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LA CROSSE SCHOOLS SHARE \$32,982 IN CLASSROOM GRANTS

LPEF awards 21 grants in second round; total for year tops \$61,400

LA CROSSE, WI, April 6, 2017– Innovative classroom programs, including multiple efforts to address complex academic, emotional and behavioral issues facing students, are among 21 grants totaling \$32,982 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Among the grants: support for involving community members in an innovative school garden project; materials for summer school students to improve reading and math skills; an experimental classroom approach to team-based collaborative learning; upgraded school music instruments; and support for training a service dog to work with special education and regular classroom students at one elementary school.

The 21 grants were chosen from among 25 applications totaling more than \$53,500. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students, and the total impact or reach of the project. This second round of grants brings the total awarded this school year to \$61,403.

“We love seeing how teachers and students put these grants into action in classrooms,” said Shawn Dutchin, LPEF Board President and a practice operations director for Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare. “We’re proud to continue increasing funds for classroom grants because they go to the heart of our mission to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse.”

Grant recipients, along with recipients of additional grants that will be selected next fall, will be honored along with school and community leaders next January at LPEF’s annual Grants Award Luncheon, presented by Festival Foods.

Here is a brief summary of the 21 grants announced today in surprise visits to recipients:

- \$5,000 to support specialized training for a service dog to work with special education and regular students at North Woods International Elementary School, helping to comfort, calm, reassure and encourage students in ways that adults cannot. Recipient: Heather Stern.
- \$4,374 to provide training for six Hintgen Elementary School teachers to attend a Responsive Classroom workshop held this summer in La Crosse. The training will be a key to Hintgen's ongoing equity initiatives, integrating with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports systems to help staff improve use of language that reinforces, reminds and redirects student behavior. Recipients: Amy Oliver and staff.

- \$2,500 for Hokki stools and a variety of other seating options at Hamilton/SOTA I Elementary School, including testing "pedal desks," which allow students to pedal while they participate in classroom activities. Some funds will support using outdoor space as an alternative learning environment during good weather months. Recipients: Jourdan Stacey and Austin Mickschl.
- \$2,500 to support the first year of an innovative school garden program at Hintgen Elementary School that will involve community members of all races and ethnicities in educating students about gardening, eating healthy and making a positive impact on the Earth. Recipients: Vanessa Schmitz, Sarah Score and PaHoua Vang. *This grant is underwritten in part by the Dr. Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$2,500 to provide student activity tables, binders and other materials for use in multi-age classrooms at North Woods International Elementary School, providing more flexibility for grouping students and encouraging more team-based collaborative learning. Teachers will implement practices of a Continuous Improvement Classroom, involving students in a cycle of planning, executing, reflecting and refining their learning. Recipients: Iliana Gonzalez-DeRemer and Jessica Hembd.
- \$2,000 to support training for two Spence Elementary School teachers taking an intensive course specifically designed to support educators, helping them learn mind-body wellness practices, such as yoga, mindfulness, meditation and breath work. The two teachers will then work with others at Spence to provide instruction and practices of various wellness strategies in Spence classrooms, and to share with other La Crosse educators. Recipients: Alyssa Gray and Ronnah Metz.
- \$1,647 to purchase Hokki stools to expand use of alternative seating in a North Woods Elementary kindergarten classroom, allowing students to "wiggle while they work." Recipient: Rose Kulig.
- \$1,500 to purchase alternative seating and "fidgets" (such as stress balls) to allow Logan Middle School students freedom to move and minimize distractions, helping them concentrate and stay engaged in learning. Recipients: Kellie Schmitz, Dani Hartman, Jodi Jansky and Megan Weiser.
- \$1,259 to purchase Hokki stools and standing desks for use by regular and special education students at State Road and Hamilton elementary schools, allowing a variety of seating for students to be able to move while learning. Recipient: Lisa Hague.
- \$1,200 to purchase a variety of materials for summer school students at Logan Middle School, including construction materials, baking items, road maps, books and math manipulatives - providing items to engage students and help them develop reading and math skills. Recipient: Kellie Schmitz.
- \$1,189 to provide a variety of tools, manipulatives, games and stress relievers for use with students in the Integrated Supports program housed during school days at the Boys & Girls Club Erickson site. The objective is to reduce frequency, severity and duration of negative behaviors by providing students with alternative sensory outlets. Recipient: Michael Landers.
- \$1,158 to provide alternative seating options for Southern Bluffs Elementary School students, allowing them to choose options that best fit their body "needs," while staying engaged during instruction and work time. Recipients: Kadie Koepke.
- \$1,127 to purchase upgraded mouthpieces and ligatures for school instruments that are provided to Logan Middle School students who cannot afford their own equipment. The upgraded equipment will allow students to improve performance and will encourage them to grow musically and continue music education in high school. Recipient: Alana Seddon. *This grant is underwritten in part by the McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education.*
- \$1,000 in matching funds to bring in partners from community organizations to offer activities and field trips for Hamilton/SOTA I Elementary students during the summer session. The focus will be on

outdoor activities that are inexpensive, near the school and easily replicated by families outside of school. Recipient: Steve Michaels. *This grant is underwritten by former LPEF Board President Rachel Gundersen.*

- \$819 to purchase standing desks for use by Emerson Elementary School special education students, allowing them to get their "wiggles" out and stay on task in the classroom. Recipient: Kelly Masche. *This grant is underwritten by the Bonney Family Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$678 to purchase Bal-a-Vis-X materials (sandbags, racquetballs, balance boards, etc.) for Spence Elementary School students to engage in a series of balance, auditory and visual exercises. The exercises help students focus attention, practice cooperation and promote self-challenge - helping them renew energy and focus on learning. Recipients: Jocelyn Buxton and Paul Holman.
- \$644 to purchase two sets of "Put In Cups" for Summit Environmental Elementary School students and staff to create art displays in chain link fences around playgrounds. Recipients: Tracy Taylor Johnson and Nick O'Keefe.
- \$600 to purchase hands-on musical instruments for a Spence Elementary School teacher to use in her regular elementary classroom, engaging students in creating and playing music as part of other lessons. Recipient: Alyssa Gray.
- \$561 to buy a starter aquarium, fish, seeds and grow lights to create an aquaponics program for at-risk students in the Integrated Supports program housed at the Boys & Girls Club Erickson site. Students will learn basic scientific concepts, such as chemical cycles, plant biology and eco-system principles, while growing their own food. Recipient: Brad Skaer.
- \$528 to purchase a wide variety of books to engage Emerson Elementary School students in literacy and math together, helping them make the connections between math and real life. Recipients: Jill Fink and Tami Hillestad.
- \$197 to support access to an online animated learning program called "GoZen!" to help Spence Elementary students manage stress and cultivate social and emotional skills. Recipient: Katie Jeseritz.

In addition to more than \$61,000 in annual grants to classrooms, LPEF provides other support for La Crosse public schools, including nearly \$23,000 for Random Acts of Kindness to meet needs of students in areas such as nutrition, hygiene, clothing, and transportation. 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.

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