



spotlight

EDUCATOR PROJECTS AND IDEAS

Community Partners, Engaging Problems, Student solutions...Oh My!

Angela Forino is a 3rd Grade educator at Herbert Mills Elementary School in Reynoldsburg, OH and has a goal this year: get her students designing solutions for their community. And, she is accomplishing this goal everyday by reaching out to partners in the community to connect her students with.

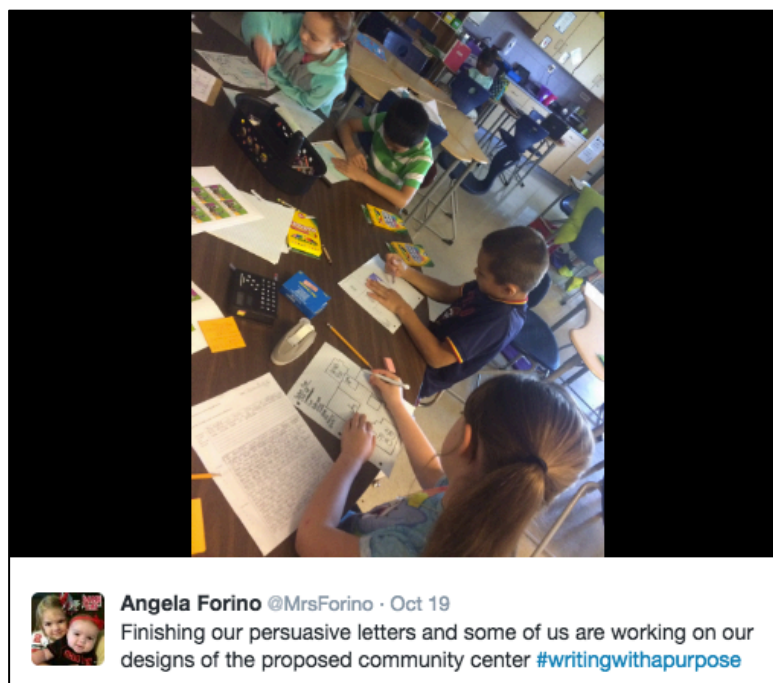
She said she has had great success with designing cool projects and coming up with scenarios for her classroom, but this year she is finding a whole new level of success by having the community pose real problems to her 3rd graders and her students having a chance to propose real solutions!

"We've been great at Herbert Mills Elementary at coming up with projects, scenarios, and design challenges for our students, a personal goal of mine was to incorporate real problems into all of those ideas for my students," said Forino.

So, she began keeping an eye out for opportunities to connect with people within Reynoldsburg and have her students demonstrate their learning by proposing real solutions to the partners! And, the community partners and the work her students are

producing are taking her students to a whole new level.

This fall Forino got inspired from a social media post she saw that Reynoldsburg would be having focus groups for the community to build their new YMCA. She latched on and sent a *cold* email out to the YMCA team to see if her students could help! The YMCA team responded immediately and worked with



Source: @MrsForino via Twitter



her to think about ways the 3rd graders could support the YMCA in this effort.

From there she designed a problem based learning unit around her students mastering persuasive writing to answer the question “How can we design a facility that is beneficial and engaging for families?” The students did research, explored what would be meaningful for their peer group, teenagers, their parents, senior citizens, and their community members. The problem based learning unit culminated in the students presenting their writing and ideas to the YMCA, the local mayor, and city development representatives. Their presentations offered the students an opportunity to share ideas that they will actually be able to see when the new YMCA will be built.

Forino said that the students thrive by having an authentic audience and sharing their real solutions for the community! Forino tweeted about the project and shared moments where her students would beg her to continue to write so they could



Angela Forino @MrsForino · Oct 21

Thank you to everyone who came to see us present today. We hope we persuaded you!
Next step: word analysis of our ideas #writingwithafocus

Source: @MrsForino via Twitter

So, what's next for Angela Forino and her 3rd grade students? They aren't slowing down, the students are working on a Reynoldsburg History Project that will showcase their skills and knowledge to help bring people in for the local Pioneer Day, Forino has partnered with the Ohio Historical Society and the Livingston House Society make the experience authentic for her students. After that the students get to work with local business owners as they work through their own economics unit and business development ideas!

Follow Angela Forino on Twitter @MrsForino

And to learn more about the YMCA project, check out This Week's story here:

<http://www.thisweeknews.com/content/stories/reynoldsburg/news/2016/10/25/stem-students-take-on-design-task.html>

PAST Foundation is proud to partner with Herbert Mills STEM Elementary School and educators locally and nationally as we support communities, schools, and students in making everyday experiences real and meaningful for every student!



Source: @MrsForino via Twitter