

# C-L-K students thank Calumet Township

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CALUMET TOWNSHIP - The Calumet Township Lions Park doesn't have a slide or a swingset. But C-L-K Elementary School students haven't minded, treating the trails and trees as a learning playground.

"No matter how beautiful the visual aid was for my children, nothing gets them as excited about learning as being right there, touching things, exploring things, smelling things, and just being out, and all the enthusiasm that they show when they're out there," said kindergarten teacher Barb Kinnunen.

Students from the school came to the Calumet Township board's monthly meeting Friday afternoon to update the board on its activities at the park through the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative.

Kinnunen came to the meeting with students Emma Schneiderhan and Caitlyn Strom, as well as Lloyd Wescoat of the LSSI.

Kinnunen's students made three trips to the park in the fall. On one of them, they paired up with second-grade students from Melissa Schneiderhan's class for a half-hour lesson on the five senses.

For the most recent trip, they took the trail all around the lake, where they looked at everything from the frost imprints of a leaf on the ground to coyote scat. The lessons continued in the classroom, where they recollected their experiences in map form.

"I asked them to picture us walking to the park, and they were able to draw the loop around the park, which direction we took, where the bridge was, where we stopped and had our picnic, where we found the snake that was smushed up, where we saw the beaver dam," Kinnunen said. "Seriously. kindergartners doing these incredible map skills. I can't thank you enough."

Kinnunen also thanked Supervisor Paul Lehto for the park's turtle sanctuary, where turtles lay eggs in the sand.

"Those kinds of moments are things that I can't create in the classroom, that would never come up in such a meaningful, authentic way, as we learned that day about why we shouldn't walk on that sand, and why we shouldn't dig in that sand," Kinnunen said.

Lehto said the sanctuary came about after a resident saw a turtle trying to dig a hole in the parking lot gravel to lay its eggs. Soon after, crews deliver a couple truckloads of sand to put near the water.

"It was just a couple days later people saw the turtles out there, digging in the sands to lay their eggs," he said.

After that, the township put up signs noting it as a turtle sanctuary.

Strom helped Kinnunen read a thank-you letter from the class.



From left, C-L-K Elementary kindergarten student Caitlyn Strom, Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative co-coordinator Lloyd Wescoat, teacher Barb Kinnunen and student Emma Schneiderhan talk about Kinnunen's class's trips to the Calumet Township Lions Park in the fall. The group appeared at the township board of trustees' monthly meeting Friday.

"Thank you for the big rocks and stones to climb on," Strom read. "Thank you for the benches where we can sit and rest. Thank you for the picnic tables so that we can have a snack."

Lehto said the Lions Club has a grant to finish the hard-surface trail around the park, and put another bridge by the inlet.

They'll be going out again as soon as the snow melts.

"We'll be out there frequently, because it's a great way to learn," Kinnunen said.

In other action, the board:

discussed a grant for studying the creation of a fire district that could combine the township department with those of Calumet and Laurium. The issue will be taken up next month so the municipalities can draw up an interlocal operating agreement.

approved a resolution granting access to township rights-of-way to Merit Network, Inc., a non-profit building fiberoptic infrastructure for Internet access throughout Michigan to meet educational, governmental, health care and research needs.

approved an in-home business permit for Dr. Jill Kalcich for a Calumet Avenue residence.

agreed to a partial payment to the Houghton County Road Commission for services last fall.

discussed whether the township would continue charging \$25 a hour to the Copper Island Ski Club for the groomer, which was paid off in December.