

Foundation awards 22 grants to teachers Prize Patrol crew visits schools to surprise and celebrate winners

Behavior teacher Jessi McCormick was pleasantly surprised when the Education Foundation Prize Patrol crew dropped by Hawthorne Elementary School and awarded her a grant for \$4,999.

McCormick accepted the Innovation in Education Grant on behalf of herself and project partner Kristy Dillon, an English Language Learner teacher who could not attend the ceremony.

"We're thrilled with what we can do with it," McCormick said.

The grant will enable the faculty members to acquire curriculum materials to design and implement a program to make recess periods at Hawthorne more organized and productive for students.

The grant won by McCormick and Dillon was one of 22 awarded this year by the Education Foundation. The grants totaled \$57,142, which was about the same amount that was awarded last year.

"We had some really fantastic grant



The Education Foundation Prize Patrol stopped by Hawthorne Elementary School on May 8 to present an Innovation in Education Grant. Pictured, from left, are Principal Stephanie Jones, Callie Beisch of the Foundation, Bryan Brinkman of Scheels, Addie Graham-Kramer of the Foundation, teacher Jessi McCormick, Melinda Haensel of Hy-Vee, and Chris Kray of Scheels.

applications this year," said Callie Beisch, who chairs the Education Foundation Board.

Donations to the Foundation enable the organization to fund about 58 percent of the grant requests it receives. Beisch and other Board members want the organization to raise more money for creative educational projects in the future.

"I think it would be great to get up to \$75,000 and award more grants," Beisch said.

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Grants fund creative educational projects in schools across district

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Money raised for grants typically funds creative programs not funded by tax dollars. Grants are awarded by the Education Foundation on a competitive basis to teachers in any Sioux Falls Public School. (See Page 3 for a full list of the newest grant recipients.)

The grant awarded to Hawthorne will help the school structure recesses to be more engaging for students and productive for the school.

“Every student will be involved in some way,” said Carrie Aaron, the Education Foundation representative on the organization’s Grant Review Committee.

Conflicts that arise during recess time will be reduced, and that will result in kids spending more time in class, Aaron said.

Representatives of Scheels and Hy-Vee accompanied the Prize Patrol to Hawthorne. Scheels managers presented the school with an assortment of playground balls and games for students. Hy-Vee contributes balloon and candy bouquets to teachers who earn grants.

A grant for \$2,600 to make toys switch-accessible for students with mobility needs was among the other 21 proposals awarded recently. Other grants will help faculty members buy educational equipment, such as a 3D printer, drones, virtual reality headsets, audio books and light tables, or assist with creative projects in other ways.

Foundation needs gifts to fund grants

Tax-deductible contributions from individuals, businesses and organizations fund Education Foundation grants that assist teachers and students in Sioux Falls Public Schools.

In addition, the Education Foundation partners with the Daughters of the American Revolution Foundation to give first-time teachers \$200 to help them buy classroom supplies.

More information about the Education Foundation, its programs and how to give is available at www.SFEducationFoundation.org. Questions about donation options can be directed to Allison Struck, the Foundation’s executive director. She can be reached by phone at (605) 367-4484 or email at Allison.Struck@k12.sd.us.



Allison Struck, executive director of the Foundation, helps award a recent grant.

Teacher Swap Meet will be held July 26

Shoppers as well as teachers throughout the Sioux Falls region are welcome to attend the Fourth Annual Teacher Swap Meet in Sioux Falls.

The Swap Meet will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, July 26 at the Sioux Falls Convention Center.

Browsers will find plenty of bargains on books, games, display materials and other educational supplies.

They also will have the opportunity to see and hear Tom Roberts, an author of books for children. His newest book, “A New Norm,” is designed to help people deal with mental illness. The book was published by Avera Health and the Children’s Home Society of South Dakota.

Admission to the Swap Meet is free. It will be hosted by the Education Foundation and sponsored by Avera. The event was created to help teachers buy, sell and trade classroom supplies, but it is also an opportunity for shoppers.

Teachers who would like to reserve a table at no charge to sell personal supplies should contact the Education Foundation at <http://bit.ly/2VleUWf>.

Some vendor slots remain available, too, but there is a charge for businesses to sell merchandise. For more information, contact Executive Director Allison Struck at 605-367-4484 or at Allison.Struck@k12.sd.us.



Grant winners work in schools across district

The Education Foundation recently awarded 22 grants for innovative educational efforts to teachers across the School District. Here is a list of the winners for the 2019-2020 school year. Each entry begins with the grant title, followed by the amount, recipients and their school.

- "Mindfulness Matters - Social Emotional Learning Resources for the Classroom." \$3,728.24. Kate Marchand, Johanna Artz, Stefanie Hage, and Sierra O'Donnell. Eugene Field A+ Elementary School.
- "ClassVR - Virtual Reality in the Classroom." \$2,896.00. Taylor Huska, Ben Short, Marissa Chau, and Michelle Clark. Memorial Middle School.
- "STEM Tools for Engaging Science Activities." \$1,661.93. Nicole VanderWolde, Robert Wilson, Deb Sanborn, and Ryan Rank. Memorial.
- "If a Picture is Worth a Thousand Words, a Prototype is Worth a Thousand Pictures." \$1,248.00. Nicole Highby. Pettigrew Elementary School.
- "Enhancing Learning Through Osmos." \$702.79. Amy Dreke. Pettigrew.
- "Lighting Up Learning." \$893.98. Kayci Halbersma. Pettigrew.
- "Watch Me Uke, Now Watch Me Lele." \$1,799.60. Victoria Hyder. Oscar Howe Elementary School.
- "Unique Learning Experiences with Robotics." \$2,472.00. Pam Espeland. Susan B. Anthony Elementary School.
- "Lighting the Way to STEAM." \$1,238.16. Paula Parrish. Susan B. Anthony.
- "Developing a Sensory Aware Classroom." \$1,077.07. Kristen Engelson. Susan B. Anthony.
- "Growing a Healthy Space." \$1,060.26, Brooke Knudson. Horace Mann Elementary School.
- "Light Sensory World." \$743.91. Rachel Rivera-Nemmers and Esperanza Langle. Sonia Sotomayor Spanish Immersion Elementary School.
- "Sensory Path Integration for All." \$3,700.00. Allie DeJong. Lowell Elementary School.
- "Playaway with a Purpose." \$4,366.18. Korey Erickson. Robert Frost Elementary School.
- "Be in the Zone: Social Learning is for Everyone." \$2,500.00. Carol Beldin. Instructional Planning Center.



Kristine Smith, left, an occupational therapist, was awarded a grant at the Instructional Planning Center. Superintendent Brian Maher participated in the award ceremony. So did donor representative Jason Herrboldt, of First Bank & Trust, and Beth Boyens, whose late mother contributed to the Foundation.

- "Do You Hear What I Read?" \$2,551.11. Sherri Wolles. McGovern Middle School.
- "Self-Regulation in Flexible Seating." \$2,000.00. Heather Maschino, Cassandra Schroeder, Shelby Merritt, and Cassidy Grizzard. McGovern.
- "Restructuring Recess." \$4,999.00. Jessi McCormick and Kristy Dillon. Hawthorne Elementary School.
- "Project iPads: Innovative Projects for Accelerated and Driven Students." \$5,242.00. Meghan WoundedHead. Washington High School.
- "Virtual Reality Brings the World to Students." \$5,342.00. Britt Sampson. Washington.
- "Adapted Toy Lending Program." \$2,600.00. Kristine Smith. IPC.
- "Teach Me To Talk Using PODD As I Have More to Say." \$4,320.10. Terri Noldner, Nicole Freeman, Heather Hanners, Becky Whitlock, Amy Zimmerman, and Amy Koch. IPC.



Superintendent's outlook for new school year will highlight breakfast

Superintendent Brian Maher will be the featured speaker at the Education Foundation's sixth annual Innovation in Education Breakfast.

The breakfast will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Aug. 1 at The Country Club of Sioux Falls.

Topics that Maher said he is likely to address will include an update on the construction of a new middle school and new high school. The new facilities are scheduled to be in the early phases of construction by August.

The new schools were authorized in a bond issue approved last September by voters in the Sioux Falls School District.

The breakfast is free for invited guests, prospective donors and other people interested in helping improve educational opportunities in local public schools. Advance registration is required, however.



Brian Maher

For more information, see www.sfeducationfoundation.org.

Through the years, the breakfast has served as an awareness-building event for the Education Foundation. It also serves as a public forum that provides information about changes and the outlook for the new school year.

"It's really a teacher showcase. We've invited all of our grant winners to come and tell the public how they will use their grant materials," said Executive Director Allison Struck.

Honor your favorite teacher and help grow endowment fund

Here's a fun way to publicly recognize your favorite teacher or perhaps your child's favorite teacher: Make a donation of at least \$25 to the Education Foundation.

To participate, just go to the Education Foundation's website (sfeducationfoundation.org) and click the Teacher Appreciation Fundraiser link. List the teacher's name and school, and include a short message about what makes the teacher special.

The teacher will be honored in social media posts and, if the donor includes the teacher's address, a special note will be sent to the honoree.

All funds raised by the recognition program are being invested in the Foundation's endowment fund.

New fundraising event will debut in November

A signature fundraising event for the Education Foundation will debut Nov. 7 at Raven Industries' headquarters in downtown Sioux Falls.

The new event will be called Public School Proud: A Benefit for the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation. Other Education Foundation events are expected to be rebranded under the "Public School Proud" name this fall.

Up to 200 tickets for the new, auction-styled event will be sold for \$100 each. Half of the money will be given back to a lucky ticket buyer.

The event will showcase student talent as well as help the Foundation raise money for grants for teachers.

"The showcase event will be our signature fundraising event," said Callie Beisch, chair of the Foundation Board.

The Foundation's annual Innovation in Education Breakfast, which is held during the summer, will continue to serve as an awareness-building event, she said. The fall fundraising event, which will be held in the evening, remains in the planning stages.

"The board has talked about doing a signature event for a number of years. Now that I'm in place as a full-time employee, I can take on some of those event-planning duties," said Allison Struck, the Foundation's executive director.



New member brings event-planning expertise to Board

The newest member of the Education Foundation Board knows how to throw parties – events of all kinds, really.

Addie Graham-Kramer officially joined the Board in May. She is the CEO and founder of The Event Company, an event production and design company in Sioux Falls that has assisted with corporate, nonprofit and social events in 16 states.

Graham-Kramer said she is excited by the opportunity to help local schools.

“I try to give back to community,” she said. “I’m pretty deliberate with what groups I’m part of or assist. This one is pretty near and dear to my heart because it’s where our boys go to school.”

She and her husband, Drew Kramer, have two boys who attend Sioux Falls Public Schools: William is 9, and Calvin is 6. Drew owns Wildflower Construction, a custom homebuilding firm.

Graham-Kramer grew up in Central City, Neb. and attended the University of South Dakota. She started The Event Company in 2013 after working for about a decade in sales development, marketing and public relations positions with business and nonprofit organizations.

She is no stranger to Sioux Falls schools. As a parent, she has volunteered to assist at her boys’ school.

As a volunteer Board member, she looks forward to assisting the entire School District.

She is joining the Board as members are making plans to launch a signature fundraising event that will be held annually in November.

In addition to lending her expertise to help shape Education Foundation events, she wants to help build public awareness of the organization and the important role it plays in helping improve educational programs in local public schools.

The Education Foundation assists schools primarily by raising money for grants for teachers who lead innovative educational programs.

“It’s not only about funds. It’s about awareness,” Graham-Kramer said. “I hope I can be an asset.”

Stephanie Gongopoulos was one of the Board members who recruited Graham-Kramer to the organization.



Addie Graham-Kramer

“Addie has a passion for public school education. She also brings a strong marketing background to our Board as well as to our Fund Development Committee,” Gongopoulos said. “Her experience will be invaluable as we grow awareness about the Education Foundation and plan our first fundraising event.”

Our Board

The Education Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization endorsed by the Sioux Falls School District. It is governed by a Board of volunteers. Members are: Carrie Aaron (secretary), Reece Almond (vice chair), Peggy Baney, Callie Beisch (chair), Rich Brennehan, Jackie Dumansky (treasurer), Stephanie Gongopoulos (past chair), Addie Graham-Kramer, Nancy Hagen, DeeAnn Konrad, Deb Koski, Cynthia Mickelson and Kiki Nelsen.

Allison Struck is the full-time executive director. Rob Swenson assists part time with media.

Our Mission

We champion teachers and students by encouraging, promoting and funding creative and innovative teaching strategies in order to enhance and enrich education in all Sioux Falls Public Schools.

Our Niche

We raise funds to support teachers and their impact on students.

