



Press Release

Orange County Education Foundation Awards Record Number of Teacher Grants

April 22, 2013



Tim Ferguson (left), chairman of the Orange County Education Foundation's Teacher Innovation Grant Committee, surprises Sarah Dodson (right), guidance counselor at Locust Grove Primary School, with a \$500 grant from the Paul Cogar Fund for Classroom Innovation. Also pictured is OCEF Board member Carol Hunter (middle).

The Orange County Education Foundation's (OCEF) annual "Great School Bus Adventure" added more stops and grew more generous this year. On Friday, April 19, members of the Foundation Board and other school division leaders surprised a record-high 16 teachers with grants to support innovative classroom instruction.

As they did last year, Foundation Board members travelled by school bus between eight Orange County Public Schools. Guided by the school principal, the group entered each classroom unannounced and presented each teacher with balloons and an oversized check representing the amount of the grant. After hugs, handshakes, student applause and photos, the Foundation group departed for its next destination. As the group left Lightfoot Elementary School, a student remarked, "This is so cool. Our teachers are so special, and that makes us feel special."

Due to the success of its 2012 "Celebration of Education" campaign, the Foundation expanded the number of awards from nine in 2012 to 16 this year. The grant total grew from \$2,514 in 2012 to \$4,496 this year.

"We are pleased that the Foundation continues to enhance its presence in the community by not only increasing the number of grants and scholarships for our educators and students, but also the amounts," said OCEF President Bryan Hargett.

The grant recipients were selected from 45 teachers who submitted applications as part of the Foundation's third annual teacher innovation grant (TIG) competition. Twenty-five 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 deadline for the spring OCEF competition.

“Being part of the Foundation, and especially the TIG committee, has been such a rewarding experience,” said Tim Ferguson, Board member and chairman of the TIG committee. “Over the past three years, we have awarded 31 grants totaling \$8,510. Still, I would love one day to get to the point where this amount is awarded each year so no teacher goes without a grant.”

“None of our success could have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of every member of the committee, and especially Carol Hunter,” Ferguson added. Hunter is another OCEF Board member and Orange County Public Schools Coordinator of Gifted and ESOL program. She has been instrumental in the oversight of the TIG application and award process.

Twelve grants ranging from \$185 to \$250 were awarded from the Foundation’s General Fund for Innovative Teaching. They were divided into four clusters: grades 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. A \$500 grant was awarded from the Ernestine Reid Fund for Innovative Teaching. Respective \$500 grants were awarded from the new Kathleen Ellington Hargett Fund for Library and Media Center Resources and the new Paul M. Cogar Fund for Classroom Innovation.



Locust Grove Primary School teacher Jessica Johnson and her students celebrate her award of a \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Also pictured are OCEF Board members (background from left to right) Bryan Hargett, Lou Thompson (ex-officio member), Tim Ferguson, Bill Hepler, Jonathan Chasen and Sam Kessler.



Locust Grove Primary School librarian Steve Arruda and students celebrate receipt of his \$240 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Also pictured are members of the OCEF Board in the back row from left to right: Tim Ferguson, Bryan Hargett, Arruda, Jonathan Chasen, Sam Kessler and Bill Hepler.

The April 2013 recipients of the Orange County Education Foundation’s Teacher innovation Grants include the following:

Grade pre-K – 2 cluster

Jessica Johnson, Locust Grove Primary School (LGPS), *Kindling the Power to Read*. Ms. Johnson will use her \$250 grant to purchase three Kindles and a power adapter to add to the four Kindles that already are in her classroom. She intends to use the Kindles to improve student reading comprehension and fluency. After receiving her award, Johnson proclaimed to her students, “Now we can have six Kindles and all of us can read together!”

Steve Arruda, LGPS, *What Does This Word Mean?* Mr. Arruda will use his \$240 grant to purchase five Kindles, three with TIG funds and two with LGPS Library funds. He intends to utilize the Kindle’s embedded dictionary to enhance several current lesson plans intended to move students closer to digital citizenship through the introduction to and use of the Kindles. “This will help our students to move through reading materials so much more quickly,” Arruda told Foundation Board members. “They

will build strong comprehension skills and gain fluency. This is a major research tool for primary age children.”

“Awesome. Pretty cool,” one of his students responded. “Now we can do more things in the library.”



Lightfoot Elementary School teacher Jessica Graves celebrates receipt of a \$203 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Also pictured are OCEF Board members Bryan Hargett (left) and Jonathan Chasen (right).



Locust Grove Middle School science teacher Emily Driver (right) celebrates receipt of her \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. She is congratulated by Locust Grove Middle School principal Kim Crandall (left).

Grade 3-5 cluster

Nancy Vasi, Locust Grove Elementary School (LGES), *Scientific Investigations*. Mrs. Vasi will use her \$245 grant to purchase a Monocular Compound Microscope and a digital microscope camera. The new equipment will enable her students to gather and observe their own scientific samples. In the process, Mrs. Vasi hopes to inspire her students to “continue discovering their world through science!”

Jessica Graves, Lightfoot Elementary School (LES), *Web2.0/Library 2.0*. Ms. Graves will use her \$203 grant to purchase software and subscriptions to support 21st century library skills. She intends to promote reading achievement through book trailers and quick response codes, and expand opportunities for students to engage in digital storytelling.

Grade 6-8 cluster

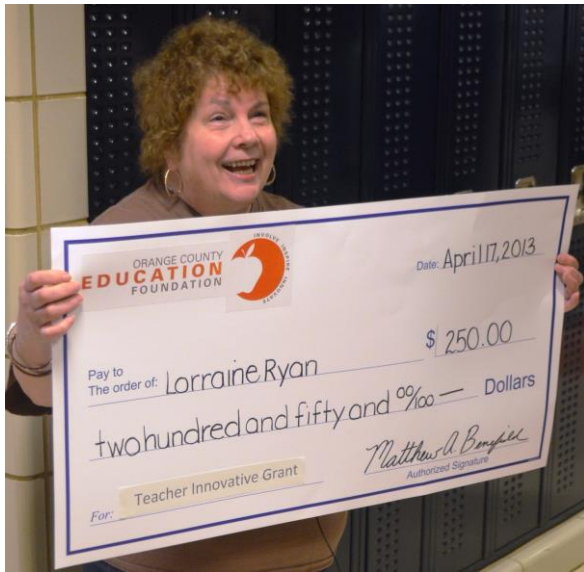
Todd Philipp, Prospect Heights Middle School (PHMS), *Mathalicious*. Mr. Philipp will use his \$185 grant to purchase a license to the *Mathalicious* website. The site provides web-based math lessons intended to create learning opportunities for students intended to create learning opportunities for students that are more rigorous and relevant. “I have used the free sample of the *Mathalicious* curriculum with good success,” Philipp said. “Now I can purchase it and it can be a substantial part of instruction.”

“I am so happy for Mr. Philipp,” a student said. “He’s always finding different ways to help us learn. He makes math simpler.”

Emily Driver, Locust Grove Middle School (LGMS), *Sea Perch/Engineering*. Ms. Driver will use her \$250 grant to purchase soldering kits to support an engineering curriculum she has implemented during the LGMS remediation and enrichment block. The kits also will support students who participate in the LGMS competitive robotics program.

High School cluster

Thomas Dixon, Orange County High School (OCHS), *Ukuleles in the Classroom*. Mr. Dixon will use his \$223 grant to purchase student and teacher books and materials to support a ukulele instruction program. He believes the program will introduce students to an easy-to-learn entry-level instrument. He hopes the introductory program will encourage students to continue to play the ukulele as a lifetime hobby.



Orange County High School English teacher Lorraine Ryan celebrates the award of a \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation.

Judges' Choice

Rosemarie Devaney, LGES, *Proud to be Me.* Ms. Devaney will use her \$250 grant to purchase self-care curriculum materials that will promote each child's sense of personal pride and dignity. In a related pilot program conducted previously, Ms. Devaney found that young girls began to dress more appropriately and took more pride in their appearance. "The OCEF has been so generous," Devaney told the Foundation Board team. "Oh my goodness! Thank you."

Michelle Straus, Orange Elementary School (OES), *Adopt a Stream.* Ms. Straus will use her \$250 grant to purchase water monitoring materials and use a Department of Inland Fisheries curriculum to provide students with field studies opportunities related to life science. "Now we can purchase boots so that our students can participate in the Inland Wildlife and Fisheries Save our Streams program," Straus said. "We'll do real field studies and collect real data to share with real scientists."

"This is so much money," said one of her students. "We are so lucky. It's fun at school today."

Sharon Mohrmann, OES, *Where in the World is Orange County.* Ms. Mohrmann will use her \$250 grant to purchase poster board and hand-held GPS devices. She will provide

Lorraine Ryan, OCHS, *Free Lance Star Writing Contest.* Ms. Ryan will use her \$250 grant to support the costs of field trips and guest speakers intended to encourage writing. Her journalism class will visit the *Fredericksburg Free Lance Star* and conduct a conversation with a member of the new staff. "To actually win a grant validates my love for writing and for young people, as they try to make sense of this world through writing and photography," Ryan said. "The funds will help with equipment and opportunities to further the cause of ethical journalism."



Rose Devaney, guidance counselor at Locust Grove Primary School, and students celebrate receipt of a \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Also pictured are OCEF Board members in the back row from left to right: Sam Kessler, Ryan Hargett, Jonathan Chasen and Tim Ferguson.



Sharon Mohrmann, gifted teacher at Orange Elementary School, and students celebrate her receipt of a \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Orange County School Board Chairman Judy Carter joins in the celebration (background).



Locust Grove Primary School art teacher John Lentine and students celebrate his award of a \$250 grant from the Orange County Education Foundation. Also pictured are OCEF Board members (background from left to right) Bryan Hargett, Jonathan Chasen, Bill Hepler, Lentine, Tim Ferguson and Sam Kessler and ex-officio member Lou Thompson.

the GPS devices to 4th grade Virginia Studies students who will use them to locate significant Orange County sites. Students will then enter the sites on a Google Earth fusion table so “people from around the world can learn more about historical events that happened in Orange County.”

Mohrmann’s students were using her very limited supply of devices when the Foundation team arrived in her classroom. “This grant will help me purchase more GPS devices and we’ll learn about longitude and latitude,” she said. “We’ll put Orange County on the map!”

John Lentine, LGPS,

Hey, Look at Me! The Brag Board. Mr. Lentine will use his \$250 grant to purchase materials to create six-panel display boards to showcase student work. The boards will be used by students to present their artistic interpretations to their peers and other audiences. “I was very surprised when the award crew burst into my classroom with the good news, and it takes a lot to surprise me!” Lentine said. “Children not only need to be literate in reading books, but also in reading visual art. Brag boards will provide a simple, easy and portable way to display student art.”

Barbara Hill Fund for Innovative Teaching in Economics and Financial Literacy

Liz Osterhout, Unionville Elementary School (UES), *How Much Does it Cost?* Ms. Osterhout will use her \$250 grant to purchase hands-on materials intended to bring math skills in subtraction and money from discussion to comprehension. “We’ll use this money to buy some money so we can learn about money,” Osterhout said following the presentation of her award. “We are very grateful, and the kindergarten students will benefit from the generosity of the Orange County Education Foundation.”

“Ms. O took the grand prize,” one of her students explained. “Hooray!”



Unionville Elementary School teacher Liz Osterhout and students celebrate her award of a \$250 grant from the Barbara Hill Fund for Innovative Teaching in Economics and Financial Literacy. Also pictured are members of the Orange County Education Foundation (background left to right): Bryan Hargett, Jonathan Chasen, Osterhout, Sam Kessler, Tim Ferguson and Bill Hepler, and ex-officio member Lou Thompson.



Lesa Brosky, art teacher at Unionville and Lightfoot elementary schools, celebrates receipt of the \$500 Ernestine Reid Grant for Innovative Teaching. She is congratulated by Lou Thompson, founder of the Ernestine Reid Fund. Mr. Thompson also is a member of the Orange County School Board and an ex-officio member of the Orange County Education Foundation Board.

Ernestine Reid Fund for Innovative Teaching

Lesla Brosky, UES and LES, *Empty Bowls*. Ms. Brosky will use her \$500 grant to purchase a ventilation system to make an existing kiln useable. The kiln will allow her students to participate in the *Empty Bowls* project, a global effort to fight hunger. Students will create pottery bowls, fire them in the kiln, and then serve a simple soup dinner where additional bowls will be available for cash donations. The donations will serve to bring the entire Unionville and Lightfoot communities together for the purpose of feeding the hungry.

“I am so happy,” Brosky told Foundation Board members. “Now we can do so much more with art. My students can do ceramics. I am just overcome with joy. The possibilities seem endless. Thank you.”

Kathleen Ellington Hargett Fund for Library and Media Center Resources

Susan Midland, LGMS, *The Flipped Classroom*. Ms. Midland will use her \$400 grant to purchase a camera and lavalier microphone to provide students with easy to use and reliable equipment to create digital stories and documentaries. “It is an honor to be awarded the Kathleen Ellington Hargett grant,” Midland said. “I hope the presentations and projects we record and add to teacher web pages will benefit the students at LGMS.”



Bryan Hargett, son of Kathleen Ellington Hargett and founder of the Fund established in her honor, awards the Fund's first grant to Susan Midland, Locust Grove Middle School librarian. The grant award was \$400. Also pictured are Orange County Education Foundation Board members Lou Thompson and Jonathan Chasen.

Paul Cogar Fund for Classroom Innovation

Sarah Dodson, LGPS, *Cardinals Count Against Bullying*. Ms. Dodson will use her \$500 grant to purchase *Character Counts* books, and incentives. She also will partner with 4-H to provide comprehensive Character Counts and bullying-prevention curriculum for all LGPS students. She intends to prepare students “become positive role models who will give back to the community and instill the same positive character traits to future generations.”

Dodson had been appointed by her principal to escort the Foundation team around the school. After awarding grants to three other teachers at Locust Grove Primary, the team then surprised Dodson with their final grant. “You tricked me,” she exclaimed. “I was supposed to take pictures today. I had no idea I would receive an award. Thank you. This money will be put to good use.”

#####

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. We are grateful to OCHS yearbook photographer Billy Knabe for providing the photos.