

EAGLE HERALD

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TWO SECTIONS

A promise is a promise

Future Fund kicks off in Marinette and Menominee counties

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MARINETTE — The M&M Area Community Foundation kicked off the Future Fund program this week, visiting schools in both Marinette and Menominee counties to announce the program to the area's kindergartners and parents. According to Executive Director Paula Gruszynski, this program has been in the works behind the scenes over the last three and a half years or so.

Gruszynski said she's visited eight schools this week in Marinette County: Goodman, Pembine and Niagara on Monday; Wausaukee, Crivitz and Coleman on Tuesday; and most recently St. Thomas Aquinas Academy, Marinette and Peshtigo, on Wednesday, with visits to Menominee County schools scheduled for next week.

When Gruszynski visited the Marinette School District, about 140 kindergartners gathered on stage in the high school auditorium for a special presentation. At the start of the program, Superintendent Wendy

Dzurick talked with the kids about their future. "In your future, you're not going to be kindergartners; you're going to be 12th graders, and when you're in 12th grade, you're going to graduate from high school," she said.

"Funding like this that you are getting will be good, and would've been really beneficial for me, so you guys are really lucky," said senior Courtney Anderson.

Gruszynski said research shows that a student who knows they have a savings account containing between \$1 and \$500, are three times more likely to graduate from high school. "If very clearly isn't about the amount of money; it is about the belief and the hope that a program like this inspires," she said.

She said that when the idea for the Future Fund was started, it was only the 66th program of its kind in the U.S., with mostly larger cities and municipalities offering programs like it. Since then, more areas have added similar programs, but she said the Menominee-Marquette area was on the forefront.



From left, Kerrl Welgal and Executive Director Paula Gruszynski from the M&M Area Community Foundation do "pinkie swears" that they will support the students' hopes and dreams for the future, with kindergartner Milka Ihander and Henry Halsey, from Menominee Sunrise Early Learning Center during the Future Fund Kickoff at Marinette High School.

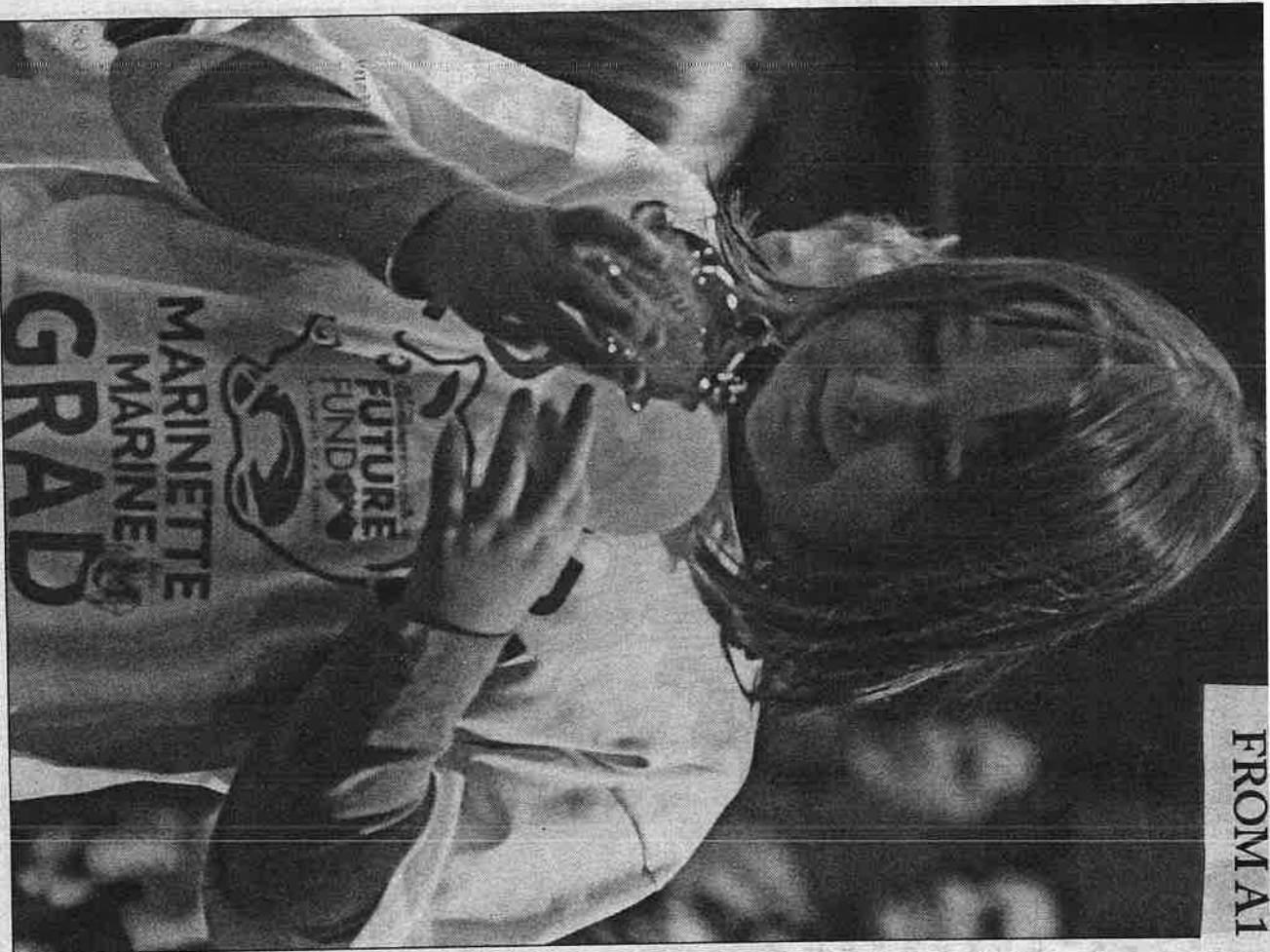
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one that established the fund and put in some of the initial money, but we have had amazing community members who have worked on contributing to the fund and helped it to grow. Most notably, KK Integrated Logistics are fully funding every single kindergarten student in Marinette and

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Executive Director Paula Gruszynski
M&M Area Community Foundation



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Violet Thiry, Menominee Sunrise Early Learning Center, gets \$50 in a piggy bank from the M&M Area Community Foundation during the kick-off to the Future Fund program, where every kindergarten student in the district gets \$50 and a promise of community support for the future.

FUTURE FUND:

Menominee counties — a total of about 700 students — for each of the first five years to the tune of about \$176,000," she said.

After this, the kindergartners each received a piggy bank and a "pinky prom-

ise" from Gruszynski that their hopes and dreams for their future would be supported.

Gruszynski said that her current goal for the fund is to reach \$1 million. "This is a forever program, so we need more people to contribute," she said.