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SOUND STUDIO, 'KINDNESS WEEK,' EXPANDED ACCESS TO FREE FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS AMONG 22 'GOLD STAR GRANTS' AWARDED BY LPEF

LA CROSSE, WI, March 17, 2020 – Start-up funding for a sound studio, support for “Kindness Week” activities at two elementary schools, and a grant to create paintings with Hmong culture imagery to be displayed at schools, are among 22 grants totaling nearly \$41,000 announced today by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Also included is a grant to help the District implement a program to provide free feminine hygiene products for middle schools and high schools, building off student-led efforts.

The 22 grants were chosen from among 28 applications requesting more than \$74,000. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students, and the total impact or reach of the project. This is the second round of LPEF Gold Star Grants this school year, bringing the total awarded to just short of \$82,000.

“Even during difficult times, teachers in La Crosse schools are looking for ways to bring innovative new ideas into their classrooms,” said Rochelle Nicks, LPEF Board President and Director of Mission Advancement for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. “We’re glad to partner with these educators on projects to enhance the education of students.”

Here is a brief summary of the 22 grants, totaling \$40,880, announced today:

- \$5,097 to purchase a state-of-the-art touchscreen mixing monitor and two microphone packages, providing the foundation for a sound studio at the new home of La Crosse Polytechnic (the combined La Crosse Design Institute and 7 Rivers High School). The goal is to find other grant funding and District funds to create a full studio for students to mix, create and record their own music as part of their academic experience, and to explore career pathways. Recipient: Katy Weber.
- \$5,035 to buy dispensers and an initial set of supplies to provide free feminine hygiene products in every girls' bathroom in District middle schools and high schools. The District intends to budget money to resupply dispensers. This project completes student-led efforts at Central High and Longfellow Middle School, and the Logan High FEM club plans a series of educational visits to all middle schools to answer questions students might have about feminine hygiene. Recipient: Anna Goldbeck, on behalf of all middle schools and high schools.
- \$4,000 to support a partnership with the La Crosse Public Library to bring award-winning author Meg Medina to La Crosse, including speaking to all middle school and high school students. Medina is a Cuban-American author who writes powerful stories to help young people "make sense of what happens to you in life." Recipients: Kristi Moulton, Linda Jerome, Cindy Halter, Denise Kuethe-Strudthoff, Linda Watson, Lila Planavsky
- \$3,900 to bring youth speaker Brian Williams to North Woods International and State Road Elementary as part of Kindness Week activities. Students will learn essential skills to help them be safe, respectful

and responsible, increasing student engagement at the start of a new school year in building friendships and processing conflicts. Recipients: Kelsie Bolstad and Lucas Ackerson

- \$2,632 to provide training to teachers and literacy specialists in the principles of Universal Design for Learning, which are research-based approaches providing teachers with tools to help students to become expert learners. Students learn self-assessment techniques, set goals and monitor their own progress. The program dovetails with District equity initiatives. Recipients: Katie Kusilek, Katherine Keeney, Ruth Baardseth
- \$2,500 to support purchase of a new sound system for the gymnasium at Longfellow Middle School, which is the only middle school without an auditorium. The new system will enhance music performances and improve usability for assemblies and sports events. Recipients: Charles Schreder, Matt Kitzerow
- \$2,500 to support a photographer-in-residence at Northside/Coulee Montessori, teaching photo skills to students and providing 30 or more families with professional family portraits they otherwise could not afford. Several family photos will be printed, framed and hung at various locations in the school, helping connect students and families with the school and celebrating that families come in many different forms. Recipients: Beth Hartung, Amoreena Rathke, Laura Huber
- \$2,325 to support a 6-day folk dance residency at North Woods International, culminating in a Family Folk Dance in conjunction with the school's Global Arts Night in Spring 2021. In addition, all District elementary teachers would receive a training session on folk dancing. Recipients: Amanda Wolfgram, Joshua Hein, Elizabeth Becker, Jill Schams, Amy Johnson-Pierce
- \$2,250 to purchase materials to be used as part of the grand opening of La Crosse Polytechnic in its new downtown location. Students will be developing exhibits, unique games and other experiences in partnership with Downtown Mainstreet businesses to showcase student creativity and various aspects of the project-based school. Recipient: Joshua Wilke
- \$1,556 to buy backpacks and a set of outdoor exploration materials, such as binoculars, magnifiers, nature guides and pedometers, for use by students exploring the unique natural setting and forest surrounding State Road Elementary School. Recipients: Jeanie Ruprecht, Carrie Quick, Charlie Alexander
- \$1,500 to support purchase of sensory playground panels and materials to improve the State Road Elementary playground and provide alternatives for students who need a more structured play time or breaks to regulate feelings. Recipients: Jac Lyga, Chris Kjos, Julie Van Dunk
- \$1,000 to engage students and families in creating paintings with Hmong culture imagery to be displayed at schools throughout the District in support of cultural understanding for all staff and students. Recipient: NaoHoua Tony Yang
- \$1,000 to buy leveled reading materials with multicultural characters to better engage a diverse student body at Hintgen Elementary during small group literacy instruction. Recipients: Kris Markworth, Kim Thornton, Karissa Gilbertson, Jenny Thill
- \$950 to send Logan High special education students for a full day of training at the Eagle Bluff Learning Center, including access to the high ropes challenge course. The adventure will promote personal growth, build confidence and strengthen group bonds. Recipients: Philip Klar, Gregory Milligan
- \$895 to purchase Kindhearted Kids curriculum and stuffed dogs and cats that State Road second-graders would adopt as part of a character education program teaching core values of fairness, kindness, respect, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, perseverance and citizenship. Recipients: Carrie Quick, Jeanie Ruprecht, Charlie Alexander

- \$890 to purchase a large board for the playground at Hintgen Elementary with symbols and signs to allow non-verbal communication between students and adults, helping students better communicate their needs and wants (needing help, wanting to swing, etc.) and raise awareness for students of all abilities. Recipients: Courtney Kirker, Emily Juneau, Kali O'Neill, Jill Utz Lebakken
- \$825 to buy materials for students in grades 3-5 throughout the District to participate in the Academic Biathlon, a creative problem-solving adventure that teaches and rewards creative thinking, cooperative brainstorming, general intellect, leadership and a flair for the dramatic. Recipient: Archie Barribeau
- \$522 to buy copies of a murder mystery novel with a contemporary and teen-relevant plot, engaging reluctant readers in the Logan High LaCrossroads program, and concluding with a murder mystery dinner where students will practice social skills. Recipients: Dorothy Hart and Hayley Rice McMullen
- \$500 to support a visit to SOTA I by a Latinx artist who specializes in anime. He will teach students how to create their own anime characters and provide materials for this art form that is widely used in graphic novels popular with young students. Recipient: Maria Henry
- \$397 to provide training for Hintgen Elementary's behavior support teacher, and buy Bal-a-Vis-X materials used in helping students with behavior issues learn to self-regulate and increase time on task in regular classrooms. Recipient: Krista Kaminski
- \$391 to buy whiteboards and dry erase markers for installation in the Summit Environmental School gymnasium, allowing students to answer questions and assess learning, rather than using awkward paper and pencil exercises. Recipients: Nick O'Keefe, Lisa Boyer
- \$215 to buy three trail cameras to capture pictures and video of animals crossing school grounds around Summit Environmental School. Students will be able to study wild game tracks and the animals that made them. Recipients: Nick O'Keefe, Lisa Boyer, Tracy Taylor-Johnson, Bree Lawrence, Erica Rasmussen

In addition to about \$82,000 this school year in Gold Star Grants, and another \$12,000 in Rapid Response Grants, LPEF provides other support for La Crosse schools, including about \$30,000 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 about \$330,000 in aid to the District this year. LPEF's mission is to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse and to promote community support for public education. For more information, contact LPEF at 787-0226, or email David Stoeffler at: david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org.

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