

## A STEP CLOSER

CENTRAL SCHOOL PROJECT  
EXCITED ABOUT \$50,000 GRANT

LOCAL/STATE, A2

## 1,000 STEPS OF FUN

CLIMB'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

IN TEMPO



## POWDER PUFF

BUENA SENIORS END CURSE

SPORTS, B1



**COMMUNITY:** RUNOFF HAS CAUSED CENTRAL SCHOOL STRUCTURE TO CRUMBLE

# Fix-up funds help in Bisbee, but more money sought

BY SHAR PORIER  
HERALD/REVIEW

**BISBEE** — Bisbee's Central School Project staff and board of directors are working toward a needed facelift and are now one step closer thanks to a \$50,000 grant from Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation through the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Melissa Holden, CSP executive director, said the grant comes on the heels of an architectural needs assessment that found the 105-year-old building with a crumbling foundation and stucco breaking loose from the walls. Part of the problem with the foundation is storm water runoff that pools around the historic building. "The water and salts are breaking down the foundation, and that's one of the problems we want to resolve. We have to stop the building from deteriorating."

The exterior project will cost more than the \$50,000 from the grant, she added. So she is looking for other grant sources like Freeport McMoRan Inc. to contribute. "We are looking into federal grant sources and plan to ask for \$100,000. The more local support for this project we can show, the better our chances are at winning grants on a federal level."

And it helps that CSP was one of 10 school buildings nationwide awarded the grant through the National Trust, she added.

Lowe's human resource manager in Sierra Vista, Stella Burke, was very happy that her former school is getting help through the company's commitment to give back to the community. "I was so excited that Bisbee got the grant. I went there

### LEARN MORE



For more information on the Central School Project, call 432-4866 or visit the website at [www.centralschoolproject.org](http://www.centralschoolproject.org).

in the '50s, so it was wonderful to visit the school and relive the memories." Her last name was Echave when she attended Central School from kindergarten through the fifth grade.

It's not just cash coming CPS's way from Lowe's, added Burke. "We have 100 people who volunteer their services locally, too."

### The building

Built in 1905, Central School was a symbol of the commitment to future generations by its citizens and Phelps Dodge, owner of local mining operations at the time. The school closed its doors when Phelps Dodge closed down in the mid-1970s, Burke said.

As Bisbee transformed from a thriving mining town to a quiet artistic hub, the school transformed, as well. Visionary artists and community activists saw the potential for a visual arts center and worked to save the building, Holden said. "The building

serves as a community art center and is home to three organizations: the Central School Project, Bisbee Radio Project and Bisbee's Obscure Productions."

The school needs a lot of work outside and inside, explained Holden. "We need plumbing and electrical upgrades and we're looking to provide handicap access. That was all brought out in the needs assessment and comes to about \$500,000. So we have a lot of work to do."

Holden is writing grant after grant and searching for other sources of funding to save the historic building so CSP can continue its commitment to support local artists and provide the community with a variety of cultural opportunities that include independent films and art exhibits. "It's hard with Bisbee being a small town. We have to be creative to find funding."

Community members can help raise funds by signing up for ESCRIP, Holden said. "Every time you use your Safeway Card, Visa or Master Card at participating merchants, Central School Project will receive a donation from those merchants. It doesn't cost you a cent, and helps us a lot in maintaining our arts programming." The process is simple; just go to ESCRIP on the Internet and type in CSP's group number, 1183142.

Like with most nonprofits, volunteers are always needed, especially during art exhibits, poetry readings and film showings, Holden added. "CSP volunteers have the opportunity to gain exposure to the workings of a community art center and contribute valuable services to a nonprofit institution."