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Donor sparks science campaign

By Doug Dusenberry
GORE RANGE NATURAL SCIENCE SCHOOL

AVON — When Oscar and Argie Tang pledged a parcel of land in Avon to establish a campus home for the Gore Range Natural Science School, Jay and Molly Precourt were intrigued by the idea.

They had been involved for a number of years with a similar project at Jay's alma mater of Stanford University and "wanted to serve as a catalyst for the realization of a major science education campus" for residents of and visitors to our valley.

The Precourts joined the Tangs as leaders in the effort by making the campaign's largest cash gift to date in the form of a \$1,250,000 challenge grant. Under the terms of the challenge, the school was given one year to match this total in new pledges.

Energized by the challenge, the board and staff of the school met with community leaders to discuss their vision for the proposed campus and quickly learned that many of them shared Jay and Molly's desire to make this project a reality for our valley.

Just six months after Jay and Molly's

gift, the school had raised an additional \$1,350,000 in new pledges, this in addition to the gift of land now valued at more than \$3 million.

"When you include the value of the land, there is now a total of over \$9 million invested into making this campus a reality for our community, with just over \$3 million left to raise by fall of 2009," said Doug Dusenberry, the campaign's director.

Kim Langmaid, the school's founder, says the campus will serve as the new home of the Gore Range Natural Science School. The campus will host innovative programming, such as school field-science programs, after-school and summer science camps, interpretive hikes, speaker seminars and mountain environmental research for Eagle County students, teachers, residents and visitors.

The donated parcel of land, located at Nottingham and Buck Creek Road, just west of Pizza Hut in Avon, includes natural amenities such as a creek that flows year-round, a spring-fed pond, aspen stands and an evergreen forest. It will feature two classroom buildings, a field studies base camp/community hall, a visitor center with administrative offices and conference facilities and a graduate fellow's residence that will house eight graduate fellow educators.

"The campus will feature the latest in green building and design with active and passive solar, integrated photovoltaic cells, alternative 'green' building materials and insulation and possible microhydro and geothermal demonstrations," said Markian Feduschak, the school's director.

It is the goal of the architectural team to achieve the U.S. Green Building



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

A Gore Range Natural Science School educator leads a group of students on a field science program. The school offers these curriculum-aligned programs to more than 2,300 students in Eagle County each year.

Council's LEED Platinum certification, making it one of only about 90 such buildings in the United States. The buildings will not only conserve energy but will serve as teaching tools for the students, both young and old, who participate in programs at the site.

Alan Danson and Kathy Borgen, who are serving as co-chairs for the campaign, welcome anyone interested in touring the site or learning more about the project. Contact Markian Feduschak or Doug Dusenberry at 970-827-9725 or dougd@gorerange.org.

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