

For Immediate Release

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Ridgewood Education Foundation Awards Spring Grants

At the February 25th Ridgewood Board of Education meeting, the Ridgewood Education Foundation (REF) presented a variety of classroom mini-grants totaling \$8,984.58. For the Spring 2008 cycle, the Foundation made awards to eight grant applicants from five different Ridgewood schools covering a wide range of study. The Spring 2008 grants are as follows: A Compass Rose for the "Cosmic Classroom" (Hawes); Kids Unite to Recycle (Orchard); Literacy - The Window to the World (Somerville); The Somerville News and Beyond (Somerville); Proud to Be American (Willard); Creating Individualized Instruction Opportunities Using Technology (GWMS); Experiencing the Culture of Latin Dance (GWMS); and, "Shakespeare Live! *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (GWMS).

A Compass Rose for the Cosmic Classroom: This project will become part of Hawes Elementary School's outdoor classroom devoted to the study of space by adding a compass rose inlaid into the walkway surrounding the semi-circular walls. Students will assist professional landscape designers in building the compass rose. The Hawes Cosmic Classroom already provides hands-on, interactive learning environment for furthering the students' knowledge of solar and lunar movements: The Compass Rose will provide additional learning for students not only in daytime astronomy, but also across other subject areas, including geography and map skills, math, science, art and literature. This grant was written by Mr. Terry Dunn, 2nd grade teacher; and Ms. Emily Young, Hawes parent, and was awarded in the amount of \$3,075.00.

Kids Unite to Recycle was written by the student recycling club at Orchard Elementary School to request funding for additional recycling bins at Orchard. The objective of Orchard School's recycling club is to increase the awareness of the importance of recycling, to develop a sense of student ownership and leadership and to implement a student-initiated recycling program. These third and fourth grade students have worked hard to organize and distribute paper recycling bins in every classroom, and with the funds from this grant, they will begin glass and plastic recycling. This grant was written by the Orchard Recycling Club and teacher Sawyer Hutto-Blake, and was awarded in the amount of \$399.00.

Literacy - Window to the World will enable Somerville Elementary School to purchase three sets of books and instructional materials called *Quickreads*, an innovative reading system designed to enhance the reading curriculum already in place for students who learn differently or are currently performing below grade level expectations. Teachers will use Quickreads to help their students develop higher-level thinking skills and increase comprehension of content area materials. This grant was written by Somerville teachers Christine Meltzer, Susan Chambre, Maria Maresciallo & Shiva Khaloyan, and was awarded in the amount of \$1200.00.

The Somerville News and Beyond will enable students and teachers at Somerville Elementary School to produce their own videos that can be used to enhance the curriculum. This grant recognizes that there are many different types of learners, and that traditional teaching methods do not always allow for all students to demonstrate their abilities. Students and teachers can use the video production for many different subject areas -- this versatile technology can help to ignite imaginations and make learning come alive. This grant was written by Theresa Ross, 5th grade teacher; Gabrielle King, 4th grade teacher; and Liz Drennan, media specialist and was awarded in the amount of \$809.40.

Proud to Be American is this year's "Theme Day" at Willard Elementary School in which the students will learn about American history through a creative, multi-faceted and thematic approach. Teachers and outside presenters will highlight the importance of patriotism, American history and geography through music, art, hands-on activities, crafts and live museums featuring famous Americans. In partnership, the Willard HSA and the Ridgewood Education Foundation will fund the presentation of assemblies entitled "This Land Is Your Land" and "The Revolutionary War Comes to the Hermitage". This grant was written by Donald Friel, 2nd grade teacher; Tara Hutchison, music teacher, and Derek Durling, 3rd grade teacher, and was awarded in the amount of \$1,343.50.

Creating Individualized Instruction Opportunities Using Technology will give students individualized instruction through the use of technology within the Earth Science curriculum at George Washington Middle School. The grant writer noted that Earth Science concepts are often abstract making them difficult to comprehend for many eighth graders. This grant will allow the purchase of software that will greatly enhance teachers' abilities to differentiate and individualize instruction for our students. This grant was written by Suzanne Zilvetti, and was awarded in the amount of \$757.68.

Experiencing the Culture of Latin Dance: A professional dance team will teach Spanish eighth grade students at George Washington Middle School several Latin and ballroom dances. Students will enjoy a cultural dance experience in this extra enrichment activity in workshop-style dance classes. This enrichment event follows a research project that the Spanish students did in the fall on the history of Spanish and Latin music and dance. This grant was written by GW teachers Kelly Wilson, Maria Zach and Ann Brown, and was awarded in the amount of \$500.00.

Shakespeare Live! *A Midsummer Night's Dream* brings a professional performance to GWMS to enhance the students' understanding of the richness of Shakespeare's dramatic tradition. The live in-school performance is followed by a "talk-back" discussion between the students and cast and crew. For many GW students, this is their first experience with the work of William Shakespeare. This grant was written by GW teacher Vanessa Calderone, and was awarded in the amount of \$900.00.

The mission of the Ridgewood Education Foundation is to enhance the quality of education in the Ridgewood Public Schools. Since 1989 the Foundation has awarded

more than \$400,000 in grants for special projects created by forward thinking teachers, parents, students and alumni. We are able to do this thanks to the generous support of our members and other friends.

Whether it is through these Classroom Grants, the RHS Arts Fund, Alumni Teacher Development Fund Grants or, most recently, the ongoing North Star Literacy Campaign the Foundation's objective is to support the quality of education in the Village's schools in whatever way we can.

The Foundation receives no government funding and is solely supported by its members. The Ridgewood Education Foundation is an IRC § 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

For more information about Foundation membership and programs, visit our website at www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org, or call 201.652.2903.