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\$18,600 IN GRANTS SUPPORT INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LPEF awards 16 grants in second round this school year

LA CROSSE, WI, March 30, 2015— Support for community field trips and projects to promote music appreciation and healthy living by students in the School District of La Crosse are among 16 grants totaling almost \$18,600 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Another grant supports The Giving Project, an effort to help students of all ages explore and visually express their understanding and thoughts on giving. The project, sponsored by the Pump House Regional Arts Center for this June's Artspire, is an extension of last year's successful Compassion Project, which was a collaboration between the Pump House, the School District of La Crosse and LPEF.

The 16 grants were chosen from among 19 applications totaling more than \$33,000 in requests. This year, for the first time, classroom grants were awarded in two rounds. The first round of 17 grants totaled nearly \$31,000 and were announced in December. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students and bring real-life experiences into the classroom.

"Teachers told us they would appreciate a second chance to apply for grants later in the school year because sometimes inspiration hits after the first deadline has passed," said Greg Bonney, LPEF Board President and an attorney at Johns, Flaherty & Collins. "We were impressed by the quantity and quality of this round of requests, and glad that generous support from our donors allowed us to increase the overall money available for classroom projects."

Two grants support continuation of prior successful grants. One supports ongoing community field trips for Hamilton Elementary/SOTA I students while the other will help fund the purchase of physical activity and movement equipment for all sixth-grade classrooms at Longfellow Middle School.

Here is a brief summary of the 16 grants announced today in surprise visits to recipients:

- \$950 to support The Giving Project, providing a unique opportunity for students of all ages to explore and visually express their understanding and thoughts on giving. Building off the same principles as the 2013-2014 Compassion Project, this project asks students in grades K-12 to create artwork on the topic of 'giving' and it will be shared through display at the Artspire La Crosse community event, a regional celebration of arts and culture. Recipient: Toni Asher, Executive Director, Pump House Regional Arts Center.
- \$1,227 to help buy a set of ukuleles and materials to be shared among all La Crosse elementary schools. Money also will go toward staff training on how to play the ukulele and how to effectively teach the instrument. The goal for the Uke for Youth project is to cultivate life-long music learning and appreciation by students in third through fifth grades. Skills learned can be easily transferred to aid in future learning of string or band instruments. Recipients: Elementary school music teachers Amanda Wolfram, Jill Schams, Amy Johnson-Pierce, Deb Michaels, Karla Wakeen, Cheri Reavis, Ellen Moon, Beth Waldron and Danielle Fields.
- \$1,728 to support Physics of Sensation II, a continuation of an LPEF grant from the 2012-2013 school year for Karen Wilke's sixth-grade classroom at Longfellow Middle School. Due to the successful implementation of the first grant, this year's grant money will help fund the purchase of physical activity and movement equipment for all sixth-grade classrooms at Longfellow. The movement-based equipment helps students focus, listen and learn by enabling a variety of learning styles. In addition, students are involved in a group project to explain and demonstrate Newton's Three Laws of Motion through use of the equipment. Recipients: Occupational therapist Jenny Leren and teacher Karen Wilke.
- \$1,959 to purchase heart rate monitors for use by fourth- and fifth-grade students at Hamilton Elementary/SOTA I. These monitors will help students learn how to accurately measure their target heart rate and recognize the feeling they get when their heart rate is in the health enhancing zone. Recipient: Physical education teacher Tyler Hamby.
- \$1,264 for field trip costs to Deep Roots Community Farm for first- through fifth-grade students at Hamilton Elementary/SOTA I. The field trips are promoted by Grow La Crosse, a local non-profit organization with a mission to connect children to healthy food and nature, and build upon the school garden project that is currently in place at Hamilton/SOTA I. Students will engage in gardening activities and receive fresh produce to take home and eat with their families. Recipient: Katie Berkedal, Grow La Crosse. *This grant is underwritten in part by the Dr. Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Memorial Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$700 to continue community field trips for students at Hamilton Elementary/SOTA I. The money funds trips to La Crosse's most popular community attractions such as the UW-L campus, the trails in the marsh and Grandad's Bluff. About one local field trip will be taken per month, rotating through grades K-5. These trips will continue to provide students with hands-on experiences that further develop language skills and knowledge by introducing vocabulary in a memorable setting. Recipient: Principal Steve Michaels.

- \$500 for the Summit Sand Sculpture, a program for fifth-grade students at Summit Environmental School that promotes learning the process and techniques involved in the art of sculpting. Students will collaborate with La Crosse area sculptor Mike Martino to create a 6-foot-by-6-foot sand sculpture of the school mascot as part of the outdoor education experience on May 28-29. Recipient: Carissa Brudos, art specialist.
- \$905 to support Learning by Choice at Hintgen Elementary School to change the look and feel of a traditional fourth-grade classroom in a way that helps students focus for extended periods of time. Money will help buy alternative seating, such as bean bags, camp chairs, and floor cushions. Recipient: Teacher Stephanie Baker.
- \$2,663 to purchase 12 stand-up desks for distribution among sixth-grade classrooms at Logan Middle School. These desks promote focused learning while simultaneously decreasing off-task behaviors by providing an outlet within the educational setting for those students who need to move in order to learn. Recipient: Teacher Samantha Parkhurst.
- \$594 for the Real-World Series, a program to provide struggling students at Logan Middle School with strategies and skills to become independent and self-determined adults ready for today's society. The grant will help fund the purchase of Real-World Series Combo Set materials that will engage struggling students in realistic graphic representations that teach them practical strategies and real-world skills. Recipient: Special education teacher Maria Ellis.
- \$1,800 to the Global Reading project preparing Logan Middle School students for the 21st century through a global approach to learning. The project will give students an opportunity to challenge themselves and connect their learning with citizens around the world. The money will buy a wide range of reading materials to support the eighth-grade global learning pillars of Sustainability of Natural Resources/Water and Human Rights. Recipients: Literacy Specialist Kellie Schmitz and eighth-grade teachers Jill Gorell, Dani Hartman and Jodi Rumpel.
- \$1,040 to purchase 13 Osmo iPad Learning System Starter Kits, providing two for each grade level and one for the Emotional Behavioral Disability classroom at North Woods International Elementary School. These kits will provide a new level of engagement and problem solving for students and introduce teachers to ways to use iPads for higher level learning objectives. Recipient: Library/HPL teacher Nicole Ellefson-Johnson.
- \$522 to support I'm A Reading Rockstar!, a program designed to engage first-grade students at North Woods in meaningful independent work to improve literacy skills. The grant supports the purchase of recordable microphones allowing students to record, listen to and play back their independent reading, writing, and math facts. The microphones also will be used to track and assess student reading progress throughout the school year. Recipient: Teacher Summer Elston.
- \$1,274 to support Social Emotional Learning for the Tough Kid, an evidence-based social skills intervention program that provides positive and preventative strategies to students who display behavior difficulties. The money will help fund the purchase of The Tough Kid series and SuperHeroes social skills program materials for use by students receiving Emotional Behavioral Disability services at North Woods. Recipient: Teacher Heather Stern.
- \$445 to purchase self-inflating mattress pads to be used by juniors and seniors in the Health Science Academy during the Native American summer leadership camp in southwest South

Dakota. The leadership camp coincides with the visit of the Global Partners Project at Gundersen Health System. Recipient: Teacher Thomas Kammer.

- \$1,005 to support an artist-in-residence program by local folk dance instructor Sue Hulsether. The three-day program at Southern Bluffs Elementary will give students a fresh look at an art form that is rich in history, develops an awareness of the body, and reinforces self-discipline and self-confidence. The residency will be capped off with a Family Dance Night for Southern Bluffs families, funded by the Southern Bluffs PTO, at which Hulsether will be the dance caller while a live band plays traditional folk music. Recipient: Music teacher Jill Schams.

Grant recipients will be honored in January 2016 as part of LPEF's annual Grants Award Luncheon. They will join recipients to be selected from grant requests made next fall.

In addition to the annual grants to classrooms, LPEF provides other support for La Crosse public schools, including nearly \$22,000 to help students overcome roadblocks to achievement in areas such as nutrition, transportation and co-curricular support. The La Crosse Public Education Foundation's mission is to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse and to promote community understanding and support for public education.

For more information on grants, or on ways to support LPEF through donations, contact the LPEF office at 787-0226, or email David Stoeffler at: david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org.

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