

'\$pending Frenzy' returns to Gallup Central High

Written by By Shawn Spruce For the Sun
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Students learn importance of financial planning

After a nearly three-year hiatus a signature youth empowerment event reminded students at Gallup Central High School about the importance of financial planning.

On April 22, students convened in the school's gymnasium to participate in the \$pending Frenzy, an interactive simulation designed to introduce budgeting, consumer awareness, and independent living to teens and young adults.

The \$pending Frenzy featured community volunteers who staffed businesses such as a bank, grocery store, realty office, and auto dealer where students made purchases using play money.

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It’s been an annual event at Central High for nearly 10 years; however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the simulation was last offered to students in 2019.

“It’s great to be able to get back into schools to host the \$pending Frenzy,” Dale Dedrick with First Financial Credit Union, one of the event organizers said. “One of the things the pandemic reinforced is the need for healthy financial habits and practices. The \$pending Frenzy is an engaging, effective, and fun way to teach young people those valuable lessons.”

The \$pending Frenzy was created by a Colorado-based non-profit, First Nations Development Institute, and is facilitated at schools and youth centers across the country.

Central High introduced the program in coordination with a financial literacy class taught by math teacher Arnold Blum, who encouraged GCHS students, teachers, and staff to participate.

“Financial education is a priority at our school” Blum said. “We have many students who work part time while balancing their studies. They can take this knowledge and information and put it to use immediately.”

Each student began the \$pending Frenzy with \$30,000 in crisp stacks of realistic looking bills. Because the simulation was based on a one year time frame, many students were surprised at how quickly their cash was depleted after paying income tax, purchasing a vehicle, buying food, and renting an apartment.

“I thought it was fun and very educational,” Marisa Garcia, an 18-year-old GCHS senior, said. “It definitely taught us that we need to look at things we can afford instead of just buying whatever we want. It also showed us that things in life happen that can really hurt us financially so we also need to plan smart.”

The GCHS \$pending Frenzy was made possible by a partnership of community volunteers and local businesses. In addition to First Financial Credit Union, other organizations that contributed to the well-recieved event included Amigo Automotive Group, Lowes Supermarket, Amazing Grace Insurance, Coldwell Banker High Desert Realty, and First Nations Development Institute.

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