

Pennsville Education Foundation awards grants to district teachers

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PENNSVILLE TWP. — Seven projects by teachers in the Pennsville Township School District were awarded grants by the Pennsville Education Foundation for the 2010-2011 school year.

Foundation President Randy Freed, a former Pennsville teacher, said that the group raises money for the district through different projects.

“This year, we decided that we wanted to initiate a program for teacher grants,” Freed said. “We wanted to give money back to be used directly in the classroom by the dedicated teachers of the district.”

Superintendent Dr. Mark T. Jones said that the foundation and the board of education both felt that it was time to acknowledge the good work of the teachers.

The educators who applied for grants went through a lengthy application process, according to Freed.

“Teachers would apply, then a grant committee reviewed their submissions. They were scored and rated, then we chose the best ones,” said Freed.

Some of the criteria for selection included how many students would be affected, how many staff members were involved, what goals the project hoped to achieve, how the teachers would measure the success of those goals, and if the project addressed a need that wasn’t already met in the regular school budget, Freed said.

At the end of the process, seven projects were selected that totaled more than \$8,000 in awards.

Some of the projects chosen included “IXL Math,” a practice tool for first- and second-grade educators that adapts to students’ individual levels of understanding and includes progress awards and motivational tools.

“Minimizing Your Carbon Footprint” is a project that would test the amount of energy used to do things in the classroom, such as electrically sharpen a pencil, then provide alternative energy uses.

Another project, “Grandparent’s Day,” would provide a breakfast for the grandparents of students and then allow them to participate in a book fair with their grandchildren, which would raise money for the district and literacy for the students.

Four teachers of the fourth grade, Gloria Walters, Katie Reilly, Lindsay Mulford, and Alicia Busillo, created the project, “Going Green Begins With You, Me, and the Community.”

“From April 18-21, we will hold different activities for the fourth- and fifth-grades that will teach them to be aware of the world and how to recycle,” Busillo said.

She also said that the project will include members of the community and stores in the town showing students what they do to “go green” through presentations.

“Students will be taking a huge part in the project — planting in greenhouses, working on habitat projects, and sharing what they’ve learned with other students in the district,” Busillo said.

She said that the group of educators was inspired by kids’ curiosity in saving the planet.

Busillo said that she and her fellow teachers were excited and shocked to receive the grant, worth \$980.05.

Jennifer Spears, a fourth- and fifth-grade special education teacher in the district, was awarded a \$1,000 grant for her project, “Author Day.”

She said she plans to bring an accomplished author to the Penn Beach School, so the students can experience the writing process through the relations of someone who does it for a living.

Spears said that she had never applied for a grant before, but is excited to bring the experience to the school.

Freed said that the foundation and the teachers are very happy with the grants and that there are plans to continue the awards for the next school year.