

Newsletter

The History

Founded in 2009, as a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt charitable organization, the Mars Planet Foundation serves the Mars Area School District by providing opportunities to enhance and enrich the learning endeavors of each student.



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- In this edition:**
 Learn more about the teacher grants awarded.
- Scholarships awarded in May.
- Learn ways to help the Mars Planet Foundation continue to grow.
- Local businesses could save money on taxes



Mission

The Mars Planet Foundation focuses on awarding Teacher Grants throughout each school year and to inspire teachers to bring innovative new ideas and programs to their students which ultimately enhance their learning capabilities. We also oversee scholarships that help to enrich our graduating seniors at the annual Academic Banquet.

- Ambassadors**
 Jennifer DiCuccio
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Students are Popping to Learn

Popular fidgets make great learning tools.

In the fall of 2021, Ms. Greta Huggins, a first grade Primary Center teacher, submitted a grant request to ensure her students are using a multisensory approach to learning while having fun. Ms. Huggins asked for the Mars Planet Foundation to fund Push Pop Sensory Toys so each student in the class could have their own. Her goal was to use these as tools to engage all students in developing stronger number sense, master the early practice of addition and subtraction as well as skip counting. Her ideas didn't stop there. Ms. Huggins planned to focus on fine motor and even phoneme segmentation. All important early learning skills.

After receiving the Pop Its for the classroom, great things have happened for those students. "The best part is probably all the smiles I see the entire time my kids are using them. They think they are just playing but I know they are learning so much each time we use them" states Ms. Huggins. Prior to having the Pop Its in class, many of the students struggled to skip count. Just from observation she has been able to see gains in skills with some students being able to skip count to 100. "Skip counting and just general number recognition are so important for the students to be successful in Math."

The students have been able to use the Pop Its for addition and subtraction. It is such a quick and easy way to add and subtract for young students. Ms. Huggins shared that it was so nice to have a Pop It handy when the kids are doing a worksheet on "What's the next number". These toys sure took learning to the next level.



Are you a Mars teacher with a great idea?

The Mars Planet Foundation is looking to fund your grant requests. Find out more information at <https://marsplanetfoundation.org/>

Greenhouse Grant Grows More Than Plants.

Friendship grow here too.

In the fall of 2021, Ms. Earlene Allhouse, an emotional support teacher, submitted a grant request to ensure her students could learn skills both inside and out with a greenhouse grant request. With the grant, Ms. Allhouse was able to set up a greenhouse that the students will be able to maintain in various seasons allowing the students to experience hands on how to plan, plant and grow the plants.

With the grant, the students were able to learn and experience first hand about the parts and needs of a plant. From there, they were given the responsibility of making sure the plants grew in their care. The students also learned about by products of the plants and even got to grow their very own Chia pets.

Witness lessons
in action.



Save the Date

Wednesday, June
22nd

Mars Farmhouse Cafe
Dinners To Go Fundraiser



Make sure you watch the various media outlets of the Mars Planet Foundation for upcoming fundraising activities. Some for the whole family to enjoy!

Giant Maps Are Out of This World

Exploring Mars and the Moon through multi-curricular lessons brings more fun to STEAM.

Ms. Colleen Hinrichsen, STEAM teacher at the elementary building submitted a grant that will allow students from 2nd through 4th and possibly high ages experience Mars and the Moon through large vinyl maps. This grant will bring learning and excitement for years to come all the while showing students how various content areas are connected. Ms. Hinrichsen planned a full year of activities with these maps. She was creative in her use of incorporating class robots, problem solving, maps scales and even math equations. The floor maps are made of vinyl and show the topography and surface of Mars and Earth's moon, along with scientific facts and education materials.

It should come as no surprise that the students were in love with the maps and excited for the whole experience. Ms. Hinrichsen shared that "They bring learning to life as we combine our knowledge from different subject areas in new and exciting ways. While we learn about the Moon and Mars by using these maps, we also apply the same map skills we use when we learn about our own world! Having maps as big as our classroom transports us away from Earth during class time so we feel excited and engaged in our lessons."

Second and third grade students created stop-motion animation films to demonstrate an action verb that would take place on either the Moon or Mars. The creativity was endless as it was reported that "several groups even figured out that they could slow down their animations to create actions that appeared to have less of a gravitational pull." The students were able to have their characters show actions that ranged from throwing a football in a moon crater to erupting out of the largest volcano in the solar system on Mars.

The fun and inspiration did not stop there as the fourth graders used the maps to imagine and simulate inventions that would allow human life to survive in space. Ms. Hinrichsen explained that "Students analyzed the topography at various locations, and then they created robotic devices to solve their specific problems. Their ideas ranged from rotating mobile gardens to moon rock collecting buggies, even to humanoid robots searching for life forms."

The Moon and Mars maps have already made such a positive impact on learning in their first year. It is exciting see what Ms. Hinrichsen will think up next!

Read the article from the Cranberry Eagle if you missed it:

<https://www.cranberryeagle.com/2021/12/14/mars-students-learn-with-giant-maps/>



Use the QR CODE to enjoy the maps in action with a video from the STEAM students.

Spring/Summer 2022

Foundation hosts 30th Academic Excellence Award Ceremony

Scholarship Winners

BC3 Pioneer Education Scholarship-
Julia Fletcher

Belinda a. Terzich Memorial
Scholarship- Isabella Pellegrino

Edward R. Choura Vocational
Scholarship-
Cristian Oxlaj-Relac

Kean Foundation Scholarship for the
Arts-
Kambria Eldredge

Kean Foundation Scholarship for STEM-
Isabella Pellegrino

Lefcon Technology Scholarship-
Samuel Hagen & Max Solich

Kimberly Young Memorial Scholarship-
Mia Scalise

MAHS Swim & Dive Scholarship-
Sophie Huff

Mars Planet Foundation Education-
Scholarship- Lauren Miko

Ross McConnell Memorial Scholarship-
Cristian Oxlaj-Relac

William R. "Beel" Neel Scholarship-
Audrey Gehm

Jake Cooper Memorial Scholarship-
Ava Black & Anuj Kaul

Helen Werner Anderson Memorial
Scholarship-
Angelina Tsao

Every Spring the Mars Planet Foundation hosts a senior awards ceremony and reception to award scholarships and honor outstanding seniors.

If you have an upcoming senior, check out the various available scholarships on the website.

<https://marsplanetfoundation.org/scholarships>



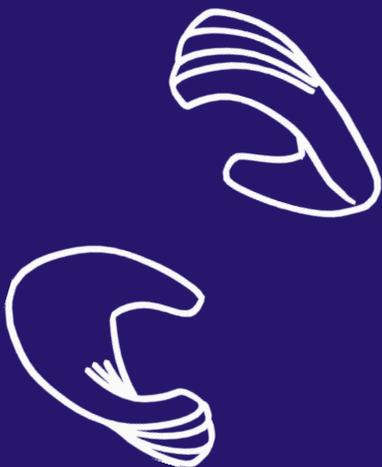
Support the Mars Planet Foundation

The Mars Planet Foundation relies on the generous donations of the community and local businesses to provide teacher grants, student scholarships and overall support to the growth of students. There are many ways in which you can get involved. Please consider volunteering your time, making a personal donation, or making a corporate donation.

To donate please go to www.marsplanetfoundation.org

Give a little. Help a lot.

Parents, alumni and friends can maximize personal contributions to the Mars Planet Foundation with corporate matching gifts. By taking advantage of a company's matching gift benefit, you may be able to double or even triple the amount of an individual contribution. To find out if your company has a matching gift policy, please check with your HR department.



TO PAY LESS STATE TAXES!

As a business owner, you recently paid your tax liability to the Commonwealth. How much did you pay? And, do you know how the money you earned is going to be used? To pay the Governor's salary? To fix that pothole?

What if we told you there is a way we can assure you that 100% of what you contribute will stay right here at home to directly benefit Mars Area School District and that you can claim 90% of what you donated as a credit on your state taxes?

That's right! Your contributions, in the form of an Educational Income Tax Credit (EITC) stay right here. This is not a deduction – it's a straight-out credit you get to claim against what you chose to contribute. That money is managed by the Mars Planet Foundation, a collection of local volunteer Board members and Ambassadors, to fund district wide instructional technology, STEAM programs, and so on. Recently, EITC funds have been used to purchase 3D printers, gymnasium-sized maps of the Moon and of Mars, and other educational enrichment resources. Imagine the pride of knowing your tax dollars – something you have to pay regardless – will stay local. And, you'll know how those funds are being invested in our children's futures. Because, we will tell you. Stay tuned for more information on how to donate to the Mars Planet Foundation EITC. Oh, and, sorry; we can't do anything about that pothole.



LEAVE A LEGACY USING ESTATE PLANNING

Impact the lives of Mars Area School District students with the life you've built! By directing a gift to the Mars Planet Foundation, you create a lasting legacy to enhance education in the Mars School District. Bequests and planned gifts of all sizes make a difference in the lives of our students.

Leaving a legacy is simple. Include a charitable bequest in your will or trust or designate the Mars Planet Foundation as a beneficiary of a retirement or investment account or insurance policy. You can positively influence the future of our young students through your gifts of: Stock and Bonds

- Retirement Assets Cash
- Insurance Policies
- Real and Personal Property

Types of Bequests

With the help of an advisor or your attorney, you can include language in your will or trust to leave a gift to the Mars Planet Foundation.

There are several ways you can make a bequest to the Foundation:

Specific Bequest: leaving a specific dollar amount gift or a specific asset.

Percentage Bequest: designating a percentage of your overall estate.

Residuary Bequest: giving what remains in an estate after expenses, debts, and any specific or percentage bequests have been paid. It is common for a residuary bequest to involve leaving a percentage of the residue of your estate.

You can also designate the Mars Planet Foundation as a partial, contingent, or sole beneficiary of a retirement, investment of bank account, or a life insurance policy. We recommend seeking the professional guidance of an estate planning attorney to make decisions regarding a planned gift but invite you to use this information to aid you in your discussions with your attorney. Please contact us with any questions you may have at admin@marsplanetfoundation.org.



Another great way to support the Mars Planet Foundation is to select us as your Amazon Smile choice