

Ask any working mom or dad their greatest challenge, and they're likely to answer "childcare." Finding a safe, reliable, affordable and nurturing place for your child while you are working is essential to a thriving family. Quality childcare makes for a productive and sustainable work life for parents. Knowing this, Sedona-Oak Creek Unified School District wants to creatively do their part in helping families who attend our district.

At the same time, SOCUSD is very committed to contributing to the community as a whole. Ask any local business operator their greatest challenge, and they're likely to answer "finding and keeping quality staff members." While this need may predate the changes wrought by the pandemic in Sedona, the upheavals of last year have left workforce recovery a challenge nationwide. Thus, Sedona's businesses lack workers, and the inability of families to afford housing in Sedona is worsening so the labor pool is further shrinking.

In true Sedona style, community members, local government, and the school district have put minds, hearts, and pocketbooks together to provide a solution that is an effort truly supportive of local family needs, particularly at this time of restabilization.

Introducing the Wildcat Kid's Club, launching as a new SOCUSD program in August of 2021 with the generous startup support of a local donor. This new West Sedona Elementary opportunity is a quality "Before and After" wraparound school program offered on campus at West Sedona School. This new effort does not replace our already robust after school club programming, but rather extends it even further and adds the much needed early morning childcare option that enables working parents to begin the work day on a traditional schedule with the peace of mind that their child is already safely at school, making friends, playing, learning, and eating breakfast as the formal day of classroom learning begins.

Students participating in the Wildcat Kid's Club will enjoy West Sedona Elementary's menu of fun after school clubs that include yoga, sports, STEM club (fun project-based activities developing skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), folklorico dance, and more. These after school activities end at 4:00 p.m., and an activity bus is provided at that time. With the extended day WKC, though, students can stay as late as 6:00 p.m. with parents picking up children as they head home from work. The early morning extended day begins at 6:30 a.m.

If you don't have young children at home any longer, think back to those days and imagine what a boon this support is for working families!

Saving the best part for last, this wraparound program is FREE of charge for students who attend the Sedona Oak Creek Unified School District. Club hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and students can choose from a variety of activity centers to explore their interests as well as expand on their education in an open-ended, child-centered environment.

We can't wait to begin offering this great support for families and local businesses, an effort that also sustains district enrollment. Startup funding for this program intended to benefit community families, businesses, and education is provided by Village of Oak Creek residents Basil and Mimi Maher who have three children enrolled in Sedona-Oak Creek USD schools. To ensure the long-term success of this program following its startup, the district will seek grant funding and welcome support from partner businesses and the community at large. Together we thrive!

Go Wildcats! Go SOCUSD! Go Sedona! One District-One Team