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NEARLY \$42,000 AWARDED IN GRANTS TO LA CROSSE SCHOOLS

LPEF awards 32 'Gold Star Grants' supporting innovation in classrooms

LA CROSSE, WI, December 6, 2017— Projects in nearly every curriculum area – including teaching about local history, helping students create mosaics for a school garden, and building a portable desalinization machine -- are among 32 grants totaling \$41,935 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Also among this year's Gold Star Grants are projects to: provide simulation goggles to help students see how alcohol and marijuana can impair vision and judgment; support all-school assemblies at all three middle schools focused on creating a compassionate school culture; and training for two teachers who will in turn train District staff on self-care techniques to remain healthy while helping children who are dealing with trauma in their lives.

The 32 grants were chosen from among 45 applications totaling more than \$76,000. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students, and the total impact or reach of the project. This is the first round of grants awarded this school year, with a second set of applications due Feb. 26, 2018.

"These teachers deserve a 'gold star' for innovation and dedication to providing students with quality learning experiences," said Shawn Dutchin, LPEF Board President and a practice operations director for Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare.

Grant recipients, along with recipients of grants awarded last spring, will be honored along with school and community leaders Jan. 22, 2018 at LPEF's annual Grants Award Luncheon, presented by Festival Foods. This year's special honors go to:

- Corporate Partner in Education – Coulee Bank for its long-running support for LPEF and children's causes in our community.
- Leadership Award – Joe Ledvina, supervisor of buildings and grounds for the School District of La Crosse, for his work on behalf of the District and for LPEF.
- Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer Distinguished Service Award – Tom and Judy Sleik, longtime volunteers with LPEF.

Three of the 32 grants were underwritten through special support from Mayo Clinic Health System – Franciscan Healthcare:

- \$2,000 to support transportation and equipment rental for a new Hiking Club at Central High, introducing students to outdoors experiences and helping relieve stress, address mental health issues, and increase overall health. Recipient: Isaac Pischke.
- \$1,200 to purchase six Fatal Vision Alcohol Impairment Goggles, and six Fatal Vision Marijuana Simulation Goggles, plus videos and associated lesson plans and materials for use at all three middle schools and both high schools. These goggles simulate how a person's vision is impaired while drinking or using marijuana, and would be used as part of a two-day learning experience for middle school health classes, and for a deeper dive during high school health classes. Recipients: Melissa Norman, Matt Kitzerow, Jen Schieldt, Kelly Kline, Tia Teske, April Young, Tony Aguado, and Chester Janke.
- \$600 to buy 200 books that will be distributed free to families using the Spence Elementary Food Pantry. Books will help families build home libraries with age-appropriate books, and will be supplemented with tips on how to read and effectively discuss books with children. Recipients: Deb White and Dori Bertilson.

Here is a brief summary of the other 29 grants announced today in surprise visits to recipients:

- \$6,480 for two teachers to attend a four-day training program, allowing them in turn to provide training to District staff on topics related to Trauma Informed Schools, particularly self-care techniques for teachers and others to remain well and healthy as they help children who are dealing with adverse childhood experiences. Recipients: Summer Elston of Emerson Elementary and Jocelyn Buxton of Spence Elementary. *This grant is underwritten in part by Fowler & Hammer.*
- \$3,510 to support all-school assemblies at Lincoln, Longfellow and Logan middle schools featuring nationally-known motivational educator Craig Hillier, focusing on creating a more compassionate school culture. This repeats a successful event first held in March 2014, but with a completely new set of students. Recipients: Rick Blasing and Paula Johnson. *This grant is underwritten in part by Gundersen Health System.*
- \$3,000 to support a visit by JusTme (Timothy Scott Jr.), a hip-hop artist who combines music with mindfulness exercises to help students learn self-regulation and calming strategies. With added support by the schools, JusTme would spend two days each at Northside/Coulee Montessori and Hamilton/SOTA I elementary schools. Recipients: Beth Waldron and Amoreena Rathke. *This grant is underwritten by Festival Foods.*
- \$2,000 to support visits to Longfellow and Logan middle schools by singer-songwriter Luke Callen, who joins 6th-graders in social studies classes and helps them express their ideas and feelings about the subjects they are studying by creating songs they then perform in concert. Recipients: Teri Kendhammer and Katherine Storlie. *This grant is underwritten in part by Trust Point.*
- \$1,991 to purchase materials and install a permanent Story Walk at North Woods Elementary, integrating the enjoyment of reading a picture book with the benefit of being active in the outdoors. The project creates a series of stations with pages from books, and students walk/run/jump/climb in a progression to read the whole book. Recipients: Sara DePaolo and Jeanette Schams. *This grant is underwritten in part by Coulee Bank.*
- \$1,900 to create 10 durable and customized books to assist non-verbal students in communicating thoughts, ideas and needs by pointing at symbols and words. Some Pragmatic Organizational Dynamic

Display books would be part of a library for use by multiple students at Summit Elementary and other schools, while other books would be personalized to one student. Recipients: Megan Meyer and Vicki Burritt. *This grant is underwritten in part by Mathy Construction.*

- \$1,875 to purchase materials for Logan High students to design and build a Desalinization Machine to purify brackish (salt) water into contaminant-free water safe for drinking. The machine will be designed to be mobile and solar-powered, making it suitable for use in remote areas. Recipient: Steve Johnston. *This grant is underwritten in part by the Judy and Randy Eddy Sr. Fund.*
- \$1,750 to support classroom visits by artist Sherry Beames to help Spence Elementary students create nature-themed mosaic art for display in the Spence GROW Garden. Students will research forms of animals and insects of the garden and create colorful mosaics to be displayed outdoors. Recipients: Ronnah Metz, Sherry Beames and the Spence Garden Committee. *This grant is underwritten in part by Modern Crane Service.*
- \$1,604 to purchase more than 120 picture books with only illustrations and a limited number of words to express a storyline. The books will allow Lincoln Middle School students to express creativity, imagination, details and organization as they develop literacy skills through different writing experiences. Recipient: Ruth Baardseth. *This grant is underwritten in part by Independent Cycle & ATV.*
- \$1,500 to provide music enrichment sessions for students in the Intellectual Disabilities program at Lincoln Middle School, helping students adapt and develop skills, while providing a more inclusive experience, including participating in year-end talent shows. Recipient: Leah Wyland. *This grant is underwritten in part by the McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education.*
- \$1,200 to support development of lesson plans for local teachers to use to teach La Crosse history. Specifically the project ties into the oral history project *Hear, Here*, which features first-person narratives about historical experiences in the exact spot they occurred in downtown La Crosse. Curriculum will be created for 4th-grade students and high school students, supplementing lessons previously created for 8th-graders. Recipient: Ariel Beaujot, UW-La Crosse. *This grant is underwritten in part by Dairyland Power Cooperative.*
- \$1,158 to purchase materials and sets of Story Stones, which have characters, objects and events painted on them and can be used to tell stories without a script. The stones will be used by English Language Learners and other students at Summit Elementary to increase language proficiency, including retelling stories they have read or heard. Recipient: Mary Zong.
- \$950 to buy two Osmo Kits, plus related software, for use at Hamilton/SOTA I Elementary. The game system is used in concert with school iPads and will be integrated with curriculum for various subjects (art, spelling, reading, coding, music, etc.) to inspire creativity, creative thinking, communication and collaboration. Recipient: Carrie Wuensch-Harden. *This grant is underwritten by Mooresmiles.*
- \$838 to purchase more than 60 books for use by 5th-grade students at Spence Elementary, providing them with accurate, culturally responsive picture books and chapter books reflecting indigenous voices and history. This helps address Wisconsin standards for the studies of federally-recognized Native American nations and tribal communities. Recipients: Alyssa Gray, Katie Gudgeon and Peter Schmitz. *This grant is underwritten by the Duane and Carol Taebel Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$810 to buy a one-year site license for use of software that includes word prediction, specialized subject vocabulary with definitions, and support with spelling, helping Central and Logan high school students with writing assignments. Recipient: Anika Paaren-Sdano. *This grant is underwritten by State Bank Financial.*

- \$800 to provide a one-day training program for up to 60 District elementary teachers on the use of the Circle of Security, a conceptual approach for teachers and caretakers to work with children to build and maintain relationships and overcome behaviors that get in the way of their learning and other students' learning. Recipients: Jocelyn Buxton and Shelly Long. *This grant is underwritten by the Richard Swantz Endowment Fund, created by and in honor of the former school superintendent to support staff development.*
- \$800 to buy collaborative learning games, art supplies, puzzles, problem-solving centers and STEM activities for use by 1st-grade students at North Woods Elementary, giving them stimulating and enjoyable opportunities to start off their morning, as opposed to photocopied morning seat work used while the teacher is greeting students, taking attendance, etc. Recipients: Sarah Kratt, Tara Schuttenhelm, Leah Justin and Nicole Brudos. *This grant is underwritten by Wells Fargo.*
- \$720 to buy 30 sets of four Spanish readers, providing materials that are culturally relevant and level appropriate for Logan High language students, including those in the Global Scholars program. Recipients: Katie Beyer and Rhonda McGowan. *This grant is underwritten by LHI.*
- \$697 to buy trees and related signage for a Tree Walk at Longfellow Middle, creating a park-like setting and outdoor learning space. QR codes will allow students to link via iPads to unique web pages that students can maintain with notes, photos and related school projects. Recipient: Elizabeth Ramsay. *This grant is underwritten by Altra Federal Credit Union.*
- \$640 to buy multiple mats made of durable anti-slip materials and containing colored liquids that move under a clear surface in response to pressure. The sensory floor tiles will be used in every Emerson Elementary classroom, providing a "think spot" for students in need of behavior modification, helping them regulate emotions and stimulate sensory development. Recipients: Nancy Wettstein-Weaver and Alicia Place. *This grant is awarded in honor of Susan Paudler, who retired from the School District last June after 34 years of teaching, most recently as a 2nd Grade teacher at Emerson. Grant support was provided by Fowler & Hammer.*
- \$560 to provide training for a North Woods Elementary teacher in a program that helps pre-K and kindergarten students develop skills to succeed in school. The Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training focuses on helping students who come to school unprepared, including many from homes of poverty or trauma. Recipient: Jeanette Schams.
- \$548 to buy various materials, including a movable table with a plastic bin that can be filled with sand, water or other materials, allowing for sensory experiences for Summit Elementary students with autism, intellectual disabilities and visual impairments. Recipient: Kasey Pomeroy.
- \$531 to purchase lighting kits, tripods and other equipment for two, portable mini-sets for students at Longfellow Middle and Logan High to use as workspaces to create quality stop-motion style animation and other original video content. Recipient: Lisa Lenarz.
- \$500 to provide a clinic for Logan High, Logan Middle and other District coaches in an approach that emphasizes three dimensions in developing student athletes: physical development; mental aspects (confidence, emotional control); and heart (character and values). Recipient: Jordan Gilge.
- \$420 to buy sets of two novels, plus other materials, for use in 7th-grade social studies at Logan Middle School, helping students understand refugees and global refugee crises. Recipients: Kristi Moulton, Christina Fenton, Jesse Martinez and Heidi Jones. *This grant is awarded in honor of Terri Johnson, who retired from the School District last June after 33 years of teaching, most recently as a social studies teacher at Lincoln Middle School. Grant support was provided by Fowler & Hammer.*

- \$400 to purchase a variety of hand-held manipulatives (tweezers, tongs, putty, pop beads, etc.) for use by Spence kindergarten students to help them develop fine motor skills. Recipient: Julie Wilson.
- \$341 to purchase a Qball, a wireless microphone inside a soft ball, designed to help amplify the voice of quiet speakers, and also as an interactive tool for students to use in order to participate in classroom discussions while moving around. The Qball will be tested in a 4th-grade classroom at State Road Elementary. Recipient: Amanda Faust.
- \$339 to provide lanyards, buttons and other materials for students at Hamilton/SOTA I Elementary to earn badges for completing lessons and learning technology skills. The goal is to encourage students to properly use devices, and also to help support peers and staff with technology issues. Recipient: Carrie Wuensch-Harden.
- \$273 to purchase Mindflex games for use by North Woods Elementary students, teaching them how to focus and calm their own brains in order to guide a ball through a series of obstacles. The goal is to help students overcome emotional issues caused by trauma, anxiety or depression. Recipient: Amanda Wolfgram.

In addition to about \$70,000 in annual Gold Star Grants to classrooms, LPEF provides other support for La Crosse public schools, including nearly \$25,000 for Random Acts of Kindness to meet needs of students in areas such as nutrition, hygiene, clothing, and transportation. In total, through the support of generous donors, LPEF will provide more than \$350,000 in aid to the District this year. 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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