

# Salina Unified School District No. 305

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## Media Release

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## Lessons in Community: Fifth Graders Donate at Match Madness

Four hundred and fifteen fifth graders from Salina Public Schools (SPS) participated in Match Madness - as donors.

"This event is really nice because over 65 organizations are going to receive money," said Jonas Smith, a Cottonwood Elementary student. "This is truly the kindest event I've ever seen."

Ken and Karen Ebert came up with the idea. They approached Jessica Martin, president and executive director at the Greater Salina Community Foundation, with the idea of providing \$10 to every SPS fifth grader to make a donation at Match Madness.



"If we can start our young people believing and understanding philanthropy at this age, it is a great way to help them support charities in Salina," explained Karen Ebert. "The experience of Match Madness was a great way for fifth graders to see for themselves all the good that is being done in the Salina community."

"Our students viewed a video of the nonprofits and their booths and discussed how each one gives in some way to our community," said Krista Linenberger, SPS Director of Elementary Programs and Assessments.



"Students used a booth map to locate the top 10 booths they wanted to visit." At the event, the students identified their top pick on a voting form that represented their \$10 donation.

"Thanks to generous donors in our community, every single fifth grader's donation will be matched up to 50% from a \$300,000 match pool," explained Jessica Martin, president and executive director of the Greater Salina Community Foundation. "Their \$10 donation will be matched with up to \$5, making it a \$15 donation."

"I'm grateful to the Ebert family for this opportunity. It's really cool to learn about all the different organizations here in Salina," said Reagan Cheeks, Coronado Elementary student. Abigail Murray, another fifth grader from Coronado, enjoyed the event saying, "I liked learning about how these organizations help the community." She connected with the Love Chloe Foundation and especially their Monkey in my Chair program. "They give kids with cancer the same experiences that others get to have in school."

The Salina Education Foundation provided funding for the students to be bused to the Salina Fieldhouse where the event was held. "It is so exciting to see the next generation coming out to support the nonprofits in our

community,” added Martin. “This is really what the community foundation is about—bringing everyone together, donations big and small, to make a bigger impact.”

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