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Foundation Awards \$14,614.83 in Grants for 2015-2016 Teacher Grants cycle

The Foundation for Wallingford Swarthmore Schools is pleased to announce that in its sixth year it has awarded over \$15,000 in grant money to teachers in the district who submitted outstanding grant applications, an increase of nearly \$1000 over last year. Foundation President Frannie Reilly and Grants Committee Chair Barbara Briggs presented a check to the Board of the Wallingford Swarthmore School District for \$15,491.34 at last night's board meeting.

Through the Teacher Grants, the Foundation supports a wide range of programs, encompassing the arts, technology, and character development. While the number of grants funded is too large to list all, we highlight a few below:

- At SRS, the Foundation will be supporting all fifth grade students in the extensive process of developing a play, from beginning to end. With the assistance of an artist-in-residence, the students will write, produce, develop stage sets, and perform the play. Also at SRS, the Foundation is building upon its prior investment in makerspace – a product that offers students a chance to practice creating various types of circuits, to explore simple machines, and to experience many of the scientific concepts they have read about in class. This year's investment will focus on further integrating MakerSpace into the standardized curriculum, making the classroom more exciting and engaging for everybody.
- At Strath Haven Middle School, teachers will bring astronomy to life with LEGO Mindstorm kits, which provide the necessary hardware for students to build rovers similar to those currently being utilized on Mars. Also at the middle school, new software will enable teachers to post slides with teacher and narration and video, ensuring that students who did not follow in class are able to review the material at home.
- At NPE, the Foundation will support a program where upper-level students will lead teacher-parent conferences, an initiative that will both involve students in their learning process and increase their confidence ahead of their transition to the middle school. Also at NPE, the Foundation is funding a mobile STEM maker station, which increases the accessibility of MakerSpace to many students.
- At StrathHaven High School, the Foundation is helping to fund a robotics development project and also to establish a mentoring and leadership program, which will pair new students with upperclassman as a way to increase the engagement of students, which research has shown contributes to both academic achievement and personal growth.

- At WES, the Foundation is supporting a Guided Reading Library for second grade students. Guided reading is a research-based methodology, which ensures that students achieve reading proficiency. It focuses on providing the necessary flexibility to reach struggling readers at their level and to support their skill development.
- Beyond these highlighted items, the Foundation also supported the purchase of calculators and organizational tools for underprivileged students, and the payments of stipends for college students to participate in elementary school homework clubs.

Lisa Palmer, superintendent states, “On behalf of the students and teachers of the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, I would like to thank the Foundation for generously funding over \$15,000 of teacher grants. These grants, which focus on building student leadership capacity and increasing student engagement and achievement, directly contribute to the District’s goal of providing opportunities that support the needs of every child.” In further pursuit of this goal of reaching every child, the Foundation has been working with the superintendent as well as the individual school principals to fund additional programs and projects.

The Foundation is able to fund these major projects through successful fundraisers such as the Panther Pajama Run and Pancake Breakfast (which will be held this year on Saturday November 12, 2016), First Annual Golf Outing (May 15, 2017), corporate sponsorships, United Way donations (donor code: **49418**), and individual contributions. The Arts4Smarts Committee is currently seeking sponsors and donors. If interested, please visit our website arts4smarts.org.

In addition to funding these teacher grants, the Foundation will continue to fund its current major initiatives: the High School Interdisciplinary Garden, the Middle School Multi-Media Studio, and the Elementary Schools Robotics and Programming Project.

The Foundation for Wallingford-Swarthmore Schools is an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that supports innovation and excellence in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District. Through community support and involvement, the Foundation works in partnership with all of Wallingford-Swarthmore School District funding partners to strengthen Wallingford-Swarthmore School District schools from elementary through middle and high school levels. With increasing pressure on school funding, the Foundation’s goal is to provide both a mechanism for community engagement with our schools and a funding stream for innovative programs and student enrichment which might otherwise fall to budget cuts. If you would like to learn more about the major projects, teacher grants and the Foundation, and get involved as a supporter or a member, please visit