

Goals

Harambee received a 2014 MOU Savaloja Grant. This grant was a perfect match for Harambee. We shared the goals of benefiting birds, increasing understanding of birds, and diversification and expansion of the MN birding community. Due to overwhelming interest by teachers and students, we applied for a second grant in 2015. This report is intended to share how the 2015 grant impacted our work. We are a unique magnet school with a diverse population and a desire to use the natural world as a context for learning. We wanted to increase and improve the ways we used birds as an integrating theme. We hoped to use the engaging and motivating topic of birds to connect standards in science, language arts, social studies and math as well as our magnet foci of community cultures and environmental science.

The 2015 grant allowed us to improve our bird study in 3 valuable ways;

1. Resources

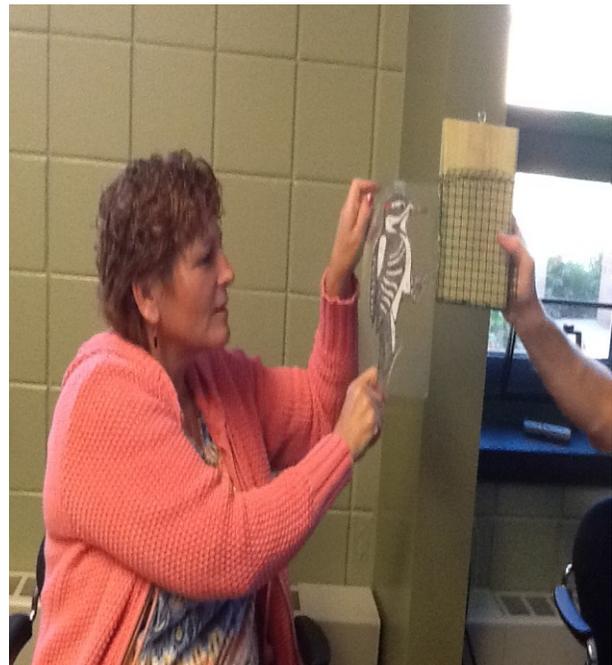
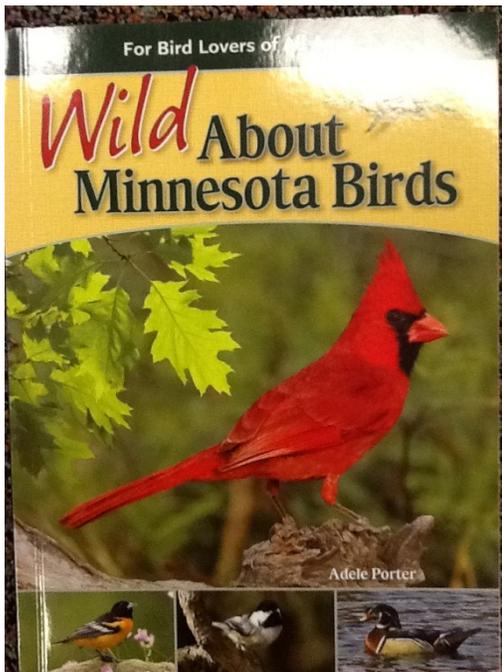
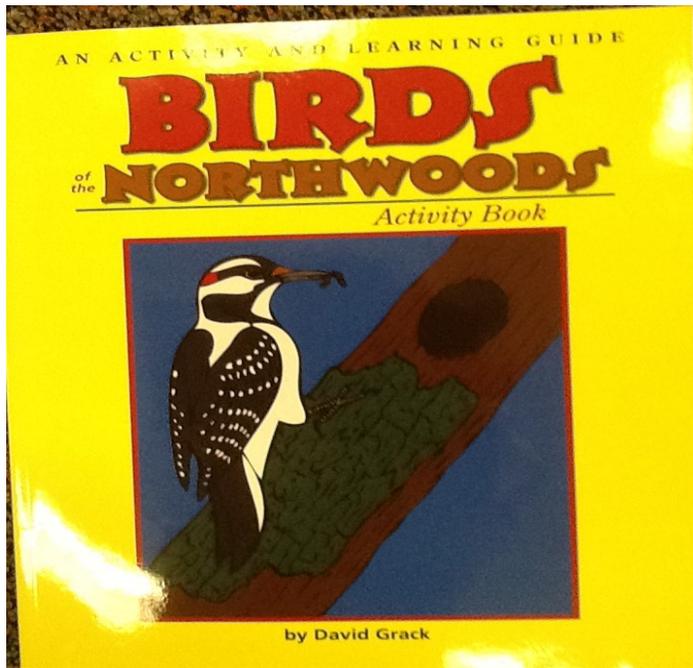
The students in the original grant received individual copies of Birds of the Northwoods Activity guide. This book is designed for students to complete activities and collect information about 50 different bird species. We also included time for the author of the book to visit classrooms, talk to the students about the book and birding as well as take them outside to look for good bird habitat in the Harambee backyard. The students kept these books as they moved into 3rd grade and the teachers continued to make bird study an integral part of their curriculum. The 2015 grant allowed us to purchase the same book for the next group of 2nd grade students and provide the same experience with the author. Now those students will be part of a 2 year cycle with the bird study. We also purchased WILD About Minnesota Birds by Adele Porter as a teacher resource guide for each of the incoming 2nd grade teachers. Having this quality resource increased the chances that teachers would incorporate the bird study into their curriculum.

2. Training

David Grack, the author of the activity guide returned to work with both 2nd and 3rd grade students and teachers. David worked with Jenny to plan a session that was individualized for the team and connected to the other elements of the each grade level's curriculum. David showed the teachers ideas for using the binoculars and field guides with students and took groups of kids out to try birding with binoculars for themselves.

Meeting and Planning

3. Finally, the grant included time for the classroom teachers to meet with Jenny for planning and curriculum writing. At 2nd grade, we were able to use the experiences of the previous year's teachers as a guide and make changes based on what worked (and didn't work) in the prior year. For 3rd grade, we worked to extend what began in year 1. This element is critical to the success of the bird study. With pressure on teachers to meet standards and follow district mandated curriculum, we needed to insure that the bird study was an integrated component and not an "add on".

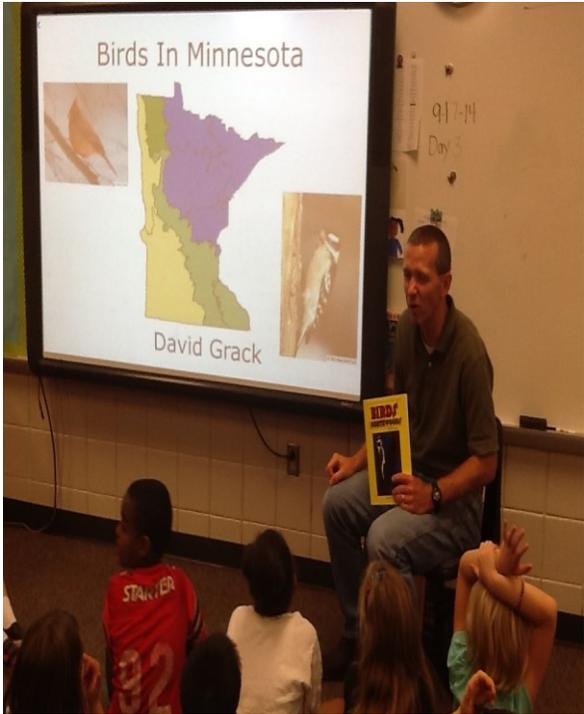


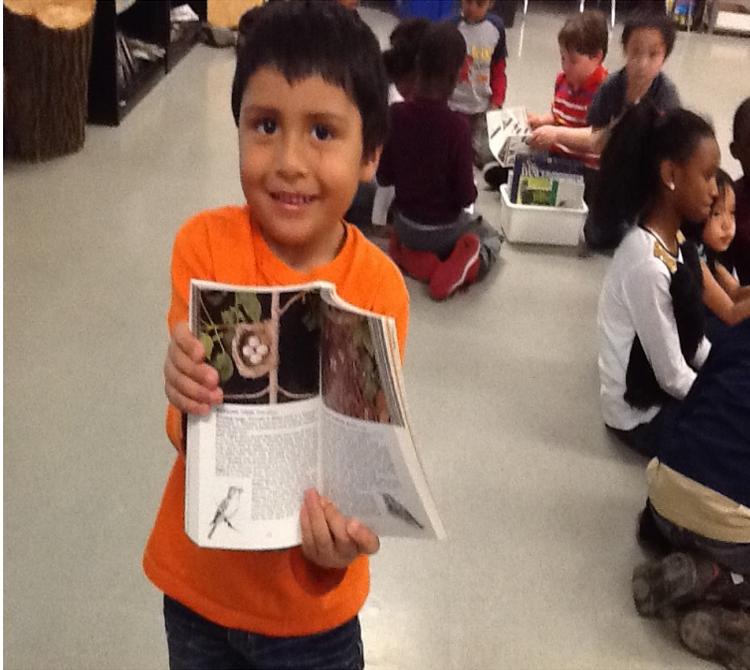
Great Resources

Teacher as learner too!

Outcomes

The second year of the Harambee Beginning Birders project was another incredible success! Not only did the teachers moving from 2nd to 3rd grade want to continue, they took initiative to go further. One of the teachers wrote a Roseville Area Schools Foundation grant to secure additional bird related materials from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology as well as student materials and resources related to birds. They planned a field trip to a nature center for bird banding and continue to use the bird study as a context to connect multiple subject areas and engage kids with nature. They even involved families with a bird themed family event where students taught about MN birds and families made bird houses and feeders to take home! The teachers moving into 2nd grade for the 2015-16 school year also embraced the bird study and were very appreciative of the work established in the first year. They incorporated iPad technology where students researched birds using Cornell and Journey North. Our hope that a vibrant birding community would develop at our school came to be a reality!





With our “looping” model, the current 2nd graders will stay with their classroom teachers for another year and move to 3rd grade together in 2016--17. The teachers currently working in 3rd grade will “loop” back to teach 2nd grade that year. Now that we have a solid foundation, the 2-3 loop can use birds as an integrating topic on a permanent basis and continue to make improvements. The Savaloja Grant was instrumental in making this possible. Thank you!

