




23 Teacher Grants Awarded

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The Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) has awarded 23 Teacher Grants totaling \$32,500 to be carried out during the 2013-14 school year to enhance learning for approximately 1600 Ithaca City School District (ICSD) students.

Teacher Grants fund classroom projects that are linked with grade level standards and enrich the curricular opportunities for students and their teachers. Proposals for a maximum grant amount of \$1500 are made by teachers. In keeping with IPEI's mission of "connecting school and community," they always include a community partner.

Teacher Grants Review Committee Chair Sandy True, expresses that "IPEI Teacher Grants support and engage our teachers, our kids and our community. The teachers receive support to explore their creative ideas while involving community partners. The kids get a fun engaging learning experience introducing them to some of the incredible resources of our community. This ultimately benefits us all!"

Three Teacher Grant projects were selected during the competitive review process to be funded through the Charles E. Treman Jr. Teacher Grants Fund of the Tompkins Charitable Gift Fund in memory of the late Tompkins Trust Company president. They include "Soaring Stories: Exploring the Ecology of Plants and Butterflies through Storytelling", "Storydance", and "Trout in the Caroline Wilderness Classroom".

IPEI will fund the other 20 grants through the annual Adult Spelling Bee (scheduled for March 2, 2014) and its 2013-14 Annual Fund "Engagement Matters". In addition, IPEI offers four rounds of Red and Gold Grants and Community Collaboration Grants reviewed on a rolling basis. The Fine Arts Booster Group, an affiliate of IPEI, has also recently announced the first of its two rounds of mini-grants.

Northeast Elementary School teacher Paula Kilts will collaborate with the Ithaca Children's Garden and Regi Carpenter for "Soaring Stories". The goal of this project is to explore the interconnectedness of plants, butterflies, and humans through art and science. There will be ecology visits by the Ithaca Children's Garden staff and volunteers to help students explore the anatomy of flower, butterflies and their host plants, and hands-on gardening. Regi Carpenter will visit Northeast to tell stories about plant mythology, and to share how stories use language, movement, speaking, and documentation through photography and video recording. The project will culminate with an evening event for students and families.

"Storydance" is the project of Beverly J. Martin Elementary School teachers Arne van Leuken, Nancy Siegele and Elizabeth Inman working with teaching artist Lisa Tsetse. Eight weekly arts residencies will be offered in the three Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. Stories will be utilized to emphasize language development, reading readiness, and self-expression through creative movement. This initiative engages preschoolers in fine arts experiences that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

While Bill Foster and the Floating Classroom brings "Trout in the Classroom" to many ICSD schools, this year will be the first time it will be offered in conjunction with the new Wilderness Campus of the Caroline Elementary School. Caroline teacher Anna Chapman will partner with Foster and with Robert Ross and Matt Sacco of the Cayuga Nature Center and Museum of the Earth. The fourth grade students will be housing two trout tanks in order to study both brook and brown trout. They will maintain the appropriate environment in the tanks, chart their growth, examine the impact of humans and environment, and ultimately release the fish into the stream behind the school in the Wilderness Campus.

In November IPEI released research-based evidence for what it has always believed: the programs and activities that it funds through grants to teachers and schools are effective at increasing student engagement. Data from reports submitted by teachers who were awarded grants during the 2012-13 school year show that ICSD students' engagement rose by an average of nearly 50 percent following an IPEI grant-funded activity. For students identified as "performing below grade level," the average increase in engagement was even higher, almost doubling after participation in IPEI-funded programs, as measured by classroom teachers.

IPEI Teacher Grants 2013-14

Cornell Leadership Experience Aaron Buck/DeWitt Cornell Team & Leadership Center

Latin Music Tour Dorothy Preston/Beverly J. Martin Sally Ramierez, musician; Ana Ortiz, No More Tears

Kindergarten Makes Learning French Fun Deb Jordan/Fall Creek Silke Ullmann, Ithaca Language School

Music Matters Wall Mural – Music Expressed Through Art and Language Buddie Woodridge/DeWitt Mary Beth Ihnken, Artist

Soaring Stories: Exploring the Ecology of Plants & Butterflies through Storytelling* Paula Kilts/Northeast Ithaca Children's Garden; Regi Carpenter, storyteller

Storydance* Arne van Leuken/Beverly J. Martin Lisa Tsetse, Teaching Artist

Using Scientific Illustration to Learn about Trout, and Contribute to our Local Community Jennifer Wilkie/South Hill Camille Doucet, Artist; Bill Foster, Finger Lakes Trout in the Classroom

Fall Creek King Street Ramblers Karla Notarianni/Fall Creek Dave Davies, Musician

Trout in the Classroom* Anna Chapman/Caroline Bill Foster, Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom Project; Robert Ross, Cayuga Nature Center

Fall Creek First Grade Marathon Abigail Bokaer/Fall Creek Will Glennon, Ithaca Youth Bureau

The Nature of Art Rebecca Ryba/Fall Creek Jed Jordan, Primitive Pursuits

"What's Missing?" Connecting Young Children with the Environment Kathleen Downes/Caroline Carol Hockett, Johnson Museum of Art; Mary Beth Ihnken, Artist

Environmental Ambassadors – We Can Make a Difference! Caren Arnold/Northeast Seth Dennis, Tompkins County Solid Waste

The Voice of the Haudenosaunee Tara Ciotoli/Belle Sherman Caleb Thomas and Margaret Bowers, Haudenosaunee

The Voice of the Haudenosaunee Nancy Thompson/Belle Sherman Dan Hill, Cayuga Share Farm, Indigenous artist

Using My Five Senses in the Garden Kelly Craft/Northeast Leigh MacDonald, Ithaca Childrens Garden; Raylene Ludgate, Cornell Plantations

Love Those Rhythms, Rhymes, and Letters Sharon Ciferri/Enfield Judy Stock, Musician

Make Better Stuff: the advantages of rapid prototyping Sheila Kissiloff/Fall Creek Xanthe Matychak, designer

Nature in Our Neighborhood Allison Andersen/Fall Creek Tim Drake, Primitive Pursuits

Leveraging Students' Access to Literature Monica Sherman and Chris Rugg/DeWitt Cal Walker, The Village At Ithaca; Buffalo Street Books

Six Mile Creek and Me Jayne Port/Belle Sherman Karen Edelstein, GIS Specialist; Matt Kelly, Buffalo Street Books

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?? Exploring genre & theme through literature and film Allison Andersen/Fall Creek Brett Bossard, Cinemapolis

All Of Us Singing Stephen Anderson/South Hill Sarah Wolff, Poet

*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.

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