



**ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Taylor Education Administration Complex**  
**200 Dailey Drive**  
**Orange, VA 22960**  
**www.ocss-va.org**  
**540-661-4550**      **540-661-4599 Fax**

## Press Release

# ***Orange County Education Foundation Surprises Nine Teachers with Grants to Support Innovation***

May 18, 2012



OCHS teacher Sandi Terry is surprised by Tim Ferguson, OCEF Board member with a \$250 Teacher Innovation Grant which will be used to purchase a digital camera to be used by student staff members of the high school's literary magazine, *Collage*.

With fanfare to rival Ed McMahon and the Publisher's Clearinghouse Sweepstakes crew, members of the Orange County Education Foundation (OCEF) surprised nine area teachers on Wednesday, May 16 with grants intended to support innovative classroom instruction. The teachers included eight in Orange County Public Schools and one at Grymes Memorial School.

The recipients were selected from 41 teachers who submitted applications as part of the Foundation's second annual teacher innovation grant (TIG) competition. Twenty-one of the applications were carried over after they failed to receive funding from the fall TIG competition co-sponsored by the Foundation and the Lake of the Woods Lions Club. The other 20 applications

were submitted prior to the May 1 deadline for the spring competition.

"The good news is that we have provided funding for nine real innovative projects this year," said Tim Ferguson, chairman of the Foundation's Teacher Innovation Grant Committee. "At the same time, it's sad that 32 other good ideas remained unfunded. There's no doubt that the Foundation Board has its work cut out to encourage more support from our community."

On Wednesday, May 16, however, Ferguson and his Foundation Board colleagues focused their attention on celebrating the winners. Traveling on an Orange County Public Schools bus, the group visited the school of each TIG recipient. While principals were provided advanced notice, the recipients were not so advised. In each case, the OCEF group arrived at each recipient's classroom door with balloons and an over-sized check. Grant awards were made in the presence of each teacher's students. After shock, tears, smiles, hugs, handshakes and photos, the Foundation group left for its next destination.

Six grants of \$250 were awarded from the Foundation's Teacher Innovation Grant fund. They were divided into four clusters: grades pre-K-2; grades 3-5; grades 6-8; high school; and a judge's choice category. Another \$250 grant was awarded from the Barbara Hill Fund for Innovative Teaching in Economics and Financial Literacy. Two grants in the amount of \$314 and \$450 respectively were awarded from the Ernestine Reid Fund for Innovative Teaching. The May, 2012 recipients of the Orange County Education Foundation's Teacher Innovation Grants include the following:

### **Grade pre-K – 2 cluster**

**Jill Woycik**, kindergarten teacher at Locust Grove Primary School (LGPS), intends to use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to ensure that every student in her classroom is a fluent reader. In her application, Woycik wrote that she wanted to show how the iPod Touch could be used to introduce beginning sounds, sorting activities and read-along audio books to promote fluency with beginning readers. With the award, LGPS students will be able to use the iPod Touch as another meaningful learning tool.

"I am so grateful to the Foundation for giving me the opportunity to bring technology into the classroom," Ms. Woycik said. "The students will love using the iPod during center time. I cannot wait to look into all the wonderful apps that will reinforce what we are learning."



Jill Woycik, LGPS teacher with Tim Ferguson and Bryan Hargett, OCEF Board Members.

### **Grade 3-5 cluster**

**Erin Shafferman**, Gordon Barbour Elementary School music teacher, intends to deepen her students' understanding of music theory while introducing them to the ukulele. The grant will allow Shafferman to add ukuleles to the list of musical instruments available to her students. In her application, Shafferman reported that she wanted treble clef, notes, time signatures and the value of notes to be more than words on a page for GBES music students. She said she wanted those words to come alive as the students make beautiful music with their brand new ukuleles.

"I greatly appreciate the manner in which the Foundation supports the arts in such a meaningful way," Shafferman said. "The grant will allow me to put a ukulele in each child's hand."



Pictured back row left to right: Bryan Hargett, Tim Ferguson, and Sam Kessler, OCEF Board members. Pictured front row left to right: Sherrie Page, Orange County School Board member, Erin Shafferman, GBES teacher and Jen Curtis, GBES Principal.



Pictured left to right: Penny Work, OCEF Board member and Shyla Vesitis, Grymes Memorial School Teacher.

### Grade 6-8 cluster

**Shyla Vesitis**, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Grymes Memorial School, intends to help her students become more aware of the Orange community while they develop first-person research skills and learn to use digital story telling equipment. The grant will allow Vesitis to purchase software and materials to support the project.

“Receiving this grant will allow our students to build their research skills while becoming more aware of our community,” Vesitis said. She added that she was excited about digital storytelling and felt like the grant would allow her students to use technology to link ideas and build community in meaningful ways.



Pictured left to right: Bryan Hargett, Sherrie Page, Renee Bourke, PHMS Principal, Jennifer Hudson-Foskett, PHMS teacher, Sam Kessler, Penny Work, Tim Ferguson and Carol Hunter.

### **Jennifer Hudson-Foskett**,

Prospect Heights Middle School (PHMS) teacher, intends to expand the reach of the PHMS Garden Club into community gardening. She also wants to expose student participants to the process and value of worm composting. Her grant will enable students to formulate goals and plan their gardens while incorporating math, science and language arts into the Garden Club experience.

“I have always been interested in gardening and I have used gardening with students in the past,” said Hudson-Foskett. “I find that it provides a

context for learning. It connects students to school. But even more than that gardening extends to family life. It brings school into the home and the home into school.”

### High School cluster

**Sandi Terry**, Orange County High School English teacher, will purchase a digital camera that will be used by student staff members of the high school’s literary magazine, *Collage*. The magazine highlights student skill, creativity, and achievement in the areas of writing and art. The grant will provide a fresh and more professional look to Collage, according to Terry’s application.



Sandi Terry, OCHS teacher





Michelle Reuss, Lightfoot Elementary School teacher (center) with Dr. Robert Grimesey, Jr., OCEF Board President and Carol Hunter.

### **Judges' Choice cluster**

**Michele Reuss**, Lightfoot Elementary School (LES) teacher, proposed a plan for a “Magical Night of Reading” program intended to encourage and support LES students as they mature into lifelong readers. The program will allow students to dress like their favorite book character while they enjoy dinner with their parents at LES. Following dinner, the students and their families will engage in various student-led activities, such as reader’s theater, book talks, author’s chair and reading games. Each student also will receive a free book for their participation in the program.

“I am overwhelmed by the recognition,” said Reuss. “Receiving the award for the *Magical Night of Reading* is so special. It’s such a powerful event for Lightfoot Elementary School and the have the Orange County Education Foundation’s support means so much to me but even more to the LES community. Thank you so much.”

### **Barbara Hill Fund for Innovative Teaching in Economics and Financial Literacy**

**Mary Freeman**, Orange County High School teacher, received the first-ever Barbara Hill Grant for Innovative Teaching in Economics and Financial Literacy. The award will allow her

students to conduct on-line and in-class research related to the purchase of a vehicle. Students will be introduced to such tools as the Kelly Blue Book and NADA web sites where they can determine market value while they factor in down payments, monthly payments and finance charges, as well as registration and license fees. After completing their research, students will participate in a field trip to a local car dealership where they will meet with dealership personnel and review their decision-making process. They also will be able to apply their new-found knowledge to the evaluation of new automobiles at the dealership.



Mary Freeman, OCHS teacher (far right) pictured with her students.

### **Ernestine Reid Fund for Innovative Teaching**

**Lori Barden**, Orange County High School teacher, received one of two first-ever Ernestine Reid Grant for Innovative Teaching. The award will allow her to purchase Smart Board technology that will enable students to gain experience with writing checks, reconciling checking accounts and completing federal and state Income tax forms. “The fact that it is named after Ernestine Reid makes this grant award even more special,” Barden



Lori Barden, OCHS teacher (center) pictured with (left to right) Judy Carter, Orange County School Board member, Bryan Hargett, Sherrie Page, Sam Kessler, Tim Ferguson, and Penny Work.

said. “And being able to support the students in personal finance class with interactive materials will bring such power to the instruction. I am so grateful for this opportunity to make a positive difference for my students.”



Pictured left to right: Bryan Hargett, Jen Curtis, Tim Ferguson, Sherrie Page, Sam Kessler, Karen McKean, GBES Guidance Counselor, and Carol Hunter.

**Karen McKean**, guidance counselor at Gordon Barbour Elementary School (GBES), received the second Ernestine Reid grant. The grant will support the implementation of a school-wide character education program at GBES. According to McKean’s application the program will be based on the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The funds will cover the cost of the Character Counts curriculum materials, as well as posters and other visual aides to support character development.

“I have so much respect for Ernestine Reid,” said McKean. “I am

honored to receive this award. The *Character Counts* curriculum will be a great compliment to the bullying prevention program we have in place. *Character Counts* will increase our students’ awareness of positive character traits here at Gordon Barbour and in our community!”

#####

*Further information about the Orange County Education Foundation’s Teacher Innovation Grant program may be obtained by contacting Carol Hunter at (540) 661-4550, or [chunter@ocss-va.org](mailto:chunter@ocss-va.org). We are grateful to OCHS yearbook photographers Morgan Sidle and Billy Knabe for providing the photos.*