

## Mountain PTA; Helping Kids Do the Fun Things

The Mountain Elementary PTA is raising \$5,000 for new playground equipment.

The school is paying to replace a climbing wall that has been deemed a safety hazard due to age. This wall was donated by a family with a new climbing structure called the Monarch Climber. The PTA is buying additional equipment to go with the climber, like balance boards, spring pods and a Buddy Bench. (Visit [www.mountainPTA.org](http://www.mountainPTA.org) to donate online.)

"I've been working on this for two years and it's finally happening," said Kristen Kucko, the treasurer of the Mountain PTA.

As the treasurer, Kucko is passionate about raising funds. She said, "There are a lot of things that the school pays for, but there are a few things that the school can't pay for. The PTA can supplement those things at the school, especially fun things that kids look forward to doing."

When you walk into Mountain, the PTA has a list of their meetings, activities and budget displayed on the bulletin board. "When you look at that budget, you can see exactly what we raise and what we spend," said Kucko. "96% of the money we raise gets spent on the kids and the school."

### How does the PTA spend the money they raise?

- The average teacher spends up to \$500 per year *out of pocket* to buy things for their classrooms. To offset expenses, the Mountain PTA gives each teacher at least \$200 of "mad money" every year to buy supplies.
- Casa Mesita provided a \$4,800 grant to fund the homework club, and the PTA provides supplemental funding. During homework club, students can stay after school and a teacher is on hand to answer questions about their homework assignments and give one-on-one help.
- Every class in the school goes on one field trip a year, and the PTA pays for the transportation (usually \$375).
- Last year they invited Creede Repertory Theatre to perform, and they have two similar assemblies planned for next year.
- When teachers have special projects, the PTA provides educational grants. For example, Mrs. Semanision created the Rubik's Cube club, the PTA gave her a \$500 grant to buy the Rubik's Cubes, educational materials, and supplies to make Rubik's Cube art.
- They often buy series of books for classrooms to study.
- When the first graders were learning about owls, the PTA paid for the Espanola Wildlife Center to come up and bring some of their owls.
- They paid for transportation so the 4<sup>th</sup> graders could take swimming lessons, so the fifth graders could go skiing, and so the sixth graders could take the ropes course at the Santa Fe Community College.

"We can't do all these things without the parents' help," said Kucko. "We're so grateful to have so many parents who care."

The Mountain PTA is currently raising money to buy playground equipment for the upper playground.  
Please visit [www.mountainpta.org](http://www.mountainpta.org) to make a donation.