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Around Town: Area 59 educators lead Pathfinders in honors-related activities

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At Area 59 this week, Pathfinders have been taking classes on drone aviation, photography, pin making and 3D printing, taught by a mix of Area 59 staff and volunteers.

“All three of us (staff members) have been up to our elbows in Pathfinders,” said **Ellen Peterson**, Area 59 director. “I’d say organized chaos is what it looks like right now.”

Peterson developed the classes after researching Pathfinder “honors,” or awards for time spent mastering a particular skill, to select course subjects that Area 59 would be best equipped to teach the Pathfinders to earn their honors.

Volunteers **Karen Sanchez** and **Lea Naumu** are helping Peterson lead the pin-making classes throughout the week. Twenty-five Pathfinders packed into each class, with two classes taught Tuesday and four classes Wednesday through Friday. The Pathfinders earn pins when they’re awarded an honor, but they’re also collected and traded with other Pathfinders.

Jan Folland, Area 59’s instructional associate for community outreach, is teaching the digital photography course to 12 Pathfinders. Pathfinders were able to take pictures of themselves standing in front of a green screen and superimpose themselves next to famous Wyoming calling cards, such as Devils Tower and bison.

Afterwards, the pictures are printed and laminated in the style of a boarding pass, so that Pathfinders can easily make room for the photos on their return trip.

John Sturtz, an Area 59 member with a drone piloting license, taught chaperons with the Pathfinders the basics of drone piloting. Peterson said the hope is that when Pathfinder leaders return home, they'll be able to teach their clubs how to pilot drones to earn their drone piloting honor.

Area 59 instructor **Greg Locke** and summer program educator **Sandra Pennington** are teaching the 3D printing course at the Gillette College technical education center in two daily sessions Wednesday through Friday.

"He has a personal stake in 3D printing," Peterson said.

Rockpile Museum leads classes in regional history for Pathfinders

Rockpile Museum educator **Heather Rodriguez** and **Emma Golinvaux**, the museum's education intern, put together this week's lessons on the history of Campbell County culture for Pathfinders.

"We had a lot of different educators who were brought in ... we had representatives from the Crow tribe, we had someone interpreting our homestead shack, Golinvaux said. "I've kind of just been coordinating them and ... giving them snacks and coffee."

Collections intern **Henry Muhlena**, demonstrated the Neolithic-era practice of hunting with spear-length arrow throw darts, which were thrown at their targets with an atlatl.

Educators from the museum and around the country lead classes in archeology, paleontology and regional history in the Rockpile Museum's main facilities, as well as the annex and the outdoor area between the museum and the fire station.

The Pathfinders were able to learn about the particulars of the Crow tribe's history and cultural practices, and they saw live demonstrations in black smithing, saddle making, and leather working, among others.

"They all have really unique things that they're doing, and kids from other countries are very interested in their practices," Golinvaux said.

Correction: This story has been updated to remove a comment made by Ellen Peterson about an employee that was incorrectly applied to another employee, and to correct a reference to summer program educator Sandra Pennington, who had been incorrectly referred to as Lea Naumu.

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