

# Creativity Carts Inspire Innovation!

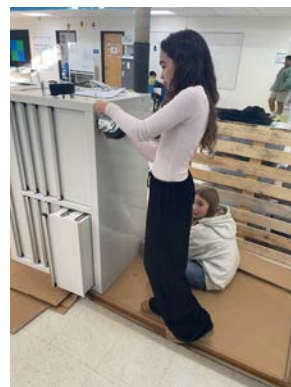


*EEF Grant Evaluation & Reflection by Amy Murphy, June 2026*

The Mobile Creativity Labs exceeded our expectations by creating innovative, useful, and highly engaging opportunities for students to explore creativity, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship throughout the school year. What began as a project designed to provide students with access to creative tools and materials quickly evolved into a student-driven initiative that empowered learners to take ownership of the entire creative process—from idea generation to project completion and even business development.

## Here's What Worked!

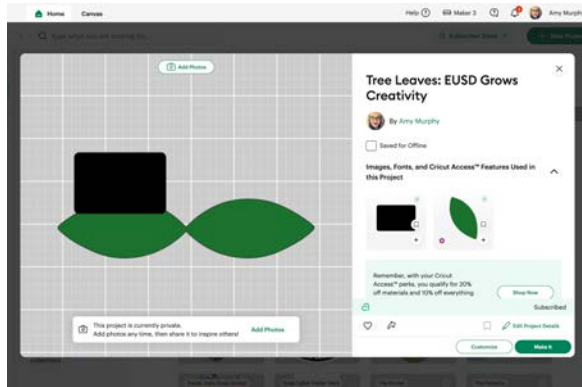
One of the most successful aspects of this project was the opportunity for students to participate directly in the grant-writing and management process. Rather than simply benefiting from the grant, a small team of five girls became active contributors to its implementation and success. The girls participated in brainstorming project ideas, learning about the grant application process, celebrating the receipt of the award, researching and ordering materials, revising purchasing decisions based on emerging needs, receiving and organizing supplies, maintaining the mobile carts, and ultimately utilizing the resources to create projects of their own. This authentic involvement gave students valuable real-world experience in project management, budgeting, organization, decision-making, and stewardship of shared resources.



The Mobile Creativity Labs proved to be far more versatile than originally anticipated. While they were designed to support classroom learning, they quickly became valuable tools for a wide range of innovative student experiences.



One notable example was the creation of an exhibit for the annual EUSD smART Festival. The same grant team of girls added to their group and used equipment and materials from the Mobile Creativity Labs to design and construct an interactive, life-sized creativity tree that brought the festival theme, "EUSD Grows Creativity," to life. Festival guests were invited to reflect on where and when they feel most creative, write their responses on paper leaves, and add them to the growing tree. This project not only showcased student creativity but also encouraged community participation and celebrated the importance of creative thinking.

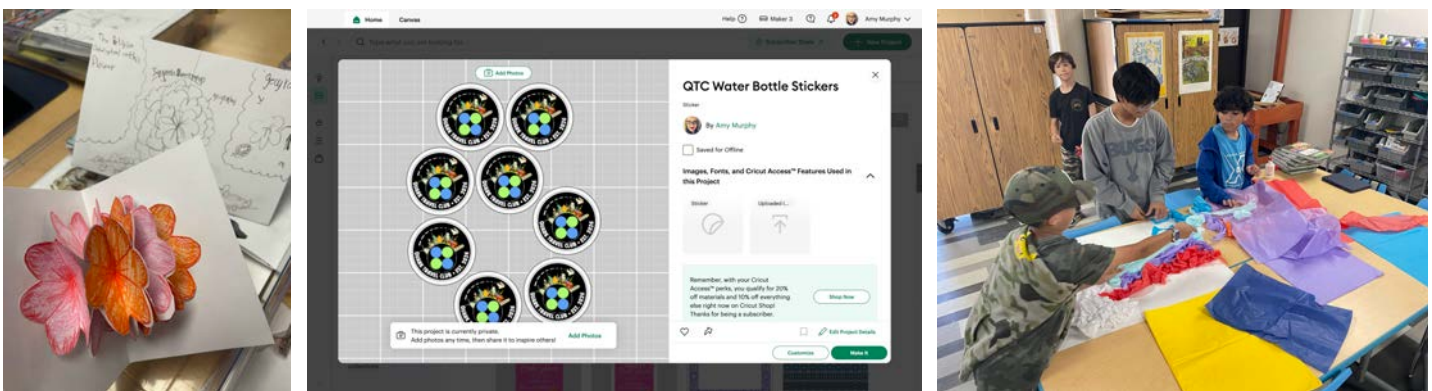




The labs also became one of the most utilized resources during enrichment sessions and after school ELOP classes. Students repeatedly expressed interest in learning how to use the tools, materials, and techniques they observed others creating with throughout the year. The popularity of these enrichment opportunities demonstrated that students were eager for hands-on, creative experiences that extended beyond traditional classroom assignments.

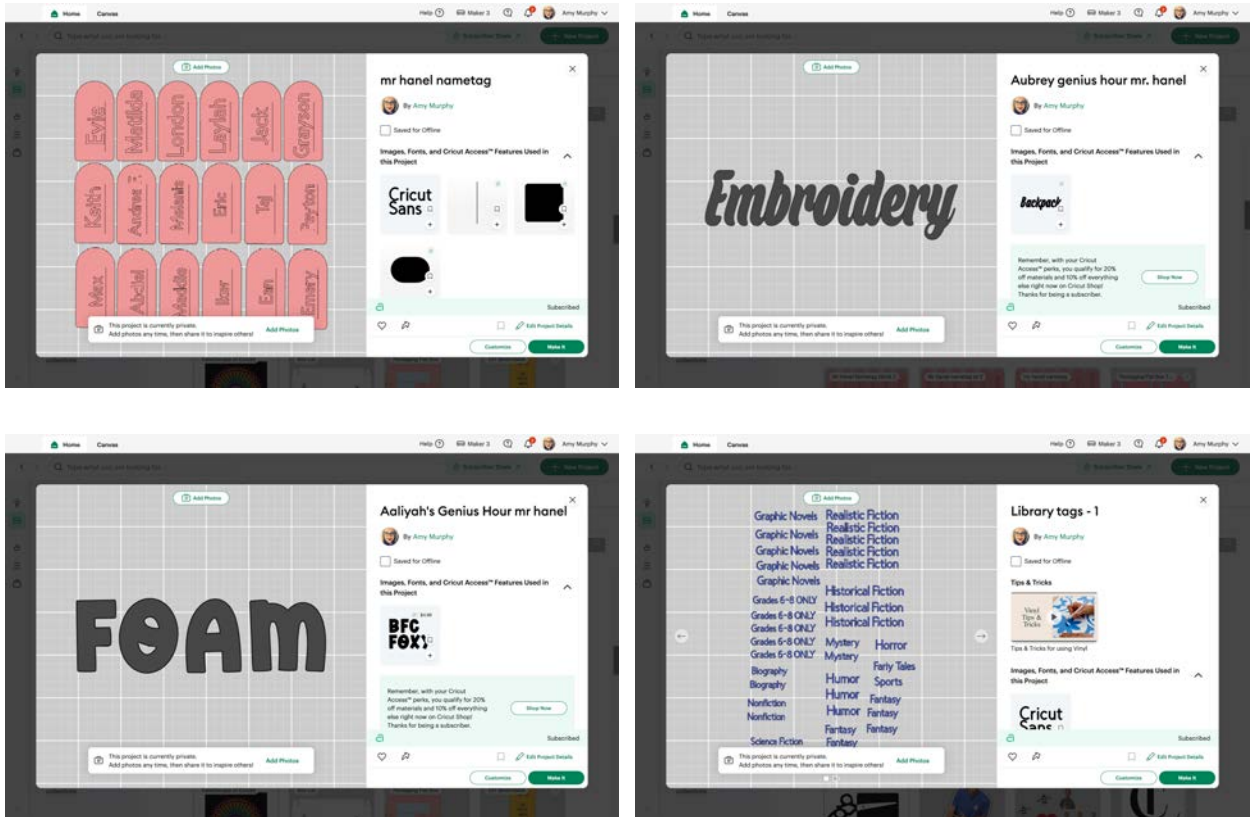


Another major success was allowing students the freedom to learn through trial and error while encouraging them to "dream big." The Mobile Creativity Labs provided students with the materials and flexibility needed to explore ideas without fear of failure. Students were able to prototype, revise, improve, and reimagine their projects. The labs fostered a culture of innovation where experimentation was valued, and creative risks were encouraged.



Perhaps the most unexpected success emerged as an "In-School Hire" program. A group of sixth-grade students began creating useful and practical items for their classmates. As demand for their products grew, the students transformed their creative endeavor into a functioning school-based business. They developed products, created an order form, established production and delivery systems, and eventually added their

creations to the school's ClassBank store, where students could purchase them. Through this process, students gained firsthand experience with entrepreneurship, innovation, customer service, marketing, and production management. What began as a creative project evolved into a meaningful lesson in problem-solving and business development.



## Challenges and Lessons We Learned

One challenge we encountered was assuming that the materials we initially selected would align perfectly with student interests and needs. Once students began using the labs, it became clear that they had unique ideas about the types of tools and materials that would best support their creative visions. This experience reinforced the importance of incorporating student voice into future purchasing decisions and planning processes.

Another challenge was underestimating the demand for consumable materials. Student enthusiasm and frequent use of the labs resulted in supplies being depleted much faster than anticipated. While this was a positive indicator of engagement, it highlighted the need for a long-term sustainability plan focused on replenishing high-use materials.



## What's Different Next Year?

Moving forward, we plan to place an even greater emphasis on student feedback when selecting materials and supplies. Students have demonstrated a strong understanding of what resources best support their creativity, and their input will help ensure that future purchases maximize both usefulness and impact.

We also plan to pursue additional grant funding specifically dedicated to consumable and frequently used materials. While the carts, tools, and equipment purchased through this grant have proven durable and sustainable, the continued success of the Mobile Creativity Labs now depends largely on maintaining a steady supply of consumables and replacement materials. Investing in these resources will ensure that future students continue to have access to meaningful creative opportunities.

Additionally, we plan to develop a scheduling system based on usage, productivity, and demonstrated demand rather than an equal-use model. Throughout the year, certain classes and student groups utilized the carts extensively and would have benefited from longer access periods or multiple carts. A more flexible scheduling structure will help maximize the impact of the resources and better meet student needs.

## Student Impact

The Mobile Creativity Labs provided students with benefits that extended far beyond traditional academic learning.

One of the most significant outcomes was an unexpected entrepreneurial experience. Students learned how to identify needs within their school community, develop products that addressed those needs, and create systems to market, produce, and distribute their creations. This experience helped students develop valuable skills in innovation, communication, collaboration, financial literacy, and leadership.

Students also experienced a substantial boost in creativity and confidence. Having immediate access to materials allowed them to tinker, experiment, and create organically. Instead of focusing solely on making the "right product/project," students explored possibilities, tested ideas, and discovered solutions through hands-on learning. The Mobile Creativity Labs transformed creativity from an occasional activity into a regular part of the learning experience.

Additionally, the small team of students who managed the equipment gained a strong sense of responsibility and ownership. Through participation in grant management, purchasing decisions, organization of supplies, equipment maintenance, and project implementation, the girls developed important organizational and leadership skills while learning how to care for shared resources.

## Lasting Impact and Sustainability

The lasting impact of the Mobile Creativity Labs can be seen in the culture of creativity, innovation, and student ownership that has emerged throughout our school. Students now have a revived view of themselves as makers, designers, problem-solvers, and entrepreneurs. Teachers have incorporated more hands-on creative opportunities into their instruction, and students actively seek out ways to apply their creativity to real-world challenges and community needs.

The physical infrastructure established through this grant—the carts, tools, and organizational systems—will continue to benefit students for years to come. The foundation for ongoing creativity has been built. Future sustainability is primarily dependent upon maintaining adequate supplies of consumable materials that allow

students to continue designing, building, prototyping, and creating. With continued support for these essential resources, the Mobile Creativity Labs will remain a vibrant and innovative learning opportunity for future generations of students.

## Many, Many Thanks!

We are deeply grateful to the Escondido Education Foundation for recognizing the value of creativity, innovation, and student-driven learning. Their generosity made it possible to transform an idea into a meaningful educational experience that empowered students to think creatively, take initiative, and develop skills that extend far beyond the classroom. The impact of this investment will continue to be felt for years to come, and we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide students with experiences that inspire imagination, foster innovation, and cultivate lifelong learners.

