

WallowaLife

Teen entrepreneurs plunge into Wallowa Lake

Submitted to The Observer

It was 49 degrees outside and 41 degrees in Wallowa Lake on April 21, a perfect day for a group of 10 teen entrepreneurs from Wallowa County to take the Polar Bear Plunge.

The group jumped into the water as a way to raise money for their upcoming Leadership & Innovation Tour to Seattle — and to symbolize what it takes to become an entrepreneur.

“The willingness to do something bold, slightly crazy and way out of your comfort zone,” said adviser Stacy Green.

The 10 entrepreneurs also donned brightly colored tutus and hats that included a court jester, a policeman, a

top hat and an angry birds stocking cap. Green said the funny outfits not only inspired more pledges from sponsors, but also represent breaking down one of the key barriers to trying something new and taking a risk: the fear of looking foolish.

“Now they’ve actually really looked like fools,” Green said, “and they survived.”

The 10 entrepreneurs have been participating in an out-of-school time program administered by Enterprise-based nonprofit Building Healthy Families and funded by Oregon Community Foundation.

The entrepreneurs meet every other Wednesday evening and take field trips to



Courtesy photo

Going into the water are, from left, Joseph Harshman, Cody Duquette (already in), McKenna Miller, Hayley Riggs, Elsa Steen, David Ribich, Natalie Zeigler, Blu Risseeuw, Kyle Roepke, Damon Greenshields and Nicola Moili.

meet local business owners, in addition to being required to create their own for-profit business. The program is one of three programs under Building Healthy Families Mentor Match initiative that provides tutoring and mentoring to Wallowa County kids in kindergarten

through 12th grade.

The participants in the program are President Elsa Steen, Kyle Roepke, McKenna Miller, Hayley Riggs, David Ribich, Damon Greenshields, Natalie Zeigler, Joseph Harshman, Cody Duquette and Blu Risseeuw.

Through the Polar Bear Plunge, the group raised almost \$1,000 toward their Seattle trip, where they will tour leading American companies such as Microsoft, Nordstrom, Starbucks and REI, and meet with various entrepreneurs.

“The goal of the program,

and of the trip to Seattle, is to introduce them to the idea of being an entrepreneur as a career choice,” Green said. “Then we hope, of course, that they will use that entrepreneur expertise to come back to Wallowa County and open a successful business.”

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS TAKE THE PLUNGE



Ten young entrepreneurs jumped into Wallowa Lake at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 21, as a fundraiser for their upcoming Leadership & Innovation Tour to Seattle. The jump into the 41-degree water on a 49-degree day symbolized what it takes to be an entrepreneur – “the willingness to do something bold, slightly crazy, and way out of your comfort zone,” according to advisor Stacy Green. The funny outfits? “So many people won’t take a risk because they are afraid of looking foolish,” said Green. “Well, now they’ve actually looked foolish, and survived.” The entrepreneurs are participating in Building Healthy Families Mentor Match program, one of three programs funded by Oregon Community Foundation, that provides tutoring and mentoring services for K-12 in Wallowa County. Entrepreneurs, from left, are: Cody Duquette, Kyle Roepke, Joseph Harshman, Natalie Zeigler, Damon Greenshields, Elsa Steen, McKenna Miller, Hayley Riggs, David Ribich, Nicola Moloi, Blu Risseuw. Courtesy photo