

Ithaca teachers get \$25K for classroom projects

Matthew Hayes, mhayes@ithacajournal.com | @IJmhayes 12:39 p.m. EST December 10, 2014

The IPEI grants connect Ithaca City School District teachers with community partners in support of new ways to engage students while keeping the community involved



(Photo: SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO)

ITHACA – Grants worth \$25,000 have been awarded for classroom projects linking Ithaca City School District teachers with the unique talents of community partners.

The 17 teacher grants dispersed by the Ithaca Public Education Initiative go to local teachers for projects to be implemented this school year and costing no more than \$1,500. The competitive grants will enhance learning for approximately 1,700 Ithaca students, according to IPEI.

Kindergartners at Northeast Elementary School will experience the interconnectedness of literature, nature, and play through open-ended play sessions, books, an evening family program, and a field trip to the Ithaca Children's Garden, due to a grant given to special education teacher Nicole Dauria. The project will use play to support language development, social and emotional growth, and problem-solving skills, according to IPEI.

Another grant, for a project called "Phun with Physics," partners Fall Creek Elementary School teacher Chris Bell with Xraise, the outreach education program of Cornell University's Laboratory for Accelerator-Based Science and Education, and the Physics Bus, Ithaca's traveling physics classroom.

As part of the grant — with a goal to show young students that science can be accessible and fun — two first-grade classes will take monthly trips to Cornell's Wilson Laboratory to experiment with electricity, light, sound waves and magnetism, and to watch scientists work in the underground accelerator tunnel. Once back in the classroom, they will help create exhibits for the Physics Bus using recycled materials, according to IPEI.

Those two grants will be funded through a Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund. A grant given to Enfield Elementary School Pre-Kindergarten teacher Sharon Ciferri was funded by a retired ICSD teacher for projects that encourage the integration of music into elementary classrooms.

The other 14 grants are slated to be funded from its annual fund through the popular Adult Spelling Bee scheduled for March 1.

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IPEI grants

Here are the rest of the IPEI Teacher Grants for this school year, with the teacher and community partner.

•Ithaca to El Salvador: Bridging Communities in the Spirit of Volunteerism! Teacher: Cara Salabrici/Boynton Middle School. Partners: Mauricio Rosa, El Salvadoran, and Margit Chamberlain, Peace Corps, Rio Abajo El Salvadore.

•Music for Unity and Social Change; Motivational Assembly and Workshop Series. Teacher: Ahrayna Zakos/Beverly J. Martin. Partners: Elisa Sciscioli, musician, and Harmony Graves, Community Unity Music Education Program.

•Music for Unity and Social Change; Motivational Assembly and Workshop Series. Teacher: Samantha Little/South Hill. Partners: Elisa Sciscioli, musician, and Harmony Graves, Community Unity Music Education Program.

•Playing—Out of the Box or In!* Teacher: Nicole Dauria/Northeast. Partner: Ithaca Children's Garden.

•Extending the Growing Season at DeWitt's Vegetable Garden with High Tunnels. Teacher: Wayne Gottlieb/DeWitt. Partner: Keith Thomson, gardener.

•Enfield Shines at Literacy. Teacher: Georgette Graham/Enfield. Partners: Carol Hockett, Johnson Museum of Art, and Doug Levine, State Theatre of Ithaca.

•Planning and Printing a Community. Teacher: Allison Trdan/Belle Sherman. Partners: Hod Lipson, Professor of Engineering at Cornell University, and Gabriella D'Angelo, Professor of Art and Architecture Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

•Continuing to Leverage Students' Access to Literature. Teacher: Monica Sherman/DeWitt. Partners: Karen Yearwood, The Village at Ithaca.

- Spanish Brass Concert and Master Class. Teacher: Michael Allen/Boynton. Partners: Aaron Tindall, Professor of Tuba at Ithaca College School of Music and the International Tuba Conference.
 - Phun with Physics* Teacher: Chris Bell/Fall Creek. Partners: Xraise Outreach Program, Cornell University, and Erik Herman, Ithaca's Physics Bus.
 - Powered by Poetry. Teacher: Rachel Valenzano /Beverly J. Martin. Teacher: Sarah Wolff, poet.
 - Animals in the Garden: Making Friends through Literature, Storytelling, and Permaculture. Teacher: Kathleen Downes/Caroline. Partners: Ithaca Children's Garden and Regi Carpenter, storyteller.
 - Songs, Music and Movement, and Literacy** Teacher: Sharon Ciferri/Enfield. Partner: Judy Stock, musician.
 - Emotions through the Arts—Mad, Sad, Glad with Music*** Teacher: Larissa Anderson/Northeast. Partners: David Plaine and Mark Sammo, musicians, and ICSD bus drivers.
 - Emotions through the Arts—Mad, Sad, Glad with Visual Art*** Teacher: Kathleen Downes/Caroline. Partners: Carol Hockett, Johnson Museum of Art, and Susan Zhender, artist.
 - Emotions through the Arts—Mad, Sad, Glad with Dance*** Teacher: Kelly Craft/Beverly J. Martin. Partner: Lisa Tsetse, choreographer.
 - Dancing through the Pages. Teachers: Arne Van Leuken and Marnie Ecklund/Beverly J. Martin. Partner: Lisa Tsetse, choreographer.
- *Selected to be funded by the Charles E. Treman Jr. Teacher Grant Endowment of the Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund in memory of the former president of the Tompkins Trust Company.
- **Selected to be funded by a gift from a retired ICSD teacher who encourages the integration of music into elementary classrooms.
- *** Three classrooms will take part in every component of this grant: Music, Visual Art, and Dance.

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