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GMI to build new Pleasant Street School walking path



PRINCIPAL DAVID LEVESQUE tells the students that GMI Asphalt has agreed to build a new paved walking pathway around the Pleasant Street School. Also pictured are Renay and Warren Colby, vice president and owner of GMI. (BOB MARTIN/CITIZEN)



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LACONIA — No matter how young you are, with enough perseverance and hard work, one can achieve a goal. This was the case at Pleasant Street School, where first-grade-students wrote letters to GMI Asphalt Corporation to tell them about their healthy lifestyles, and how a walking

path around the school will benefit them.

GMI Asphalt Corporation has teamed up with the Pleasant Street School to build a new walking path that will be ready for when the students return from their spring vacation on May 2. Owner Warren Colby explained that the school will be putting up about one third of the cost and they will take care of the rest. They will have a team paving the path throughout next week.

Colby and Vice President Renay Colby met with the first-graders in Mary Faria, Allison Walls and Caitlin Friend-Rushton's classes on Thursday to tell them about the walkway, and to thank them for the letters they sent them.

After meeting with the first-graders, the announcement was made to the entire school in an afternoon assembly. To say that students were excited would be an understatement. When it was announced, the students went wild, with many of them fist pumping, cheering and even jumping around.

Warren Colby said every year they try to be involved in the local schools, with last year GMI being involved in the construction of the Imagination Station in Gilford. He said when they received those letters from the students at Pleasant Street School, it was not only inspirational to their staff, but also a driving force for GMI to get behind the project.

"You guys sent these letters to us, and we were just so impressed," Warren Colby said during a schoolwide assembly where the students were surprised with the announcement.

Renay Colby added, "It really got our attention. I will tell you it was an impressive presentation. The kids telling us about what they would do and how this would help them with healthy habits is impressive."

Warren Colby said the paved path will be 1,000 feet long and 8 feet wide, and will wrap around the school for students to enjoy for many years to come.

"It's a nice little walkway that will be awesome for the kids," he said.

Warren Colby said after they received the letters, they contacted Principal David Levesque and started talking about the details. He said he is excited to have this project get underway, and that he was proud of the students for the hard work they did to get this done.

"The lesson here is that hard work gets results," he told the students. "These kids wrote all these letters. I know they put a lot of time into it. The hard work that you guys gave to be healthy, to achieve your award, does get results. It's a great lesson."

The award Warren Colby was speaking of was when Pleasant Street School was named the healthiest school in the state of New Hampshire last year, with the 2015 Healthy Eating Active

Living N.H. Education in Excellence Award.

Levesque said the school constantly practices healthy activities. Once a month, they have “Walk to school Wednesdays,” where the students meet before school to walk, and when arriving at the school, they are treated with healthy snacks. They also have “Taste test Tuesdays,” where students try new foods and vote on them to see if they can be put on the school’s lunch menu. Levesque said this new walking path aligns with healthy activities they strive for, as it will be a good smooth walkway for everyone to enjoy.

Levesque explained that for the past three years, the students have been raising money to build a walkway through collecting pennies, having a teacher involved in the Lakes Region Dancing with the Stars and other fundraisers. He said that in November, the first-graders decided to take matters into their own hands and write letters, complete with illustrations to GMI to request assistance. The letters worked, and GMI will be taking care of the construction, and will be working on the path beginning on Monday, with a Friday completion.

“They worked for three years, so to have a company come in and say, ‘here you go,’ is unbelievable,” said Levesque. “Our theme this year is giving back to the community, and now they are giving back to us. So this really has become a perfect circle.”

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