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WHEN IS A YEARBOOK MORE THAN JUST A BOOK OF MEMORIES? **Grand Island High School Yearbook Club Donates Computer Lab**

GRAND ISLAND, NEW YORK- The last days of school were always our favorite. The weather is getting warmer, we're spending more time outside, and everyone's making plans for summer. The last day of school is spent socializing and passing the yearbook around for signatures from our favorite friends and teachers. For the yearbook staff, it is a wonderful feeling to see your fellow students enjoying the fruits of your labor. Many do not realize the amount of time and effort that is required to publish a yearbook. However, witnessing the excitement among students and teachers on the last few days of school make every hour of work put into the yearbook, worth it. This is a common story that would resonate with most high schools across America but things are different for the Venture Yearbook staff, advised by faculty member Mr. Chris Simpson, at Grand Island High School outside of Buffalo, NY.

Mr. Simpson leads students on a yearlong journey with the yearbook project. Students learn the creative aspects of photography and journalism while understanding the concepts behind effective sales and marketing. His yearbook class is the perfect implementation of Project Based Learning in a school because it has an end goal of producing an amazing yearbook while students learn all the different parts of running a business throughout the year. The truly commendable part of their program is the culture of giving back. This year, the Venture Yearbook staff selected local charity, Educators of America, to help them donate a computer lab to younger students in Western New York. These young students will use the computers that Grand Island donated to access web-based curriculum materials thus creating opportunities for learning they would not be able to have without this partnership. In addition, the Venture Yearbook staff donated holiday gifts to local families that needed extra help this year. Titled the "12 Days of Christmas," the staff anonymously placed gifts and gift cards at the homes of students who needed the most support this past holiday season.

At a presentation to thank the Venture Yearbook staff, Brett Claydon, Board Treasurer of Educators of America remarked "Thank you for your generous donation and for giving back. You should be very proud of yourselves. Continue to give back through your lives, it means more than you can ever imagine. You might not always see the impact right away, but that doesn't mean you're not making a difference."

The Grand Island High School community should be proud of their success. When students and parents purchased the yearbook, or participated in other fundraising activities, they were doing more than just buying an exceptional publication, they were giving back to the Western New York community and creating new opportunities for younger students. Mr. Simpson's Venture Yearbook students are especially lucky since they were able to experience a real world project and will benefit from these learnings in college and their future careers. The Grand Island High School Venture Yearbook is more than just a book of memories, it is a first class learning experience that will benefit all involved for decades to come. Moreover, the Venture Yearbook staff understands how monumental it is to give back; a lesson that is often overlooked.

Educators of America is an international non-profit organization dedicated to connecting teachers with the training and technology they need to increase student achievement. To learn more about our projects or to make a donation, please visit www.educatorsusa.org.

The Grand Island High School Venture Yearbook is published by Lifetouch Publishing Inc. Lifetouch is the local leader in yearbooks, school photography, and the only official school photographer of the National PTA.

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