



Canadian Rockies School Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2023

Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation donation enriches learning opportunities and supports across CRPS

Canadian Rockies Public Schools (CRPS) is celebrating a generous \$734,000 donation from the Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation for the 2022/23 school year – a gift that will have a major impact on the division's ability to fund mental health initiatives and outdoor learning programs unrivalled in North America.

"Pauw's significant financial support continues to enable CRPS to offer programming that ensures each student thrives physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually," said CRPS' Superintendent of Schools Christopher MacPhee. "As an integral partner in our system, the Pauw Foundation is to be commended for helping our division break down barriers, enrich learning opportunities, and fuel the health and well-being of all students."

2023 marks the 10th year the Pauw Foundation has enhanced student programming and supports in CRPS. Initially funding student programming for Banff students in outdoor pursuits, school athletics and Nature Explorers, in recent years, funding has expanded and benefited all K to 12 CRPS students, driven by four goals related to athletics, outdoor pursuits, outdoor and experiential education, and student wellness and wrap-around supports.

According to MacPhee, CRPS will receive \$90,000 to provide Gr. 7 to 12 students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular athletics and experiential education offerings. At the high school level, the donation will offset student and transportation fees; at the middle school level, the funds significantly subsidize most costs, making athletics accessible to all.

Contributing to the health and well-being of students, Pauw's donation of \$70,000 towards outdoor pursuits will allow each Kindergarten to Gr. 8 class to enjoy four lessons in either swimming, curling, golfing, tennis, hiking, skating, snowshoeing, canoeing, or cross-country/ downhill skiing. An additional \$255,000 will be put towards student wellness and wrap-around supports, enabling the division to hire a new speech and language pathologist and occupational therapist and carry forward the services of a divisional psychologist, a school and family wellness worker, and school counsellors.

Through CRPS's Outdoor Learning Center (OLC), Pauw's donation of \$325,000 for outdoor and experiential education will be used to engage Gr. 9 to 12 students in locally developed courses such as Winter Travel 15, Water Experience 15, and Wilderness First Aid Training. The donation also will afford all K to 8 students the opportunity to access OLC and Nature Explorers programming and allow Gr. 10 students to participate in the OLC's WimWe (Wim & Nancy Pauw Wilderness Experience) program. Through Wim We, students venture out into the Rocky Mountains six times to hike, canoe, snowshoe, and ski and to become certified in Avalanche Safety Training (AST) 1. MacPhee said during the 2021/22 school year, a total of 136 Gr. 10 students were certified in AST 1, making CRPS the only school division in North America to certify students in avalanche skills.

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"We remain a committed funding partner with the school division and are proud to support a 'best-ever' school experience for local students, and especially, to support enhanced and complementary programs with funding, so there is minimal monetary impact to families," said Pauw Foundation Fund Director Cathy Geisler. "I'm personally honoured to work with CRPS on behalf of Wim & Nancy Pauw Foundation, who are so genuinely thrilled to see students across the Valley receiving great education options and experiences. Wim's reinvestment of tourism dollars allows the foundation to work with partners to deliver this magic."

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