



Oak Creek School

Oak Creek School builds relationships, connects with community, inspires opportunity, and celebrates success.



11490 Purple Sage, Cornville AZ 86325
Phone: 928-639-5109 Fax: 928-639-5108
~Nayadin Persaud – Principal ~

April 7, 2020

Northern Arizona Healthcare Foundation
Community Grant Review Committee
269 S. Candy Lane
Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Verde Valley Bikes for Kids program. Our school has been fortunate to have the after-school program since 2018 and it has been one of the most popular amongst our students. In the next few paragraphs, I am going to tell you a little bit about my school and why this program is so important to our school community and families.

Oak Creek School (OCS) is located in Cornville, situated adjacent to state land and a 20-minute drive to Cottonwood, Camp Verde and Sedona. The population is 3,280. OCS is one of the four schools in the Cottonwood Oak Creek Elementary School District (COCSD), and is the most remote location in the district. OCS's current enrollment is 265 students, preschool through eighth grade. The school has the only buildings in Cornville large enough to house community events. Our playground serves as a community park and a safe area for families to take their children after school hours and during the weekends.

The community that OSC is a part of has its share of socio-economic challenges. Yavapai County Sheriff deputies regularly patrol the campus due to frequent vandalism and theft. The emergency response time for incidents involving students and families yields waits of over thirty minutes. A school resource officer, only assigned to OSC near the end of the 2019 school year, is shared with three other schools in the area. The school resource officer has been directly involved with arrests (often multiple arrests over time) involving the parents of some students who attend OCS and the officer reports that a disproportionate number of individuals in the community suffer from mental illness and drug/alcohol addiction. Many families live in poverty. The family trauma that results over time from crime, parental arrests, mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction, and poverty have an impact, resulting in multiple academic deficits.

The Verde Valley Bikes for Kids program gives our students an outlet from their traumatic and stressful home lives. On the surface, we see the students having fun and staying healthy. However, if we go a bit deeper, understanding that overall health and wellbeing for young children is the foundation for developing strong communities, the value of the program becomes clear. This program provides the basis for our youngest community members to begin



Oak Creek School

Oak Creek School builds relationships, connects with community, inspires opportunity, and celebrates success.



11490 Purple Sage, Cornville AZ 86325
Phone: 928-639-5109 Fax: 928-639-5108
~Nayadin Persaud – Principal ~

to develop skills, through physical activity and mental focus that promote their overall wellbeing. It helps improve our student's emotional, mental, and social states by encouraging them to stay active and spend time outdoors, often allowing their minds to wander in a carefree way, all while engaging in safe activities.

Our program is run by a group of kind, dedicated, committed volunteer coaches. These coaches dedicate their time, and sometimes even their own money, to help support our students. Often students do not have meaningful, healthy, strong relationships with the adults in their lives. The program provides the student's access to caring adults, who show up every week to share their passion for mountain biking, serving as role models to our most needy students.

The coaches work with the students one-on-one, teaching and assisting them to work with mountain bikes and to begin to develop in them a love of riding. The program provides bicycles and helmets for the students while they participate in the club. The coaches teach them about bike safety, riding techniques, care of the bikes, and riding/trail etiquette. In addition to their weekly commitment, Verde Valley Bikes for Kids donate high quality mountain bikes to students who participate in the program. This year, they are giving away 13 bikes to students in the program. The program also provides free maintenance for bikes given to the students. Lastly, the program participants, along with other local bike programs, gather in Sedona for an annual Community Bike Ride. This event celebrates our mountain biking club students.

Thanks to this generous gift, our students are able to learn new skills, develop healthy relationships with adults, while staying healthy and active, enjoying the outdoors when they are away from school. This is an opportunity they would not have if it were not for this program.

I truly believe this program benefits not only our students, but also children throughout the Verde Valley. We will be very happy to welcome them again for the 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely

Nayadin Persaud
Principal, Oak Creek School
928-639-5109 x6001



Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District
Tradition, Experience, Innovation, and Opportunities



Oak Creek School

*Oak Creek School builds relationships, connects with community, inspires opportunity,
and celebrates success.*

11490 Purple Sage, Cornville AZ 86325
Phone: 928-639-5109 Fax: 928-639-5108
~Nayadin Persaud – Principal ~

