



PINE RIVER-BACKUS SCHOOLS

DISTRICT OFFICE

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TO: To Whom It May Concern

FROM: Catherine Bettino

RE: WoodSpirit Gardens

DATE: December 13, 2010

As a school superintendent, I know how to deal with joy, success, crisis and loss. At Pine River-Backus Schools, we had experienced far too many losses – the untimely deaths of several students and teachers. We decided that to help our community grieve and endure the losses that we wanted to create a reflective space that would allow us to remember and honor our lost friends and family. Pathways, the Pine River-Backus School Memorial Garden, became our dream.

Students, community members, and staff members joined together to make the dream a reality. Dan and Tom Dix were among those community members. Not only did Dan and Tom provide real and practical help, they also encouraged us to stretch and think of all the possibilities that would reflect our intentions. The end result was a garden that included a rock retaining wall, flagstone pathways and a flowing waterfall. The plant garden is yet to be developed but we plan to include native shrubs and flowering plants. The initial stonework and trees already reflect the peaceful and tranquil setting we hoped to develop.

Dan and Tom gave more to the process than I ever expected. Their artistic perspective coupled with a true appreciation for nature and its bountiful beauty drove our memorial garden process. Along with artistic and technical skills, Dan and Tom were committed to making the construction of the garden a community process. They spent days here at our school involving students and community members in building the garden. We all learned quite a bit about landscaping and teamwork as the garden became a reality. Dan and Tom, again, brought out our best and helped us to create art.

Community members already enjoy Pathways. Most days I watch children and parents stroll through Pathways and they always stop to view the waterfall. Dan and Tom helped us think bigger and more creatively than we would have on our own. I look forward to continuing our work with WoodSpirit Gardens and Dan and Tom Dix.

Committed to Quality, Success for Every Student

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Catherine Bettino