

Supporting Mental Health Needs: Webster Presbyterian

2022 Collaborative Ministries Grant Report

This grant was given to Webster Presbyterian Church to enable us to develop an ongoing partnership with State Road Elementary school in Webster.

Our goal was to enhance, in several ways, the school experience for the school's large number of high-needs children and essentially help equalize the playing field for their most vulnerable students. When the playing field becomes more equal, all children benefit.

The grant money, along with a generous donation by a congregant (given because of the grant to even further our goals), has been used to purchase a two-octave set of Malmark Chimes for the music department at a cost of approximately \$1,900. Additional monies from the donation will cover costs for books to take home for about 40 children who have no books at home.

Reading is fundamental. It is proven that playing music, learning notes on a staff, playing rhythms focusing on parts and the whole is the perfect adjunct to learning to read. Chimes allow larger groups of children to learn and benefit.

Here are responses to specific questions requested by the New Life Committee:

1. Our goal has been to establish an on-going community connection with the State Road Elementary School which serves a low-income area of the Town of Webster.
2. Students and teachers at the State Road School have new music resources and volunteers who have started a reading program for the students.
3. The grant has energized our congregation by enlisting members of our congregation to visit the school weekly as volunteers.
4. Our next steps will be to see if this model can be expanded to other schools in the district with either more members of WPC participating or enlisting help from other churches.
5. I (Tony) saw God in the faces of the three kindergarten children that I read to at the State Road School as part of my becoming a volunteer at the school. I'm sure other volunteers with have the same experience.

Our sincere thanks to the Presbytery for this opportunity to further our community outreach and partnership with the State Road school.

Tony Hubbard, Clerk of Session