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\$25,314 AWARDED FOR 23 GRANTS SUPPORTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LPEF increases total grants budget by 11.5% this school year

LA CROSSE, WI, April 6, 2016– Innovative projects to support reading, math and music, as well as student health and nutrition, in the School District of La Crosse are among 23 grants totaling \$25,314 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Among the awards delivered in surprise visits to schools today are grants for a unique music therapy program for disabled students and money to create new hands-on approaches to teach math to first-graders. One grant will allow a nutrition supervisor to turn an old salad bar into a traveling garden for students to grow their own food. Two student-led grant requests were approved, including one to buy animation software for students eager to learn new software skills.

The 23 grants were chosen from among 46 applications totaling more than \$98,000 in requests. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students and bring real-life experiences into the classroom.

Because of the large number of high-quality requests, the LPEF Board of Directors approved added money to support classroom grants, bringing the total for this school year to \$55,467 – an 11.5% increase over the prior year. The first round of 22 grants worth \$30,153 was announced in December.

“We challenged the District staff to come up with innovative ideas and offered them a second chance to apply for grants again this year,” said Tammy Larson, LPEF Board President and senior vice president/chief risk officer for Coulee Bank. “We were pleased to meet some of the increased demand by increasing the budget – but that would not be possible without the generous support from businesses and individuals who sponsor our events and respond to our appeals for donations.”

Here is a brief summary of the 23 grants officially announced today:

- \$2,100 to contract with a music therapist to teach functional and behavioral concepts through the use of music, working with Summit Elementary students with intellectual disabilities. Summit will be the first regional school to test this concept being integrated in schools elsewhere in Wisconsin. Recipients: Resa Hawes and Paula Hueners.
- \$2,000 to support community fundraising to buy a grand piano for the auditorium at Logan Middle School, for use by North Side middle school and high school students, as well as for community performances in the great, historic venue. A fundraising campaign is underway, prompted by a challenge grant from David Marck and the Marck Family Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation. Recipient: Steve Michaels, District fine arts supervisor.
- \$2,000 to contract with skilled behavioral interventionists (social workers, counselors, etc.) to work with students in small groups during intersessions at Hamilton Elementary, helping students improve social skills and other behavior in an effort to reduce disruptions and office referrals. Recipient: Steve Michaels, Hamilton principal.
- \$1,950 to support purchase of a variety of high quality, leveled books to help Logan Middle students think critically about global topics and to 'reflect who we are and what we will become.' Recipients: Kellie Schmitz and Danielle Hartman.
- \$1,750 to buy 5 Lego Mindstorms kits to supplement 15 owned by the District for use in challenging 5th-grade and middle-school students to learn important science, computer science, technology, engineering and math skills. Recipient: Jodi Brueggeman, Spence Elementary on behalf of all elementary and middle schools.
- \$1,600 to support a Fall 2016 assembly at Lincoln Middle, with students from other middle schools invited, featuring local musicians and two local individuals sharing their own tragic life stories and their experiences with compassion, forgiveness and redemption. Recipient: Rick Blasing.
- \$1,500 to help students at Northside Elementary and Hamilton Elementary build resilience through art by working with Tyanna Buie, an African-American artist from Milwaukee who uses art as a means of therapy to understand the trauma of her childhood. Recipients: Amoreena Rathke and Laura Huber at Northside; Steve Michaels at Hamilton. *This grant is underwritten in part by the Dr. Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Memorial Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$1,437 to purchase materials for use by students to create canvas murals to hang in the hallways at Logan Middle, reflecting the rich diverse cultures represented by students and staff. Recipient: Sherrie Sikora.
- \$1,300 to buy animation software and equipment for students at two project-based schools, La Crosse Design Institute and 7 Rivers Community High School. The software goes beyond the capability of free apps to challenge students to learn higher order skills and to express themselves in unique ways that engage teens. Students will develop and run an animation club to teach other students how to use the software. Recipient: Penny Reedy, Longfellow/LDI/7 Rivers Principal.

- \$1,185 to purchase books by an author expected to present a workshop at the Aug. 30 Rebuilding for Learning Summit, helping a group of elementary teachers who will attend be better prepared to learn and develop strategies for children who suffer from trauma, mental illness, abuse, neglect, etc. Recipient: Tracy Taylor-Johnson at Summit Elementary on behalf of elementary teachers throughout the District.
- \$1,068 to purchase materials to create hands-on math centers and activities for use in first-grade classrooms at Emerson Elementary, providing differentiated instruction to help each student achieve or exceed standards. Recipient: Allison Graumann on behalf of all first-grade teachers at Emerson.
- \$1,000 for a matching grant (previously announced) to support a trip to a Chicago show choir competition by 9th Street Connection, the Lincoln Middle School Show Choir. LPEF assisted the show choir in raising \$4,500 in addition to the LPEF grant. Recipient: Jennifer Gulsvig.
- \$1,000 to provide additional support for a previous LPEF grant to continue school gardens and related programming at State Road Elementary and Hamilton Elementary. The gardens provide fresh food and cultivate healthy eating habits by students. Recipient: Katie Berkedal, GROW La Crosse.
- \$906 to buy materials and tools for use in Hamilton Elementary classrooms as staff implement 'mindfulness' strategies that provide concrete ways for children to get their bodies and brains ready to learn. Recipients: Barbara Wettstein, Katherine Erickson, Jamie Sage and Courtney Kirchner.
- \$900 to support training for additional Hintgen Elementary and Southern Bluffs Elementary teachers in a program called Stimulating Maturity Through Accelerated Training. The program provides brain stimulation activities and promotes learning readiness for pre-K and kindergarten students. This is a follow-up to a 2014-15 LPEF grant. Recipients: Barbara Oettel, PaHoua Vang and Christine Rox at Hintgen Elementary; and Laurie Kartman, Michelle Powell, Vivian Storm and Linda Justin at Southern Bluffs Elementary.
- \$799 to purchase three sets of Lux Blox, an innovative set of construction blocks that allow students to make structures that curve, bend and move; students at Spence Elementary and Emerson Elementary will use the blocks to develop art, math, science and engineering skills addressed in state standards. Recipients: Ronnah Metz at Spence and Jean Crayton at Emerson. *This grant is underwritten by the Duane and Carol Taebel Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$648 to buy access to an internet-based program, Read Naturally Live, that uses visual and auditory prompts to help students develop reading skills and improve vocabulary. The program is tailored to each student's needs and will be used with middle school students with intellectual disabilities. Recipient: Diane Block at Logan Middle on behalf of all middle schools.
- \$450 to provide transportation for Summit Elementary 5th-graders to participate in concert May 12 with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Recipient: Danielle Fields.
- \$443 to recycle an old salad bar by equipping it with grow lights and other equipment so it can be used as a traveling garden, producing a crop of herbs or vegetables to be used in school

meals. The garden would start at Emerson Elementary, but could travel to one or two other schools each year. Recipient: Faye Kielley.

- \$400 to support training two Southern Bluffs Elementary School educators in the ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids Program, so they in turn can provide parenting programs for families at Southern Bluffs. Recipients: Becky Lueck and Michelle Powell.
- \$320 to buy equipment for use by an entrepreneurial student creating a student-run coffee shop at 7 Rivers Community High School. Recipient: Trinity Isbell, a sophomore at 7 Rivers, with support from teacher Keachen Abing.
- \$305 to purchase exercise equipment to provide active transitions between subjects, or "brain breaks," to increase focus by students at SOTA I (Hamilton), including students with learning disabilities and those learning the English language. Recipient: Teri Amann.
- \$253 to replace, update and supplement a set of board games originally purchased with an LPEF grant in 2009 for use in an after-school club run by community volunteers at North Woods International School. The club helps students develop higher level thinking and social skills. Recipients: Teacher Amanda Wolfgram and community members Mike Hauptert and Mark Kendhammer.

Grant recipients will be honored in January 2017 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 \$23,000 for Random Acts of Kindness 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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