



For Immediate Release

Reynoldsburg Education Foundation Announces 2023/24 Mini-Grant Recipients

Nearly \$5,000 in Mini-Grants Awarded This Year

Reynoldsburg -- Following its largest application season to date, the Reynoldsburg Education Foundation is pleased to announce its latest recipients of the organization's Classroom Mini-Grants totaling \$4,550. The 13 winning projects were selected from a competitive pool of 21 applicants from across the Reynoldsburg City School District. Each grant recipient will receive \$350 toward their project. By partnering with the RCSD, the Education Foundation is able to help teachers' innovative ideas come to life. The projects this year are very diversified and include everything from making non-sew fleece blankets to the design of a prosthetic arm.

"Our team of 14 reviewers really had their work cut out for them this year," said Debbie Dunlap, REF Chair. "We were impressed by the quality of the applications, their depth, and the innovative and empathetic approach teachers have taken to providing for their students. These grants go beyond providing opportunity, but open doors to new experiences that allow our students to achieve academically *and* with compassion."

Announcing this year's REF Classroom Mini-Grant Recipients:

1. Amber Jordan (RHS - Summit Campus) – Creating the *Treats Corner*, this grant will begin as a pop-up business at the high school selling handmade dog treats with profits going back to helping students engaged in community-based instruction attend other community-based field trips that will further student engagement and development.
2. LaKisha Jefferson (SMBR) – Entitled Hub to Habitat Conversion, the grant will help transform the school’s Behavior Focused Learning Center into a more innovative and inspirational learning environment that will boost student morale using an industrial modern design.
3. Christopher Au (RHS - Livingston Campus) – In an effort to diversify curriculum and better reflect the student experience, this project will purchase copies of books that have been both long and shortlisted for the *Booker Prize*, a prestigious literary award deliberated each year looking for the best novel written in the English language, which was published in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
4. Abbi Baker (HMSE) – This grant aims to support problem solving through multi-sensory engagement using tools that will help young students relax and focus so that better engagement is possible. Tools will include things like high-quality headphones and math manipulatives, allowing more tactile students to learn in a more engaging environment.
5. Melisa Ray (TRES) – Small town heroes can be very impactful, and this project will allow a group of fifth grade students to take a hands-on approach (making no-sew fleece blankets) to doing just that. The soft, handmade blankets will be given to young children staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Columbus, and hand-

- delivered by the students themselves so that they may understand the impact of their kindness.
6. Jen Garin (FRES) – Entitled Explore the Invisible, this project will allow students to explore scientific phenomena concerning light, sound waves and magnetism in hands-on, inquiry-based classes during the school's afternoon innovation/makerspace enrichment times. Each homeroom will be allowed to visit the interactive space for 35 minutes every two weeks allowing for new and unique learning opportunities.
 7. Chris (Duane) Vasquez (RHS - Livingston Campus) – Learning a new language is multi-faceted, and this project will allow for the purchase of activities, games and books that will broaden the school's current Spanish program, provide enhanced learning, and engage students in new ways.
 8. Joseph Knisley (WRJH) – Using a 3D printer previously purchased with REF grant dollars, this project will add to current philanthropic giving which is allowing students to create functional prosthetic arms for donation to children in need.
 9. Amy Gochenour (SUES) – This grant aims to help create Heartfest, a day of special activities that will engage students in high-impact stations where they will learn about the importance of maintaining heart health through diet, exercise, and overall wellness.
 10. Erin Daniels (RHES) – While a button-maker is a useful tool, this project aims to take it a bit further, promoting creativity, engagement, and learning across various subjects. Fundraisers, career engagement, and design are all innovative uses for this project which takes a hands-on approach to learning.

11. Megan Patijarevich (RHS - Summit Campus) – The art of dance is reaching students in new ways, and this grant will help fund a beginner’s dance and choreography course for high schoolers where students create their own movement, and work collaboratively in groups to problem solve, communicate and productively explore others’ viewpoints.
12. Kristi Calkins (WRES) – Entitled Reconnecting with the Natural World Once Class at a Time, this project is a hands-on approach consisting of two nature backpacks for grades K-2 and 3-5. These colorful backpacks would be used outdoors by any teacher to help explore areas around school property, allowing students to explore nature through field guides, leaf rubbing plates, binoculars, and other tools without ever leaving their school’s backyard.
13. Sarah Gibson (RHES) – The musical theater is a creative outlet for people of all ages, but this grant will be used to help those in the upper elementary grades by purchasing a musical show kit with all sorts of things needed to put on a production including scripts, director guides, rehearsal vocal tracks, choreography videos, and more. The ultimate goal? A springtime musical production!

Once implemented, REF Mini-Grant recipients will provide the REF with photos, videos, and other examples of the projects’ impact on Reynoldsburg students which will be later shared on our website and Facebook page.

Each grant winner will also be invited to attend the REF’s Annual Gala and Auction held each fall at 1883 Locale, so that we may celebrate their work as a community.

The REF is a non-profit organization operating independently, but in support of the students and teachers of the Reynoldsburg City School District. Its mission is to empower RCSD students and educators by enhancing and enriching educational opportunities through charitable donations, community engagement, and support that develops and nurtures the whole child.

For more information, press only:

Debbie Dunlap, REF Chair
614.581.2870
ddunlap@live.com

For more information on the REF, please visit:

reynoldsburgeducationfoundation.org