

Dakota student completes outdoor classroom at Macomb Twp. school

By Nicole Tuttle For MediaNews Group
Jan 18, 2021

THE MACOMB DAILY



Nate Lyons recently completed an outdoor classroom for Mohawk Elementary School students as his Boy Scouts Eagle Scout project.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREA LOPEZ



Mohawk Elementary School now has an outdoor classroom, built as a Boy Scouts Eagle Scout project by Nate Lyons.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREA LOPEZ

A new and unique classroom will be available for Mohawk Elementary School students returning to in-person learning this week.

If they are not part of the Chippewa Valley Schools Virtual Academy, Chippewa Valley Schools district students are scheduled to move from remote learning to in-person hybrid learning in January.

Middle and high school students are scheduled to return to buildings Jan. 25-26. Elementary level students are scheduled to return to buildings on Jan. 20-21.

Dakota High School senior Nate Lyons, 17, recently completed an outdoor classroom at Mohawk in a sheltered area near a school garden. -

“He thought it would be great if there was an outside classroom space, due to the COVID situation,” Nate’s mother, Sian Lyons, said.

Nate attended Mohawk from about 2008 to 2014. The outdoor classroom project was developed as Nate’s Boy Scouts Troop 349 Eagle Scout project, begun in August and completed in December.

“Nate had to create a plan, present it to me for approval and then present it to the Eagle Scout board to get it approved,” Mohawk Elementary School Principal Andrea Lopez said. “They also had a GoFundMe page so they could get donations for materials.”

Nate said that about \$1,100 was raised through GoFundMe.

“The GoFundMe page was really successful. We earned more money than we thought we were going to,” Nate said.

The project involved clearing the space for the outdoor classroom, organizing supplies, and obtaining appropriate tree stumps. A total of 36 stumps were transported to the school, sanded and painted.

“I made it within COVID guidelines, keeping them six feet apart to the best of my ability. I thought it could help possibly get them (elementary students) back in school and prevent spread,” Nate said.

The project also involved creating a teacher’s desk and bench, installing mulch, obtaining umbrellas for shade and developing a rolling white board. It additionally involved recruiting the assistance of other scouts, family and friends. Nate is currently preparing to present the project for an Eagle Scout board of review, and as of Jan. 11 did not yet have a date set for the review.

Nate’s Eagle Scout project is one of the many ways that the Lyons family has contributed to Mohawk Elementary.

Lyons' oldest child, 19-year-old Jack Lyons, currently attends Western Michigan University who attended grade school at Mohawk. He chose to do his Boy Scouts Troop 349 Eagle Scout project at Mohawk, which was completed in the fall and summer of 2018 to earn him Eagle Scout status. Jack's contribution to Mohawk is a Gaga ball pit, an octagon sided pit, designed for a popular playground game reminiscent of dodge ball. The project involved multiple hours of planning, budgeting, collecting supplies and recruiting the assistance of other scouts.

Bronwyn Lyons, a 16-year-old junior at Dakota High School in Macomb Township, has also contributed to Mohawk Elementary. She was involved in the creation and refurbishment of a garden at the school. While still attending the school Bronwyn assisted in the creation of a garden as part of the school's Green Schools environmental program efforts, then while an Iroquois Middle School student she worked with two other girls to weed, re-plant and update the garden. Refurbishment took about two months, her mother said.