

Granting education opportunities

REP gives more than \$20,000 in grants to RUSD teachers

By CHANTAL M. LOVELL, Staff Writer

Posted: 11/27/2010 05:49:36 PM PST



James Benanti leads the string ensemble class in practicing a piece of music at Redlands High School earlier this month. Benanti received a grant from the Redlands Educational Partnership Foundation to help students attend music festivals. (ERIC TOM/Staff Photographer)

Grants totaling more than \$20,000 will enhance learning at 10 schools across the Redlands Unified School District.

Last week, the Redlands Educational Partnership Foundation awarded grants to 10 RUSD teachers to help supplement language, music, physical education, technology and agriculture lessons in and outside their classrooms.

"The grants are done as a way to fund innovative classroom curriculum additions," said REP President Cindy Calder n.

"When we fund larger programs, like through our Enrichment Plus, we are funding the whole school. But a lot of teachers have great, great ideas of ways to help their classrooms and they shouldn't have to fund those ideas, and some can't, out of their own pockets."

Every fall, REP awards grants to teachers and schools in RUSD to supplement programs and activities in the areas of art, science, technology and other subjects. This year, 28 teachers applied for the money, requesting a total of nearly \$62,000.

The REP board chose 10 recipients at 10 schools, including one at each of the four high schools, and gave them more than \$21,000. Calder n said the grant winners are chosen through blind judging and it was a lucky coincidence each went to a different school this year.

"Every year it's such a broad field," Calder n said. "I think the only regret we have every year is that we can't fund every one of them."

One of the most-requested items in this year's grant program were

Advertisement

"Elmo" document camera projectors, which allow teachers to project their computer screen or a document or other items onto a large screen or wall. McKinley Elementary School fourth grade teacher Robert Whitfield received a grant of nearly \$3,000 to purchase two of the cameras, projectors and carts. He said the cameras and projectors open up a new world of possibilities in his classroom.

"There's lots of time when you want to look at student writing and with this, you can just cover up the name and project it up there instead of having to type it into a computer document or making it into a transparency," Whitfield said. "You can project a webpage onto the screen. Rather than having the kids go to the six computers, I can project my screen and we can look at it as a class. It enables you to do whole-class instruction."

Cope Middle School eighth grade science teacher Alan Aceto will bring video conferencing and virtual field trips to his classroom with the grant he received.

"The (\$2,127) grant money will allow me to purchase a microphone, flip camera and a new computer," Aceto said. "The students will use it to video conference with other middle school classes around the country and can make contact with scientists doing their job out in the field. This will give them that real-life application so they can see how the science they are learning in the classroom is being used by real scientists."

Aceto said the students will also prepare short lessons they can teach elementary school students via video conference.

Vocal and instrumental students at Clement Middle School will have the opportunity to polish their musical skills through a new computer program, "Smart Music."

"It's like Guitar Hero for band students," said instrumental and vocal music teacher John Gann, who received a grant of more than \$2,500. "It's an Internet-based program that has most of the band music we are using already uploaded on it. The kids can plug in their instruments and the music is displayed on the screen. When they play a wrong note, it comes on (the screen) in a different color so they can click it and see the right fingering. It also works with vocalists."

Students can also take tests on the program or purchase subscriptions to use the program at home.

In addition to providing the software, Gann's grant will also enable him to purchase new, lighter marching band drums for the younger and smaller students who have trouble lifting some of the current instruments.

Thanks to the grant received by Redlands High School Band Director James Benanti, students in each of the school's band ensembles will be able to attend and perform at two to three music festivals during second semester.

"It's really, really important for us to get out there, represent RHS, get a chance to play in front of some very experienced judges who provide us a lot of food for thought, play in fantastic venues and see other bands," Benanti said.

Other grants went to Crafton Elementary School teacher Gigi Garcia, who will purchase exercise equipment for first grade students and develop a new physical education program; Lugonia Elementary School teacher Cari Tosso, who will purchase a "Book Bridges" program to foster parent involvement in education; and Moore Middle School teacher Colleen Sumner and others who will use their grant to purchase much-needed lab equipment for science classrooms.

Orangewood High School teacher Neil Price will teach students to plant and care for a sustainable organic urban garden. Redlands East Valley High School teacher Scott Washburn, will use the money to purchase an interactive white board for his math classroom.

"I always enjoy hearing the description of the project the winning teachers have submitted," said RUSD Superintendent Lori Rhodes. "They are always creative and unique ideas that I know will pique the interest of their students. Most often the winning projects involve providing hands-on experiences for students.

"I certainly appreciate that the teachers go above and beyond to apply for these grants, and am always so pleased to see them funded."

Citrus Valley High School French and Spanish teacher Flora Milosavljevic will use her nearly \$3,000 grant to purchase language dictionaries, textbooks, grammar DVDs and other materials to develop a language lab. This is her first year in the district and she said students and teachers are fortunate to have the support of a group like REP.

"I am very pleased with the involvement the Redlands community has in its schools," Milosavljevic said. "They're totally vested in their students and kids. There is just no way kids cannot succeed with this kind of support."

E-mail Staff Writer Chantal M. Lovell at clovell@redlandsdailyfacts.com



BOOKMARK



Print



Email



Font Resize



Return to Top

—