

EDUCATION

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A way to harmony

THE NEWS TRIBUNE

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Soldiers who train for war are helping students at Cherrydale Primary School in Steilacoom walk the path of peaceful coexistence.

Members of the 864th Engineer Battalion drew the plans for a 42-foot labyrinth at the school. The 504th MP Battalion worked with members of the community to build it.

Both are Fort Lewis units.

Second-grade teacher Kathy Thomas initiated the project, but it took donations from area businesses, the work of community members and the sweat of the soldiers to set the project in concrete.

Students will use the labyrinth in their PeaceBuilders curriculum. Students having conflicts, for example, might walk the labyrinth together to resolve them, said Cherrydale counselor Lanae Olson. A grieving student might heal from a loss while strolling the pavers and recalling memories of a loved one. Angry students might find calmness in the circle of stones.

There are classroom lessons, too, Thomas said. Students read about the history of labyrinths and their use, then incorporated what they'd learned into their writing.

They're learning, too, about the kindness of others.

Community volunteer Philip Ayles was granite-like in his resolve to get the labyrinth built, Thomas said. Basalite Concrete Products of DuPont donated 17 pallets of brick pavers; Glacier Northwest supplied 27 yards of sand and gravel, plus concrete; and Hergert All Construction provided work on the concrete band that encircles the labyrinth, Thomas said. Lowe's and Albertsons were among other donors.

LABYRINTH CELEBRATION

What: Grand opening of a 42-foot labyrinth built by community volunteers and members of the 504th Battalion, 42nd MP Brigade at Fort Lewis

When: 2:30 p.m. Thursday

Where: Cherrydale Primary School, 1201 Galloway St., Steilacoom

Open to the public? Yes



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PHOTOS BY RUSS CARMACK/THE NEWS TRIBUNE
Members of the 504th MP Battalion, based at Fort Lewis, watch Cherrydale Primary School second-grader Tommy Channon, 8, practice a skit at a labyrinth built at the school by soldiers and community members.



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Students in Kathy Thomas' class at Cherrydale in Steilacoom practice their skits at the labyrinth this month.