



December 1, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact HEF at (952)988-4097

www.HopkinsEducationFoundation.org

Jennifer St. Clair, Executive Director

Hopkins Education Foundation (HEF) awards eleven grants totaling \$32,224.

HEF grants fund a wide range of projects that both supplement and complement Hopkins School District's rigorous core curriculum. This autumn's cycle of grants is an exciting mix that reflects the creativity and ingenuity of Hopkins staff. Topics include scientific inquiry in robotics and meteorology, interactive history, extracurricular academic teams, microfinance lessons, impactful curricular enhancements at both the preschool and secondary levels, and creative healthy eating initiatives. HEF grants engage students, invigorate learning, and elevate the classroom experience. The following is a summary of each grant.

History Live - \$3,000

North Junior High, West Junior High, All Sixth Grades – Allegra Smisek, Betsy Julien, Norah Garrison

Minnesota Historical Society experts will use 21st Century technology to 'transport' Hopkins students back in time, connecting them to important segments of our country's history. Students interact via video conference with historians in period costume, effectively bringing these experts into the classroom. Using archives, primary sources and intense research, this virtual field trip takes students on a journey to a time and place as foreign as another planet, making history relevant and comprehensible.

RoboSquad – Bringing STARBASE to Elementary - \$6,000

Meadowbrook Elementary – Chuck Burmeister, Kelley White, Bobby Krzmarzick

Fourth and fifth graders across the District are attending STARBASE Minnesota, a Department of Defense program that utilizes a mission to Mars as the vehicle to introduce practical fun applications of engineering and science principles. RoboSquad brings STARBASE back to Hopkins. This pilot program

consists of building and manipulating twelve Lego programmable robots. As they ‘teach’ these robots to traverse the cratered surface of Mars and navigate obstacles, students learn coding, computer programming, higher-level thinking and robotics. The lessons incorporate perseverance, problem solving, and teamwork – all valuable and necessary 21st Century skills.

Digital Video Studio - \$2,195

North Junior High – Debbie Hahn, Becky Fritz, Jen Legatt

Royal Roundup, NJH’s weekly video show presented to the entire student body, will get a big facelift. This grant enables North’s student Genius Team to take the lead in designing and remodeling the current outdated video studio. New equipment will be used for the *Roundup*, and will also be available to all students to create, edit, and share video productions with a school-wide audience.

Science Olympiad - \$990

Hopkins High School, North Junior High, West Junior High - Michael Gehlsen, John Sammler

This is the inaugural gift from The Awesome Fund, dedicated solely to student clubs and organizations, and funded by a Hopkins alumni and his employer’s match (both have chosen to remain anonymous).

Science Olympiad is an extra-curricular academic team, for students in grades 9-12 with a penchant for science, and will compete in scholarship-granting competitions. Team advisor Michael Gehlsen, science teacher at NJH and HHS, once an Olympiad himself, has as much enthusiasm for the Olympiad as his students. Science Olympiad holds team tournaments consisting of 23 different scientific events, ranging from building projects and knowledge-based tests to laboratory investigations. Topics include Hydrogeology, Technical Writing, Invasive Species, Food Science, Science of Flight, Oceanography, Disease Detectives, and more.

Kiva Microfinance: Making a Difference in the Third World - \$4,175

North Junior High and West Junior High – Allegra Smisek, Debbie Hahn, Kim Campbell

This is an exciting addition to the eighth grade International Baccalaureate’s (IB) global studies curriculum. Students, collaborating in groups of three, will get the opportunity to invest in someone’s future. After first heavily researching entrepreneurs in developing Third World countries, each group will choose a small business to receive a \$25 loan. The group must present their research and track the outcome of their investment.

Shifting to New Concepts in Literacy – \$3,600

Hopkins High School, North Junior High, West Junior High – Jennifer Behnke, Ann Brustuen

HEF is partnering with the Hopkins School District to send nine teachers to train next summer in successful research-based adolescent literacy education for junior high and high school students. These teachers will in turn train others in the District in these 'best practices'. Instead of teaching literary constructs and themes using long novels that do not always resonate with adolescent readers, this method uses a wide variety of shorter readings that center around an exploration or question, such as empathy, moral choices, context, etc.. With this method, students remain more engaged, and deeper concepts will be absorbed in the same amount of time.

Tower Vegetable Garden: Indoor Harvesting and Sharing - \$1,148

Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing – Vicky White, William Barringer

Second graders will plant, monitor, harvest and share the bounty from this impressive tower of fauna on wheels. As the pyramid of 28 plants circulates among five classrooms, these fast-growing (4-8 weeks) fruits and vegetables will encourage experimentation with new food and discussions about healthy choices.

'Get Set for School' – ECSE Curriculum - \$3,000

Harley Hopkins Family Center – Jennifer Muller, Linda Hanson, Jackie Wood

The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) team at Harley Hopkins is currently successfully piloting the *Get Set for School* preschool curriculum. This HEF grant expands *Get Set* to six sets of materials to enable widespread use among all ECSE classrooms. Each year, more than 100 three to five-year-old students with a variety of disabilities will benefit from these terrific learning tools, which support children's diverse learning styles.

Community Vegetable Garden & Outdoor Classroom - \$4,479

Glen Lake Elementary – Hannah Swaden, Maria Williams, David Simpson

Partnering with Glen Lake's community, the school's new living laboratory will focus on science, agriculture, and cooperation. Each grade level will plant six plots and use the garden in a different way. Third graders, for example, will grow their own snacks, study the physics of sound, build birdhouses, and investigate native rocks and minerals. The outdoor classroom will include benches and tree stumps for seating, and will provide an intriguing alternative learning environment, with space for unique science experiments and nature observation. Extra food will be donated to the ICA Food Shelf.

High-Altitude Weather Balloon - \$1,300

West Junior High – Geoffrey Boeder, Frank Weber, Amy Bode

Fun, hands-on science takes flight with this helium-powered weather balloon. Seventh and eighth grade students in the *Experimental Science* elective will track the balloon's fact-finding mission with a Go-Pro

camera they install before launch. Data sensors, recorders, and GPS tracking device on board will transmit back to students. They'll use the data to understand weather and atmosphere, to hone graphing skills, and for analysis and discussion. The project will culminate in a student-created high-quality video of the launch, and a presentation of their experimental findings at the school science fair.

Minecraft Afterschool Club - \$2,337

North Junior High and West Junior High – Sara Speicher, Becky Jacobson, Becky Fritz

In this fun extra-curricular enrichment program, junior high students play MinecraftEdu, a school-ready remix of the popular game Minecraft. They'll learn programming and coding, planning, asset management and critical thinking skills. Students will be able to use what they learn in Minecraft Club for projects in nearly any subject area.

###

Since 1995, HEF has provided nearly \$2.4 Million to the Hopkins School District in the form of more than 350 grants. Each grant engages Hopkins students through enriching educational experiences. For more information, contact Hopkins Education Foundation at (952)988-4097 or visit our website: www.HopkinsEducationFoundation.org