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***Young builders pay tribute to KVR trestles
at OUC's Spaghetti Bridge Contest***

There's a tradition building at Rose Valley Elementary on Kelowna's Westside that has kids excited about spaghetti and glue.

For the past five years, the top math students in Mr. Jim Bradshaw's Grade 6 class have had an opportunity to showcase their knowledge of measurement, angles, and calculation formulas in a creative and fun way by building a bridge made of pasta and glue for OUC's annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest.

But this year, there's a new twist. The students are not just building one bridge. They are also working on a replica of a Kettle Valley Railroad trestle to enter in the Elementary School Demonstration category of the contest being held at the North Kelowna Campus on Friday, March 12.

"We wanted to recognize the tragic loss of the KVR trestles in last summer's forest fire," says Jane Muskens, one of the contest organizers. "We thought having kids build a replica would not only get them excited about the event, but would also call attention to the elements involved in building such a structure and the campaign that is underway to have these historic treasures restored by the Kettle Valley Historical Society."

It seems to be working. Eleven students in Mr. Bradshaw's class have been enthusiastically working on the project since January and will be attending this year's competition. Maddy Gwartney, Bailey Laird, and Alecia Klassen are working on the trestle replica using cardboard, papier mâché, spaghetti and glue, while Nick Kalmakoff, Marshall Rasmussen, Katie Fraser, Catie Irving, Ashley Koutstantonis, Erin Grant,

Michelle Yelland, and Charolotte Murajko, are building a pasta bridge made from spaghetti and glue.

“It’s a bit challenging, but lots of fun,” says Maddy, one of the trestle builders.

“Working on this is more fun than our regular math class,” added Bailey.

Their teammate Alecia became interested in the project when she learned they would be building a trestle. “We planned to bike the KVR, but then it burned down,” she says. All three girls say they would like to see the trestles rebuilt.

A member of the society will be at the event to talk to students about the history of the trestles and the plans for rebuilding the historic structures.

Besides being able to apply their math skills, the students are also learning about co-operation, responsibility, working to deadline, assigning tasks, and accepting others’ ideas by participating in this contest, says Bradshaw. “The contest is a real incentive for students to do well in Math in their first term as only those with top marks get selected to participate.”

“We all worked on the design and then combined the best ideas to come up with a bridge that will hold the most weight,” says bridge builder Erin. The team members say they want their bridge to beat last year’s class record of 70 pounds.

“We want to go for the record and have it hold over 80 pounds,” says Marshall.

They’ve all got cuts and blisters on their hands from the experience and by the time the competition is held, both teams will have put in more than 30 hours on their respective projects.

“Their dedication and enthusiasm is what really keeps me going and makes me willing to put in the extra time,” says Bradshaw. “They are all so keen and really look forward to participating. I’ve even heard students say they can’t wait to be in my class just so they can be in this event.”

Any elementary school students interested in joining Rose Valley Elementary students in the demonstration category of the contest can find more information at <http://technologies.ouc.bc.ca/bridge/> or by calling 250-862-5473.

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For more information, contact Jane Muskens at 762-5445, ext. 4340 or Dianne Powles at 862-5473.