

MARS PLANET FOUNDATION

WWW.MARSPLANETFUNDATION.ORG - ADMIN@MARSPLANETFUNDATION.ORG



OUR HISTORY

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

OUR MISSION

We focus on awarding Teacher Grants throughout the year, to inspire Teachers to bring innovative new ideas and programs to their students which ultimately enhance their learning capabilities. Scholarships help to enrich our graduating Seniors as there are a growing number of them that we steward and award at the annual Academic Banquet.



Flexible seating inside select classrooms funded by the Mars Planet Foundation

FOLLOW US!



<https://www.facebook.com/MarsPlanetFoundation>



<https://twitter.com/foundationmars>



<https://www.instagram.com/marsplanetfoundation/>

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Kevin Hagen - President
Wyatt Lee - Vice President
Tricia Holland - Secretary
Andrea Bowser - Treasurer
Carol Knox
Vicki Zaccari
Dayle Ferguson
Rochelle Seideneck
Christine Valenta
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Ambassadors - Non Voting

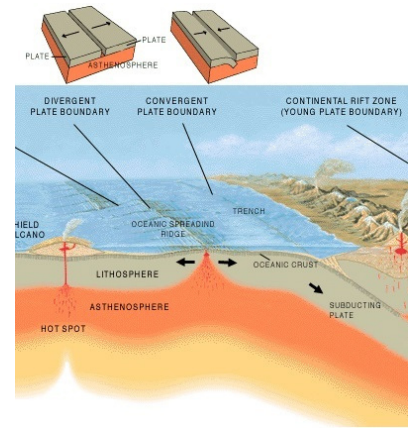
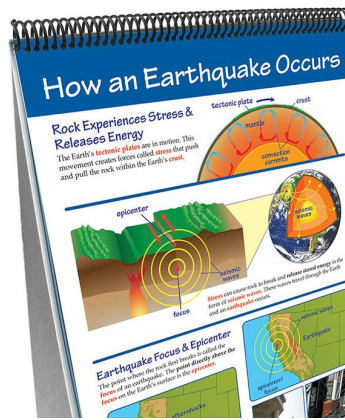
Megan Lenz
Robin Parsons
John Neurohr
Alicia Palmiero
Cara Schultz
Diana Jacoby
Jennifer Bainbridge
Jen DiCuccio

TEACHERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE TEACHER GRANTS

Exploring Earthquakes- Activity Station Kit with Mrs. Thurber

Throughout their seventh-grade year, students have the opportunity to explore and investigate physical and earth sciences. Studying plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes are ways that students can explore the world around them. With the Exploring Earthquakes- Activity Station Kit, students will see earthquakes by creating, on a small-scale level, the movement of Earth's plates.

Students will also be able to observe and record information on plate and rock movement on fault lines, reinforcing the scientific method with the Plate Tectonics and Earthquakes- Demo Kit. They will examine the causes of earthquakes and research factors that influence seismic activity. Students will be able to map earthquakes and volcanoes by looking at tectonic plates, latitude/ longitude, and charts of the ocean floor with the Mapping Earthquake and Volcano Kits. With the Finding the Epicenter of an Earthquake Activity Kit, students will practice determining the epicenter of earthquakes and calculating primary and secondary waves. Finally, students will be able to see a strike-slip fault demonstration with the Strike-Slip Fault- Student Activity Kit and see how a seismograph works with the Seismograph Models. The Planet Foundation provided funds for both seventh grade teachers to receive the learning materials.



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.

LEAVE A LEGACY THROUGH YOUR 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.

Support the Mars Planet Foundation Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC)

The Mars Planet Foundation is an approved Educational Improvement Organization that can receive donations through the state's EITC program. The Foundation applies annually to be an approved organization and works with the Mars Area School District to submit approved projects that can receive funding from EITC donations. Some of the approved programs include:

STEAM-Related Initiatives - Provide funds to purchase equipment and/or supplies to supplement learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts or Math for all students.

One-to-One Technology – Education without Limits - Provide funds to improve and/or replace technology used to enhance learning for daily instruction of students.

For more information regarding Pennsylvania's EITC program, please visit their website (<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/educational-improvement-tax-credit-program-eitc/>).

WALK AROUND MARS FUNDRAISER

The Mars Planet Foundation is currently hosting a virtual “Walk Around Mars” fundraiser! This is a 6-week virtual walk which began on Monday March 29th 2021, and will conclude on Monday, May 10th 2021. Together, we hope to lap the Planet Mars – that’s 13,263 miles of fun! We hope all of our participants will join in on our theme weeks and take and share pictures of the best parts of their journey!

During the event, there are multiple theme weeks. These include: Out of this World Costume Week, Where’s the Martian Week, and Show us Where Spring has Sprung Week! Please don’t forget to cheer on your fellow Martians as you see them out and about! We are very excited and humbled by the enthusiasm that this event has generated in our schools and throughout the community.

REMINDER: If you are one of our participants who signed up for the walk, please remember to submit photos of yourself on your walk around Mars. Please submit your photos either through e-mail to admin@marsplanetfoundation.org or upload your picture to in the Comments field on the post asking for picture submission. All pictures submitted to the Mars Planet Foundation will be uploaded to Facebook for voting purposes.

We’ll be sure to encourage you on your journey! Additionally, if you are interested in tracking your miles, text – MarsTrack to 71777.

Stay tuned for our next update where we will announce the winning school in the Mars Area. The school that registered the most participants will take custody of the winner’s trophy—and all bragging rights. Make sure to follow us on the Mars Planet Foundation as we give away prizes to participants throughout their journey!



MARS BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT OF WALK AROUND MARS FUNDRAISER IS OUT OF THIS WORLD!

In early February, the Mars Planet Foundation Board Members and Ambassadors sought donations from the Mars business community in support of the Mars Planet Foundation's Walk Around Mars Fundraiser. Once local business owners learned of the COVID pandemic's cancellation of the Foundations golf outing last August (the Mars Planet Foundations largest fundraiser) and that this year's golf outing would be cancelled, many graciously selected a sponsorship level. The donations will be used to fund teacher grants and student scholarships for teachers and students in the Mars Area School District.

Many of the sponsors were first time donors to the Mars Planet Foundation. More than 52 local businesses are sponsoring the six-week virtual walk and each have received an inflatable Marty the Martian to display in support of the event – especially the Where's the Martian Week. Local business sponsorships account for more than \$22,000 of the total \$35,000+ raised. Pictures of Marty at the local business sponsors can be viewed by going to the Mars Planet Foundation Facebook Page.

Future Mars Planet Foundation newsletters will provide details on what teacher grants and student scholarships the monies raised during Walk Around Mars were used to fund. The Mars Planet Foundation Board and Ambassadors thanks the Mars business community for support that is truly out of this world!

SENIOR YARD SIGNS FOR CLASS OF 2021

Once again, the Mars Planet Foundation is pleased to honor our graduating seniors by purchasing yard signs to mark their academic accomplishment!! Since this has been another unprecedented year for our seniors, we are happy to provide the funds to acknowledge each of them. You should see these signs decorating our community at the beginning of May!

MONTHLY LOCAL DINNER FUNDRAISERS

Mars Planet Foundation is continuing to partner with local restaurants to offer great meals to go. Look for upcoming events on Instagram and Facebook!

May Dinner – Mars Farmhouse Café

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

Clarification from the Foundation

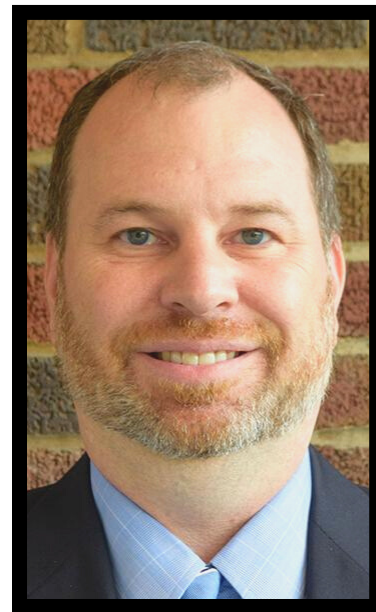
The Mars Planet Foundation is a non-profit organization that seeks to enrich the experiences of the students and teachers of the Mars Area School District. It does not endorse any political candidate or policy position. Recent posts on social media may have given the appearance of endorsements, which they were not. The Foundation apologizes and endeavors to remain focused on its important mission.



TEACHER GRANTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

IPADS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR MASD SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF AND STUDENTS

FROM TRAVIS MINEARD, MASD DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WITH COMMENTS SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS & LANGUAGE THERAPISTS



In May of 2019, Dr. McMahon submitted a teacher grant to the Mars Planet Foundation for 30 iPads for MASD Special Education staff. The Mars Planet Foundation approved the grant of \$10,000. The iPads were purchased and then distributed to elementary special education teachers, secondary life-skills teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and social workers to provide students with instructional strategies and opportunities. Teachers have utilized iPads for skill reinforcement in math, reading, and writing, instructional centers, data collection, and review apps at the elementary level.

Kyle Hamilton, a MASD elementary special education teacher, explained, "The iPads have been a wonderful addition to my special education classroom. Students use the devices for academics, breaks, and as an incentive. Having the flexibility to have students utilize my room in full capacity is important due to differentiating instruction to each student. Having many students who are hands-on kinesthetic learners make a device such as this vital in the classroom. The iPads have provided me with extra opportunities and more flexibility in the classroom. It made a large impact during Livestream Instruction (LSI). Here, the paraprofessional and I could use the iPads to ensure all students were receiving appropriate instruction. Using breakout rooms via ZOOM with the iPads was crucial when providing students with instruction and progress monitoring."

Ashley Campbell, a MASD elementary special Education teacher, shared, "The new iPads have helped to add a sense of fun back into learning through the pandemic. Students can access interactive learning games/lessons to help continue to build and reinforce skills. It also helps special education students practice working independently and positively reward success in the classroom. They love to earn iPad free time or to play a game with the teacher interactively."

Deanne Rapp, a MASD elementary special education teacher, explained, "my students are using the IPADs for writing (letters and numbers), math, and reading lessons in the classroom. We like to use the Go Math App to watch daily math lessons and complete math problems. Snap Type is another App that we use when a student has difficulty writing; instead of completing a worksheet, students can write with their finger or type. We have found many apps that help our students with writing and learning difficulties."

During speech sessions, therapists record students with articulation errors to "hear" their mistakes. In speech groups, the therapist uses various speech apps to address speech weaknesses and social skills. Asley Golias, a speech-language pathologist for Mars Area School Districts who support the Elementary and Middle Schools, explained, "The iPads have been a great addition to use during speech therapy to keep students actively engaged and interested in their session."

When working with occupational therapists, students focus on improving fine-motor skills. Students are more motivated to practice tracing, writing, and staying within lines when using an iPad instead of paper and pencil.

Social workers use the iPads to address social skills through playing videos on different scenarios and problems. Students apply skills they have learned when discussing the various issues to problem solve.

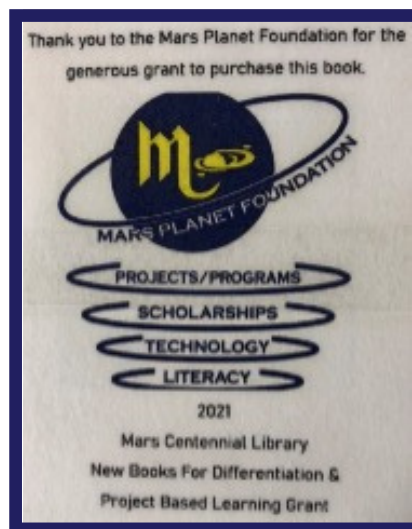
The teachers, therapists, and para-educators greatly appreciate the support from the Mars Planet Foundation has given to our department throughout the years. The entire Special Education Department and I greatly appreciate the financial support the Mars Planet Foundation provided not only for iPads but also for the past special education teacher grant approvals. As is evident in the above teacher quotes, the use of this technology is directly impacting the growth of our students' needs and achievements. Thank you!

NEW BOOKS FOR THE MARS CENTENNIAL LIBRARY:

PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS FOR DIFFERENTIATION AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING

Since library book circulation restarted in January, 2021, the Mars Area Centennial Library has been more popular than ever with students making up for lost reading time! Teachers are assigning book report projects and are doing class read alouds to highlight new genres and authors. As a Library Media Specialist, nothing is more exciting than seeing the thrill on a student's face when they pick up a new book that they are excited to read!

This year, the Mars Planet Foundation assisted the Mars Centennial Library with a grant to purchase 88 new books for our library. These books will serve multiple purposes for the Mars Area Centennial school for many years. Specific titles that were ordered with this grant were requested by teachers to use for project-based learning initiatives, class read alouds, and genre study book reports. This specific collection of books can be utilized for differentiation of instruction to allow for learning to occur at all student reading levels.



Each year, the Mars Centennial Library adds new book titles to the Library Media Center with funds raised at the Scholastic Book Fair. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 spring book fair was cancelled, resulting in a loss of \$2,000 in library book funding. Even though the Mars Centennial Library has hosted virtual Scholastic Book Fairs during the 2020-2021 school year, the profits for virtual fairs can only be spent on items in the Scholastic Catalog. The Scholastic Catalog is limited to specific books and resources. Without the assistance of the grant from the Mars Planet Foundation, the Mars Centennial Library would be missing the opportunity to purchase new, popular, and relevant books to be utilized in our classrooms.

Some book titles and series that were purchased with the Mars Planet Foundation grant are:

- 2021 Newbery Award & Honor Books such as When you Trap a Tiger by Tae Keller and Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- Sequels in popular book series such as Class Act by Jerry Craft, I Survived: The California Wildfires by Lauren Tarhis, and The One and Only Bob by Katherine Applegate
- Who Was?/What Was? series books
- Historical Fiction books by Alan Gratz
- The Spy School series by Stuart Gibbs
- 2021 Caldecott Award & Honor books such as R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul by Carole Weatherford and Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera by Candace Fleming

These books, along with many others, have been requested by teachers and students. The day they arrived and the box was being unpacked, students and teachers were lining up, requesting the long-awaited new titles!

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. A table full of new books is extremely exciting, but it didn't last long. The "New Books from the Mars Planet Foundation" table was soon empty with a long list of requests by students and teachers to be able to check out those books next. Without the generosity of the Mars Planet Foundation, students and teachers would be without the opportunity or access to new innovative book titles and beloved series. All of these titles will be able to serve as educational tools for differentiation and project-based learning for years to come!