



Charting a course for the future.

South Lake Educational Foundation

In the News

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First wave of grants to promote education

BY JULTE STEVENS
C & G STAFF WRITER

Last week, four teachers in South Lake Schools were awarded grants that will help them boost student enrichment.

Provided by the fledgling South Lake Educational Foundation, the \$3,488 in grant money given away will go to support a wide array of enlightening programs, trips and activities for district students.

Jeri Griffin Buboltz, chair of the public relations committee for the South Lake Educational Foundation, said South Lake's K-12 teachers and staff were invited to complete and submit a "small grant application" through mid-February.

Buboltz said a group of foundation trustees, district teachers and one South Lake Schools Board of Education member reviewed 17 applications and recommended that the South Lake Educational Foundation consider funding five of the grant requests.

"The South Lake Educational Foundation trustees agreed to support three grant requests, and the South Lake Schools Board of Education voted unanimously on March 15 to approve the foundation's grant recommendations," Buboltz said.

Teachers and staff could apply for a "mini-grant," totaling from \$200 to \$750, or a "collaborative grant," totaling between \$200 and \$1,500.

Funding for the Small Grant Program came from trustee donations and other business and community donations received to date.

The South Lake Educational Foundation was founded in 2004 by a group of business, civic and community leaders to raise funds for programs and projects not currently funded by the South Lake Schools' general budget.

The foundation, an autonomous, nonprofit corporation that is separate and distinct from the Board of Education, will be launching a Charter Donor Campaign later this spring, and anticipates other grant opportunities during the 2006/2007 school year, Buboltz said.

Candice Merivirta from Pare Elementary will use her \$943 grant create a Pare Family Book Club that will incorporate puppetry for students to share stories they have read, and Jill Riedel from South Lake Middle School and Melissa Ohngren from South Lake High School will use their joint \$1,499 grant to launch their own Creating Healthy Hearts program in an effort to help students achieve cardiovascular fitness and encourage healthy lifestyle habits.

Louna Saba, an eighth-grade teacher from South Lake Middle School, will utilize her \$1,046 grant to fund an eighth-grade Cultural Understanding: Students and Adults for Museum Education interdisciplinary unit that explores the American Civil War and will culminate in a service-learning project to create hate-free zones in the school.

Saba said her 90-student team, called The Patriots, will participate in a program led by members of the National Conference for Community and Justice aimed at breaking down barriers and teaching tolerance at schools.

The NCCJ, founded in 1927, is a human relations group that focuses on fighting bias, bigotry and racism.

"I will have the students in groups, diverse groups so they are not with their friends, and they will work together and learn more about one another," said Saba, who has taught in the district for three years.

Afterward, the students will implement the hate-free zones at school with pamphlets and posters that will illustrate what they learned during their field trip on April 7.

"We all know there are those places where some students get picked on the most like the hallway, the cafeteria and the school bus," Saba said. "We will focus on those areas."

Saba said without the grant, her students would have had to pay to attend the trip — a factor that may have excluded some students from enjoying the experience.

"I think it's great what they are doing, and it's great that they are giving the teachers this extra support," she said.

Tax-deductible contributions to the South Lake Educational Foundation can be sent to South Lake Educational Foundation, 23101 Stadium Blvd., St. Clair Shores, MI 48080.

You can reach Julie Stevens at jstevens@candgnews.com