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The Foundation for Wallingford Swarthmore Schools has awarded its third round of grants to teachers in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District (WSSD), funding special projects and teaching tools in technology, math, reading and literacy, the arts, and physical and social development.

Teachers at all three WSSD elementary schools, Strath Haven Middle School and Strath Haven High School submitted a total of 29 grant applications, according to Foundation President Frannie Reilly. "The Grants Committee felt that our teachers submitted tremendously strong applications this year. We had some tough decisions to make, but we are grateful to have such a terrific group of dedicated teachers, who took the time to craft such thoughtful applications." The Foundation granted over \$15,000 to teachers at every grade level and to every school in the District.

### **District-Wide Grants**

A grant made on the District-wide level went to the "Tchoukball" Program, submitted by the WSSD Health and Physical Education Department. Tchoukball, developed by Dr. Hermann Brandt, aims at removing from athletic competition military and confrontational mindsets and metaphors and replacing them with a paradigm that encourages competition without aggression, rewards problem-solving as well as physical ability, promotes teamwork and teaches principles of physics. With the Foundation's support, \$2088.34 will go to providing this innovative program across all grade levels, beginning with the early elementary years.

### **Strath Haven High School**

The Foundation made a grant of \$1,000 to the "Artist in Residency" program, which will bring the Boston Brass to our District in the Spring of 2014. Prior to their visit, the Boston Brass will conduct meetings with Strath Haven music students through Skype. On the day of their visit, the Boston Brass and the Wallingford-Swarthmore Music Department will collaborate in bringing jazz music to the elementary schools, conducting an Artist in Residency program at the High School, and rehearsing for and performing collaboratively in an evening concert open to the public.

In addition, the Foundation made a \$1,424.25 to purchase Carolina STEM Challenge kits to increase students' awareness of environmental science. These kits will be used by the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade environmental science classes, which include approximately 150 students. Student teams will design, build, test and compete in a cooperative-learning environment.

The Foundation is also funding new technology called Follett ebooks to encourage reluctant readers in the sum of \$229.79. These ebooks are designed to appeal to a diverse population of students. These ebooks will be used in literature circles and whole group discussions.

### **Strath Haven Middle School**

The Foundation, building upon a grant funded in last year's grant-making cycle, will provide middle school students with additional equipment in the Adventure Initiative sequence. Whereas previous Adventure Initiative equipment helped students to achieve personal goals, the equipment enables students both to build teamwork skills and to increase physical agility and endurance. The one-time cost of \$2,372.60 of installing this equipment will result in a benefit to all children in the District as they reach Middle-School age. The Grants committee felt that this one-time expenditure would have the maximum impact on both physical education and character development.

The Foundation is also funding the purchase of Vernier Temperature Probes and Relief Globes for the sixth-grade Earth Science curriculum. The Foundation allocated \$1,085.00 to purchase this re-usable equipment, in order for children to both visualize and document (via a computer connection) the variations in light and temperature that occur as the Earth rotates around a source of light and heat (the Sun) as the season progress.

The Foundation made an additional grant to the Middle School to fund Learning Ally, a site license for a program that will benefit up to 300 students in the Middle School who need support in literacy. The Learning Ally site license, costing only \$897.00, will provide a research-based tool that grants access to over 80,000 audio textbook and literature titles. Students also benefit from free apps for mobile devices, software for Macs and PCs, and Webinars. Learning Ally combines visual and auditory input to grant to all struggling readers access to the middle-school general education curriculum. Expected benefits include greater engagement in the classroom and better performance on summative and formative assessments, as well as fostering a genuine enjoyment of reading, even among struggling readers.

### **Nether Providence Elementary School (NPE)**

The Foundation funded four Kindle e-readers, totaling \$740, to promote literacy for NPE second-graders. Bolstering the Columbia Teacher's College "Daily Five" literacy habits, this technology allows students to read to themselves, read to a partner, listen to texts read aloud and grow their vocabularies with independence. NPE second-grade classrooms currently have only two aging conventional computers; the addition of four Kindle e-readers will free the teacher to engage personally with students on an as-needed basis.

NPE Fifth Grade Teacher Jane Sottile collaborated with WES Librarian Martha Lambertsen to select *Because of Mr. Terupt* by Rob Buyea for the “One Book” project. Appropriate for grades four through six, this book will also be suitable for Strath Haven High School Students, who will read the book and journal about their observations on parallel with Ms. Sottile’s fifth-graders. The project will culminate in a meeting of the fifth-grade readers and the high-school readers to discuss the book. The grant of \$543.60 underwrites the books themselves, as well as the notebooks in which the students have the opportunity to record their impressions. Once purchased, these books will withstand many years of re-use in the “One Book” project.

### **Swarthmore-Rutledge Elementary (SRS)**

The Foundation made a grant of \$1475 to the first-grade teaching team at SRS for an iPad Learning Center in each classroom, which will serve all 96 SRS first-graders. Designed to enhance literacy, these Learning Centers will allow teachers to differentiate instruction to the skill level of individual learners as they work on word skills and comprehension strategies. Additionally, students will gain fluency with technology at the same time that they access outstanding literacy applications that have been unavailable to them through existing SRS technology.

The Foundation also made a grant of \$441.03 to fund the acquisition of 11 outstanding titles (in sets of five) for the SRS Reading Olympics team, as well as individual copies of several other key books. Spearheaded by Gifted Coordinator Jennifer Conahan, and implemented by Librarian Roberta Shapiro, the Reading Olympics team coordinator, this grant will enable the SRS Reading Olympics team of fifth graders (with fourth graders as understudies) to access all 45 books on the official Reading Olympics book list. Students read and discuss the titles selected for the yearly competition, working as a team to gain mastery of the content of each title in preparation for the “sport” of Reading Olympics. Because the Reading Olympics titles repeat every five years, and because WES also has copies of other titles on the list, the schools can collaborate to share their books in preparation for future competitions.

### **Wallingford Elementary School**

The Foundation has made a grant of \$1439.48 to fund the WES Teacher iPad Project, which will put iPads into the hands of four WES fourth and fifth grade teachers who are interested in increasing the integration of tablet technology into their daily teaching practice. With the aid of these iPads, this group of teachers will pilot the use of the app *Confer* to support and enhance daily student-teacher conferences within the Reader’s Workshop model, a new literacy initiative being implemented in many intermediate elementary classrooms across the District this year. In addition to *Confer*, this group of teachers will use the iPads to explore apps including *Engrade*, a digital communication tool that allows teachers to electronically share grades across classrooms, now a necessity with the introduction of the Math in

Focus curriculum, which groups children by ability level rather than by homeroom. The project will also spark interest and dialog among other teachers around how tablet technology can be more fully integrated in the classroom.

Benefitting the third-grade classrooms at WES, the purchase of two iPad Minis underwritten by the Foundation at a cost of \$945.76 will allow teachers to move around the classroom and differentiate instruction, bringing interest and energy to learning tasks that have seemed rote in the past. The iPad minis will make possible use of applications including "Explain Everything," "Reading Street" and "Air Drop," which teachers have been trained to use through District-wide in-service training.