



Bucks County Intermediate Unit
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For Immediate Release:

Bucks IU Students Benefit from Craft Fair in More Ways Than One

Student Crafters Learn and Grow While Proceeds Support Educational Programs

November 13, 2018, Doylestown PA: On Saturday October 27th, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Bucks IU) held a craft fair benefitting their Education Foundation, through which teachers can apply for grants that support educational programs. To date, almost a half million dollars in grants have been distributed, making a significant impact in the growth and development of students throughout Bucks County. However, the money raised was only one small part of how this Craft Fair is benefitting Bucks IU students.



Amongst the 45 crafters exhibiting their wares, were several tables of exceptional items that were created and crafted by Bucks IU students with special needs. Teachers and students explained how both academic and life skills training are effectively integrated with art-based curriculum to support growth and development. Reading and following instructions, measuring, calculating expenses against item cost – all of these incorporate and utilize the educational skills of these students in practical, everyday ways. Students work as teams, supporting one another with their individual strengths and

skill sets, with the added benefit of boosting their social skills and self-esteem. These arts programs provide a means by which these students can achieve higher levels of independence and employability.

The crafts they were selling were not only creative, but very well done. One group of students makes high quality paper from pulp, and then use that paper to create greeting cards for a various holidays and special occasions. Other student groups were offering decorative jars featuring everything you needed to create a hearty soup, or warm batch of cookies, at home. Another had made adorable 3-dimensional snowmen decorations; each unique with different buttons, scarves, and hats. From scented candles in pretty wood topped jars, framed nature photographs, to folk art wooden wall plaques with holiday sentiments – the creativity and quality were wonderful.



Figure 1 Travis Goodman (left) and Michael Patrohay (right) are Bucks IU students working together to sell their gourmet pet treats from 'Michael's Barkery' at the recent Bucks IU Indoor Craft Fair.

Another feature of Bucks IU Special Education Programs, is how they strive to incorporate a student's families into reinforcing the skills their child is learning. Michael Patrohay is a Bucks IU student who loves his dog and helping his Mom in the kitchen. His parents found a way to incorporate that into a little business; Michael's Barkery which makes Gourmet pet treats, and supports keeping Michael involved and his skills sharp. Michael works with his Mom to bake all of the pet treats and together, the family packages and attends events where they can sell them. Michael's vibrant smile and outgoing nature make him a perfect salesman. Where he struggles is with numbers, so he has enlisted his good friend and fellow Bucks IU student, Travis Goodman, as his cashier. Together they make an amazing and highly successful team, who enjoyed a steady stream of customers at the recent craft fair.

The arts provide a platform for education and advancement in a creative and engaging way that resonates with students who have special needs. For more information about Bucks County Intermediate Unit Special Education Programs, please visit our website at www.BucksIU.org or call us at 215-348-2940.

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ABOUT THE BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT:

With over 45 years of service, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit has established itself as an abundantly skilled, technology-rich, provider of high quality, cost-effective, instructional and operational services to public and private schools, school districts, charter schools, and our community. From an exceptional and broad foundation of specialty education support services we advocate for every child, while also offering a wide-range of programs, from cooperative purchasing to professional development courses, to nurture a stronger community. Visit our website at www.BucksIU.org or call us at 215-348-2940 for more information.