrichment opportunities in science and technology, arts and humanities, music, dance, recreation, outdoor adventure, environmental education and language and writing development.

Noting that BEACON’s mission is “empowering students to discover their innate ability to succeed,” Thomas said research has shown that quality after-school programs help reduce juvenile crime rates, combat obesity and contribute to the social and emotional well-being of children through life-skills training, friendship and community engagement.

HMK’s fall offerings include tutoring, book club, Garden Explorers, Girl Scouts, newspaper, Survival Club, swimming, astronomy, climbing and a club called “Just Build It.”

The Moab Charter School’s BEACON programs for the fall include tutoring, Day of the Dead celebration, Junior Chefs, mountain biking, Upcycled Art and a STEM-focused club called Fig Newtons.

Grand County Middle School will offer robotics, Mad Science, art workshops, Museum of Moab workshops, mountain biking, Room 20 Hangout and help with homework in the school library.

According to Thomas, BEACON is able to provide unique offerings with the help of community partners that contribute to or host clubs. She also said the organization worked with 55 community partners and 25 volunteers last school year to deliver services to youth, enhance programs and provide family events.

Noted BEACON partners include the Youth Garden Project, Moab City Recreation, Moab Valley Multicultural Center, Moab Gear Trader and several outdoor recreation businesses.

BEACON also has several sponsorship opportunities for local businesses to get involved in their support of the program.
“We are currently running our third annual funding appeal and invite the community to make a gift of any size to support the important work of BEACON,” Sage said.

Contributions may be made online by visiting moabbeacon.net and clicking on the “donate” button, or by mailing a check made out to BEACON Afterschool Program, 264 South 400 East, Moab UT 84532.

For questions on sponsorships or how to be involved and support afterschool programs, contact Sage at 435-259-2767 or Thomas at 435-719w-4717.

ByBy Jeff Richards

The Times-Independent

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