



THE MINNETONKA PUBLIC
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM

2014 – 2015 Teacher Grants

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Clear Springs Elementary School

Get Hooked on Nooks

Lead Teacher/Staff: Liz Leingang

Summary: This grant will purchase 6 Nook e-readers and eBooks, which will be used in reading groups and small group instruction. The advantage of eBooks is students can easily look up words, highlight and post electronic sticky notes with comments and even listen to the book read aloud, while they are reading. The instructor can prepare notes, questions and study guides and load them right on the Nook. When reading an e-book, students can choose reading material, font size, etc. that is appropriate to their level.

Awarded \$604

Face to Face Across the World

Lead Teacher/Staff: Delette Lemon

Summary: Over the past year, a relationship has been developed with schools in Awutu-Mankessim, Ghana, West Africa. This grant will fund modem cords and internet services for three computers in schools there. This will allow students in Minnetonka to email and Skype with students and staff from Ghana. The students will make meaningful connections with students from another culture and students on both sides of the globe will benefit from the partnership.

Awarded \$840 from the Nick Duff Multicultural Fund

Robots for Tots—Part 2**Lead Teacher/Staff: Andy Lundheim**

Summary: This grant will fund beginner, programmable robots called Bee-Bots. It is prebuilt with controls that allow programming without computers or additional software. These simple robots will be a great way to engage first graders in programming. Instructors have 150 challenges which students are presented with to try to solve and test their solution with the Bee-Bots. This incorporates logic and sequencing as well as communication and collaboration

Awarded \$1,300**African Drumming****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennifer Kimball (combined Clear Springs/Scenic Heights grant)**

Summary: Drums are powerful musical instruments used in one form or another in every culture around the world. This grant will be used to purchase djembe drums that will be played throughout the year. Students will experience playing in a drumming circle, which provides a sense of unity and connectedness, as well as playing individually and being able to work on their own musical creation.

Awarded \$990 from the Nick Duff Multicultural Fund and \$991 from Minnetonka Alumni Association Fine Arts Fund**Deephaven Elementary School****Computer Coding “Unplugged”****Lead Teacher/Staff: Julie Rothman**

Summary: This grant will provide hands-on science and engineering kits to be shared among 1st grade classrooms that are intended to promote “unplugged” coding lessons for students. The objectives are to feel comfortable tackling and solving problems, learn and use STEM and coding vocabulary and to improve teamwork skills. These kits will be embedded into current curriculum and will be the platform for future years of coding instruction.

Awarded \$454**iPad as a Calming Device for Use Within the Classroom****Lead Teacher/Staff: Michelle Makres**

Summary: Grant funding is for two iPads, apps and headphones. These will allow students who need calming input throughout the day to help focus. The iPads will help the kids engage in an appropriate activity while staying in the classroom, rather than leave and go to another room. It will be easy to tailor to each student’s needs through a variety of app options and will reduce classroom interruptions.

Awarded \$900**Excelsior Elementary School****Chinese Books on Kindle****Lead Teacher/Staff: Yuan Wang—with Scenic Heights**

Summary: Classroom teachers will share iPads installed with Kindle books in Chinese. This will allow students to read as well as listen to the Chinese books. The pronunciations and audio files will help reinforce their language skills and allow students to explore areas that they feel they need to improve on and that they are interested in. This is especially helpful when students are at varying skill levels.

Awarded \$480

Handwriting without Tears**Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennifer Hanson and Kelly Fisher**

Summary: This program combines active instruction, manipulatives and handwriting tools to help instruct kindergarten and first grade students with their writing. Currently the district does not have a formal handwriting curriculum, and even in our technological age, this is still a critical skill and fundamental for all kids to learn! This program is age appropriate, hands on and fun.

Awarded \$660**Groveland Elementary School****Sensory Friendly and Accessible Environment****Lead Teacher/Staff: Amy Raffelson**

Summary: The number of students with Sensory/Motor Processing issues has been increasing and is a large area of need in the schools. Studies have shown that having a sensory friendly environment to learn in can dramatically increase the progress and achievement of students with these needs. This grant is to purchase tools such as light covers to dim fluorescent lights, study carrels to provide a quiet area, slate boards, hokki stools, noise cancelling headphones and weighted blankets.

Awarded \$1,155**“Wade into Science” Stem Science Technology****Lead Teacher/Staff: Sara Lovelace**

Summary: This grant will allow 1st and 2nd graders to engage in hands-on science lessons focusing on specific topics throughout the year such as fall nature study, winter animal tracking, spring birds and insect classification. The students will be given opportunities to design investigations and engage in scientific principles, thereby fostering curiosity, creativity and critical thinking skills.

Awarded \$960**iEngaged Learner****Lead Teacher/Staff: Sheri Simpson**

Summary: This project will give students the opportunity to use coding, programming, and problem solving skills to program iRobots to move, complete tasks, play music and build. Students will engage in problem solving and computer literacy through play. These robots are a fun and un-inhibiting way to begin to learn about coding and computer programming.

Awarded \$1,000**Close the Gap! Let’s Help Our Disadvantaged Special Needs****Lead Teacher/Staff: Kelly Pederson**

Summary: Several students have been identified who teachers feel would greatly benefit from having individual iPads. These students have multiple needs in the areas of organization, focus and homework completion and being responsible for their homework on their iPads would likely help them grow significantly in their academics and independence.

Awarded \$1,500**Tower Garden****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennifer Torres**

Summary: Tower gardens will provide hands on experience to students in kindergarten and first grade as they grow produce from seeds. They will be able to use scientific methods and recording/observation techniques as the plants grow. Variables, such as light and water can be changed to measure their effect on the plant growth. Kids love to watch things grow and will even be able to eat what they have studied!

Awarded \$850

Minnewashta Elementary School**Tools to Help Spanish Immersion Kindergarten****Lead Teacher/Staff: Rebekah Wunderlich**

Summary: This grant request is for a Rainbow Carpet along with audio programs that will help teach kindergarteners about personal space. The carpet is a great way for students to visualize boundaries, which is especially important for kids in their first year of school as they are learning to interact with each other and follow directions. Exercise and brain breaks help the kids adjust—these tools will be a fun way for kids to do that!

Awarded \$653**Scenic Heights Elementary School****Chinese Calligraphy Tools****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jing Yang**

Summary: This grant will provide Chinese calligraphy tools such as brushes, ink and rice paper to first graders. Calligraphy is a widely practiced art form in the Chinese culture. Learning this traditional art form will help students visualize the structure and learn the meaning of the Chinese characters and have a closer understanding of an important part of the Chinese culture. Additional students will be able to use these tools during cultural activities.

Awarded \$500 from the Nick Duff Multicultural Fund**Art Reproductions****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jonathan Maki**

Summary: Student's efforts in art will be celebrated through this grant by creating art reproductions to fill the Arts Center Gallery during the summer. The art reproductions will include photographs of students making art and quotes about the values of visual art and creative thinking. This will be a dynamic and creative environment for people to see the value of art and it will increase the visibility of Minnetonka's art program.

Awarded \$1,000 from the MAA Fine Arts Fund**African Drumming****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennifer Kimball (combined Clear Springs/Scenic Heights grant)**

Summary: Drums are powerful musical instruments used in one form or another in every culture around the world. This grant will be used to purchase djembe drums that will be played throughout the year. Students will experience playing in a drumming circle, which provides a sense of unity and connectedness, as well as individually being able to work on their own musical creation.

Awarded \$990 from the Nick Duff Multicultural Fund and \$991 from Minnetonka Alumni Association Fine Arts Fund**Math Support Family Fun Night****Lead Teacher/Staff: Kim Ewen**

Summary: The grant will help to provide a Family Fun Math Night at each of the elementary schools. This event will help the teachers connect with parents and help the students and families see the fun in math. Math games will be purchased for varying math levels and will be available for students to play in groups during the school day and for families to try during the events.

Awarded \$780

Minnetonka Middle School East

Rachel's Challenge

Lead Teacher/Staff: Rae Ann Camp

Summary: This grant will pay for the Rachel's Challenge program to be presented to 6th and 7th graders so they can help spread the message of kindness and compassion. The current 8th graders participated in this program when they were in 6th grade. This program is designed to start a chain reaction of kindness and compassion among middle school students. A presentation about Rachel, one of the students killed in Columbine, will motivate students to make positive changes in the way that they treat others. Student leaders and staff will be trained to guide students to sustain the momentum of change through the Friends of Rachel Club.

Awarded \$3,700

MME Garage Club

Lead Teacher/Staff: Melanie DeWitt

Summary: The objective of the Garage Club is to introduce middle school students to the eight pillars of innovation and to provide a stage to practice these pillars. This would be a before school club, researching current innovations in the world and solving challenges through innovation.

Awarded \$50

Young Filmmakers Camp

Lead Teacher/Staff: Bill Finnerty

Summary: A summer course has been developed to introduce students to the origins, elements and techniques involved in the production of movies. Funds will go toward purchasing video cameras students will use to create their own short films. Practicing shooting, editing, creating narrative and focusing on storytelling will also be part of this summer course.

Awarded \$970

Composer in Residence

Lead Teacher/Staff: Dan Mollick

Summary: This grant will introduce students to music composition with the help of composer Sarah Miller from MacPhail Center for Music. Students will have class periods with hands on instruction from the composer, and then they will use Noteflight, a music composition website, to create their own original composition.

Awarded \$1,100

Technology and the New PE

Lead Teacher/Staff: Jason Opsal

Summary: This grant will fund heart rate monitoring equipment, which students will use to assess their physical activity and analyze their fitness output. Ultimately this data will help to correlate student fitness to academic achievement, health and behavior, with teacher and parent input.

Awarded \$1,750

Minnetonka Middle School West

Composer in Residence

Lead Teacher/Staff: Laura Olivier

Summary: This grant will introduce students to music composition with the help of composer Sarah Miller from MacPhail Center for Music. Students will have class periods with hands on instruction from the composer, and then they will use Noteflight, a music composition website, to create their own original composition.

Awarded \$1,100

MMW Fine Arts Digital Sound Board

Lead Teacher/Staff: Danielle Pittel

Summary: This grant will help purchase a digital sound board for the MMW cafetorium for use in fine arts performances. The sound equipment will be used for school plays, musicals and the talent show as well as other fine arts performances. Students will benefit from using this in all rehearsals and they will be trained how to use it.

Awarded \$4,800

Skype an Author

Lead Teacher/Staff: Lisa Lewis

Summary: Allowing students to Skype with an author gives them the opportunity to see that individual as a 'real' person and empowers students to think of themselves as authors and can motivate students in their own writing endeavors. It helps them to view the writing process as an accessible adventure that might inspire them in their own writing.

Awarded \$1,350 from the MAA Fine Arts Endowment Fund

21st Century Culture of Learning and Team Building

Lead Teacher/Staff: Tom Condon

Summary: This grant funds "tools" --equipment for team building activities. The goal is to create an effective and engaging way to bring students and staff together to build trust and break down barriers between individuals and groups. This team building curriculum will be delivered throughout the year for all 6th graders with activities and team challenges as well as a big celebration at the end of the year.

Awarded \$1,803

MME/MMW Joint Grant

Google Nexus Devices to get 6th Graders Excited

Lead Teacher/Staff: Lisa Reed

Summary: This grant will be used to purchase Nexus devices for a unit in STEM on app development and the basic concepts behind object oriented programming—what it takes to create a prototype for an app. This will also help students understand the logic behind programming and encourage them to use their creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills.

Awarded \$4,139

Minnetonka High School

Sensory Motor Classroom for Neuro-Different Students at MHS

Lead Teacher/Staff: Mary Beth Bloom

Summary: This grant will provide students, who are neurologically-atypical, with the opportunity to calm, regulate and organize, in order to benefit from instruction and learning in center-based and mainstream classrooms. Support will be provided by equipping a room with specific items and opportunities that students can access in order to be prepared to learn and interact in the classroom. Students will be able to request a break to use the room, or use it to prepare themselves for a lesson. This will have behavioral, social, and communication benefits for the students involved.

Awarded \$1,750

Legacy Project: Continuing on Excellence

Lead Teacher/Staff: Danny Walter

Summary: The goal of the Legacy Project is to take the Minnetonka tradition of serving the greater good to the next level by having each graduating class choose a specific focus for their fund raising and volunteer efforts. The three main components of this goal are for: 1)MHS to be a leader in teaching students how to use their unique gifts and talents for the common good to create change 2) that students take these skills and experiences with them when they leave MHS and 3)the community and larger society will benefit from our students' leadership.

Awarded \$1,200 from the Youth Citizenship Development Fund

Video Production Sound Bar and Receiver

Lead Teacher/Staff: Steve Nugent

Summary: This grant will fund a receiver and sound bar for the video production room. This upgraded audio equipment will allow students to hear the projects they present with the same quality their videos are made with. This will motivate the students with a more professional finished quality product.

Awarded \$850 from the MAA Fine Arts Endowment Fund

Jewelry 3D Printer

Lead Teacher/Staff: Steve Nugent

Summary: The purpose of this grant is to purchase a computer and 3D printer to allow students to create computer designed jewelry. The printer will print in plastic from which a mold can be made and cast in sterling silver. This will allow students to use current technology and enable them to create a more intricate design then they can currently by hand. Students will still learn how to make wax carvings and models, but will also be able to design using computer programming.

Awarded \$2,050

Final Frontier

Lead Teacher/Staff: Brian Olson

Summary: Through this grant, students will be able to learn through an interactive approach about wireless technologies, space communications and amateur radio. The components to assemble a school portable amateur radio station with satellite capabilities will be purchased and students will be assisted in attaining an Amateur Radio License, which will incorporate STEM goals into a lifelong learning experience.

Awarded \$1,690

Digital Drawing Tablets**Lead Teacher/Staff: Paul Olson**

Summary: The Art Department offered a highly popular new class last year—Digital Drawing, that used Wacom Tablets. These tablets are state of the art drawing tablets that are used in the industry. Our student’s use of these tablets in high school gives them a competitive advantage as they are using the latest technology and tools that they will use in future careers. The tablets bring relevance and credibility to the visual arts department and let students use their creativity using 21st century skills.

Awarded \$8,000**Biotech in the Classroom****Lead Teacher/Staff: Stephanie Nelson**

Summary: This grant will allow students in the Biology G and Principles of Biology curriculum the opportunity to use biotech lab skills such as PCR, gel electrophoresis and micropipette use. This will offer them the chance to see what technology is currently being used in the field and may spark an interest in the biotech industry for someone who may not have experienced all it has to offer. It gives students a chance to feel like “real scientists” and explore areas they may not have considered.

Awarded \$1,650**Opening Up the World****Lead Teacher/Staff: Maggie Pistner**

Summary: Through this grant, students in MHS English classes will read multicultural texts and then outside resources, such as the Penumbra Theater, Mixed Blood Theater, Minneapolis Indian Culture Center, will be utilized to supplement the curriculum and give the students a deeper understanding of diversity and other cultures. Artists may come to the classroom or students may attend a performance and then draw on these experiences in their learning assessments.

Awarded \$500 from the Nick Duff Multicultural Fund**All Schools****Library in My Pocket: eBooks for K-12 Students****Lead Teacher/Staff: Media Specialists at all schools**

Summary: The purpose of this grant is to significantly expand the collection of eBooks for each school in the district. With the growing use of iPads (as well as other electronic readers) this grant will purchase eBooks helping to meet the needs of our 21st century learners. The eBooks will provide curricular and enjoyable reading for students and staff, and will be accessible to Minnetonka students and staff at all times...even throughout the summer!

Awarded \$20,000**Minnetonka Community Education/Early Childhood and Family Education****See Me Explore! Science Kits for Two and Three Year Olds****Lead Teacher/Staff: Linda Morantez**

Summary: This grant will help to purchase 5 science kits which will be rotated between each of the 2 and 3 year old classrooms. There will be kits that explore The Five Senses, Matter (Liquids and Solids), Magnets, Nature, and Weather. The materials included will be great tools for hands on discovery for young learners. The kits tie directly into the 21st century skills of analysis, reasoning and information development...and the kids just think they are having fun!

Awarded \$500

Math Manipulatives for Wee Ones**Lead Teacher/Staff:** Deborah Hughes

Summary: This grant will provide support in the form of math manipulatives and materials for the Creative Curriculum math goals for the students ages 2-5 who are enrolled in Minnetonka Preschool classes. These will help to support students as they work toward reaching their math goals and objectives in the Singapore Math and Creative Curriculum. Learning experiences that include 21st century fluencies are being developed for the students and this support will enhance those opportunities for young students.

Awarded \$1000**Transition Plus****Canine Inspired Change****Lead Teacher/Staff:** Lisa Loeding

Summary: Transition Plus strives to offer programming that is beneficial for long term growth of the young adults involved in the program. This grant will allow students to assist with training certified therapy dogs to run an agility course. This will be taught with professional dog trainers, and will help the students with communication skills as well as having empathy toward others, encouraging team members and working toward a final performance. The benefits of animal therapy for some students can be limitless and have a profound impact.

Awarded \$500