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Sharing ideas Marketplace for Kids Education Day is April 20

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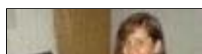
Submitted photo Students showcase their projects at the ninth annual Region 1 Marketplace for Kids Education Day last year at Williston State College. This year's event is from 9:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 20 in the Well at WSC.



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Children have big ideas, and an upcoming event gives them an opportunity to share those ideas.

The 10th Annual Region 1 Marketplace for Kids Education Day is from 9:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 20 in the Well at Williston State College. Students from northwestern North Dakota and eastern Montana participate in the event by sharing their ideas and taking classes.

"This is all about kids and their ideas," said Debbie Richter, co-chair of the event.

Marketplace for Kids is a way for students to put their ideas out for the public to see, she said. Students in third grade up to middle school participate in the event. Marketplace for Kids has two major components: the students' projects and classes. Students show innovative projects they've either worked on at home or in class.

The public is encouraged to attend between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., when the students are scheduled to be near their projects and available to talk about them. "You would be amazed at what you learn," Richter said.

Students often come up with ideas from home, inventions to make tasks more convenient, she said.

"It takes a young mind to think of them," Richter said.

Some of the classes, such as Friends of the Forest and You've Got the Dollars, Have You Got the Sense? are taught by local people. In Friends of the Forest, students will learn about forest products and make bird feeders with pine cones and peanut butter. You've Got the Dollars, Have You Got the Sense? is about money management. Other classes include KidWind about wind energy, Build-A-Bot, a class about robotics; and Rock Your Socks Off!, a dance class.

Throughout the day, the event is videotaped, and the video is shown during the closing ceremony.

"It's the highlight. They (the students) see themselves," Richter said.

Bringing Marketplace for Kids to Williston was Richter's Leadership Williston project. She took the Leadership Williston class in 2000, and at the time there were two Marketplace for Kids events in North Dakota. Richter called Marilyn Kipp, executive director of Marketplace of Ideas in Bismarck, and asked how to bring it to Williston. Kipp suggested Richter get a local committee together, and then she'd help get the event to come to town. The first Marketplace for Kids in Williston was in 2001.

Richter said the college has been really supportive and the event couldn't be done without them. Other supporters are teachers and parents who volunteer as chaperones, as well as high school and college students who volunteer as hall and classroom monitors. Often, the teens who volunteer participated in Marketplace as students, Richter said.

"I've seen kids in grade school participate, then come back as volunteers in high school, Richter said.

As of last Tuesday, 690 students had signed up. About 700 to 900 students participate in the event, she said. The purpose of the event is to show children they have a future in North Dakota should they choose to stay in the state.

"The whole gist is to show kids careers and opportunities so they can live and work in North Dakota," Richter said.

The other Region 1 Marketplace for Kids co-chairs are Deanette Piesek and Melissa Meyer. For more information, visit www.marketplaceforkids.org

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