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\$31,000 IN GRANTS SUPPORT INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LPEF awards 17 grants in first of two rounds this school year

LA CROSSE, WI, December 11, 2014– Support for school gardens, summer school literacy, microscopes that attach to iPads and the latest welding equipment are among 17 grants totaling nearly \$31,000 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation.

Three student-led grant requests are among those being announced in surprise visits to School District of La Crosse classrooms this morning.

Other grants will pay to publish booklets on La Crosse history developed specifically for 2nd-graders and to support a community partnership bringing a Pulitzer-prize winning composer to La Crosse to work with middle-school and high-school bands. The latter grant is the first to be underwritten by a new fund, the McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education.

Grant recipients will be honored Jan. 19, 2015 at LPEF's annual Grants Award Luncheon, presented by Festival Foods.

The 17 grants were chosen from among 28 applications totaling more than \$90,000 in requests. This year, for the first time, classroom grants will be awarded in two rounds. A second round of applications are due March 3 for grants to be awarded in mid-April. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students and bring real-life experiences into the classroom.

"Each year, we're amazed at the innovative proposals and other proven practices we know will engage our school children and enhance learning," said Greg Bonney, LPEF Board President and an attorney at Johns, Flaherty & Collins. "It's a tough challenge to narrow it down from so many worthy applications."

The Grants Committee was especially impressed this year by three requests developed either entirely or in part by students. The three approved grants:

- \$3,700 to the Student Council at Lincoln Middle School/School of Technology and Arts II/Coulee Montessori, led by Rick Blasing, Student Council advisor and a school counselor. The “Rachel’s Challenge” grant builds on last year’s successful districtwide Compassion Project. It will cover the costs of a visiting speaker and trainer to “initiate and sustain a culture of kindness and compassion in our school, neighborhood and community, based upon the writings and philosophy of Rachel Scott, the first victim of the 1999 Columbine tragedy.”
- \$503.35 to help purchase standing desks as part of a pilot project at Central High School. Sophomore Sara Brekke sought funding from several sources (including Central Principal Jeff Fleig) to support purchase of 10 desks to be scattered among various classrooms. The pilot is based on research showing the negative health effects of prolonged sitting.
- \$3,850 to support purchase of a Tungsten Inert Gas welding unit and related equipment to modernize the welding complex at Central High School. Senior Elijah Dannhoff developed the detailed grant request, which was endorsed by teachers and district staff. Added equipment will be purchased by the district to complete the project.

Here is a brief summary of the 14 other grants announced today:

- \$4,000 to join with UW-La Crosse and others in support of a community visit by Artist in Residence Michael Colgrass, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer. Colgrass will work with band students from all high schools and middle schools, including help with improvisation and composition skills. Several public concerts will be held in late spring. This grant is underwritten in part by LPEF’s new McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education. Recipient: Alana Seddon, music teacher, Logan Middle School.
- \$3,180 to support ongoing school garden projects at State Road and Hamilton elementary schools. The money will enhance gardens and teach gardening skills and appreciation of fresh food in conjunction with the community Grow Your Brain program. This grant is underwritten in part by Mayo Clinic Health System Franciscan Healthcare. Recipients: Principal Dave Gluch (State Road) and Principal Steve Michaels (Hamilton/SOTA I).
- \$2,492.10 to cover printing costs for booklets on La Crosse history, developed by district staff and local experts. The colorful booklets will be used in 2nd-grade curriculum. Recipient: Sandra Brauer, district social studies supervisor and principal at North Woods Elementary.
- \$500 for “Delectable Insects and Summer Fun,” a program to improve summer school literacy among Lincoln and Logan middle school students by purchasing non-fiction, high-interest books. Recipients: Literacy Specialists Ruth Baardseth (Lincoln) and Kellie Schmitz (Logan).
- \$1,953.30 for the La Crosse Design Institute (based at Longfellow Middle School) to purchase microscopes and related peripherals to attach to iPads, allowing students to conduct environmental research in the field at places like the La Crosse River Marsh or Hixon Forest. This grant is underwritten by Festival Foods. Recipients: Teachers/Advisors Maggie McHugh and Garrett Zimmerman.

- \$1,969.48 to provide training to select teachers at Hintgen and Southern Bluffs elementary to promote learning readiness and academic success for kindergarten students. This grant will be underwritten by support from the Richard Swantz Endowment Fund, created by and in honor of the former school superintendent to support staff development. Recipients: Melissa Breuer and Laurie Kartman from Southern Bluffs; PaHoua Vang and Barbara Oettel from Hintgen.
- \$600 for “Real Men Read,” a program to promote literacy among male students at Lincoln Middle School/SOTA II. Recipient: Teacher Linda Watson.
- \$1,000 to purchase books designed to help Logan Middle School students who struggle with reading. This grant is underwritten through support of the *La Crosse Tribune*. Recipients: Literacy Specialist Kellie Schmitz and Teachers Dani Hartman, Robin Fleig and Jodi Slaats-Hughes.
- \$500 to help buy food and paper products for the Spence Elementary Cooking Club for 4th-graders and 5th-graders. This grant is underwritten by proceeds from the Duane and Carol Taebel Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation. Recipient: Teacher Katie Gudgeon.
- \$1,532.59 for materials to be used by Logan High School students in the Digital Electronics and Robotics class to design and build an unmanned aerial vehicle. This grant is underwritten in part by LPEF’s Judy and Randy Eddy Sr. Fund. Recipient: Teacher Steve Johnston.
- \$2,000 to continue a program called “Musical Diplomacy through String Quartets,” for high school and middle school students to receive instruction from clinician Busya Lugovier, who came to La Crosse through the La Crosse-Dubna (Russia) Sister City project. Recipient: Steve Michaels, district fine arts coordinator and principal at Hamilton Elementary.
- \$1,000 to support student travel and other expenses for Logan and Central students seeking the Global Education Achievement Certificate. Recipients: Teachers and Global Education Coordinators Rhonda McGowan (Logan) and John Havlicek (Central).
- \$1,200 to purchase alternative “wobble seats” and other materials for Southern Bluffs Elementary to help students focus for extended periods of time. Recipients: Teachers Leah Aubert, Marcia Gardner and Janet Koll.
- \$1,000 for the purchase of tools and materials to assist Hintgen Elementary teachers work with students who have special sensory needs, including lack of focus or the appearance of being clumsy or unmotivated in class. Recipients: Occupational Therapist Barbara Oettel and Teacher Jennifer Thill.

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 details or tickets to attend the Grants Award Luncheon, to be held Monday, Jan. 19, 2015, in the Cargill Room at The Waterfront, contact the LPEF office at 787-0226, or email David Stoeffler at: david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org.

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