



IPEI Allocates \$60,000 to ICSD

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On Tuesday March 27, the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) Board of Education will accept the annual funding transfer of \$60,000 from the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) for the Kids Discover the Trail! (KDT!) program. While ICSD supports the program's transportation costs and staff development activities, IPEI raises funds from the community that flow through the district and the Discovery Trail to fund program delivery.

"Through the Discovery Trail educational programs coordinated with elementary school curriculum and standards, our students learn about their own community and see a world of possibilities for their futures," said IPEI President Terry Byrnes. "We are very grateful to the Ithaca City School District and the Discovery Trail organizations for partnering with us."

KDT! is a collaborative effort of IPEI, the Discovery Trail, and ICSD, and is funded by generous donors through IPEI. Supporters throughout the program's eight years have included the Triad Foundation, Park Foundation, Cornell University, BorgWarner Morse TEC, Tompkins Trust Company, Legacy Foundation, M&T Bank, Brooks Family Foundation, Adams Foundation, Gannett Foundation, Friends of the Library, United Way Youth and Philanthropy, and the Service League as well as many individuals and families.

The second half of the school year signals the start of the KDT! season for all elementary students and teachers. Although the program began as a once-a-year field trip by Ithaca elementary classrooms to their assigned Discovery Trail museums and the public library (see list below), KDT! has grown into an enriching learning experience for teachers, students, and Discovery Trail educators alike.

Approximately 2,900 students or nearly 100 percent of the students participated last year. Every interested teacher sets a date for their field trip pairing their classroom with one from another school as a way to encourage friendships among children of different neighborhoods (except in Grade 4 since the Eight Square Schoolhouse can accommodate only one class at a time).

At some grade levels, Discovery Trail educators visit the classroom to prepare everyone for the experience, or they provide pre- and post-trip activities for the teachers to use. "Buddy Up" trips are a second opportunity for the paired classrooms to get together for more fun and learning. In addition, there is a special book for each grade level that corresponds with the content of Discovery Trail experiences; KDT! books come home with every child every year.

In other news, IPEI awarded 14 new Red and Gold Grants totaling \$6,300 in its third grant cycle of the 2011-12 school year. The Fine Arts Booster Group (FABG), an affiliate of IPEI, awarded nine new Mini-Grants totaling \$3,880 its second cycle of grants this year.

"I am continually humbled by the impact of this seed money," said Martha Frommelt, past president of FABG. "Students are inspired, and their creative horizons are expanded. Their work has repercussions beyond our local community. This year, Ithaca High School student art inspired 'art pals' all the way in Ecuador."

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