

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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More than \$81,000, thousands of students, and 94 teachers later: The Comal Education Foundation's 10th Prize Patrol

More than 90 teachers in the Comal Independent School District received more than \$81,000 in grant money during the Comal Education Foundation's 10th Prize Patrol. The grants will be implemented in 2008-09.

"The creativity and enthusiasm of our teachers is tremendous," said Laura Linhart-Kistner, Foundation executive director. "These grants will engage students on new levels and get them excited about learning."

The Foundation, only in its seventh year, has already given back almost \$500,000 to Comal ISD classrooms through teacher grants and district-wide initiatives. The Comal Education Foundation exists to generate and distribute resources to the students and staff of Comal ISD to enrich, maintain and expand programs needed to achieve excellence in education. The Foundation is the catalyst for generating private funds to support educational programming that is beyond the scope of the normal operating budget. These funds are used to improve student achievement and skill development, and to recognize and encourage teaching excellence.

The Foundation awards grants to teachers annually, provides funding for district-wide initiatives on a targeted basis, rewards teachers of the year and recognizes top graduating seniors at the annual academic recognition banquet

The money was awarded to 20 groups of teachers on nine different campuses. The process began earlier this semester when teachers wrote grant proposals for innovative projects and programs to enhance learning. A committee of grant reviewers from the Foundation Board rated each grant, and teachers will implement the projects during the next school year. The grants are:

Bill Brown Elementary

Let's Learn D.R.R.U.M. (Discipline, Respect, Responsibility, and Unity through Music)
(\$4,995)

Teachers: Carol Murray and Mary Lynn Blacklock

All students will experience the art of drumming on different world drums and other percussion instruments through the exciting curriculum of World Music Drumming. This innovative approach utilizes the music and rhythms of diverse cultures throughout the world and provides fun lessons and activities where every child experiences success through a cooperative environment.

Outdoor Education: It's Elemental! (\$3,000)

Teachers: Ross McGlothlin and Aryn Standeford

The project will utilize the natural features of the campus property to encourage outdoor learning in a beautiful and inspiring environment. The outdoor learning center and teaching theatre will provide unique opportunities for students to understand the native Texas Hill Country habitat and promote appreciation and respect for the land they live upon.

Church Hill Middle

Using Audio Books to Help Motivate Students to Read (\$1,718)

Teachers: Misti Dunlap and Nancy Lindley

Working with struggling middle school readers, the use of audio books implemented with other strategies will help improve their reading and comprehension level. Positive modeling occurs when students are read aloud to, including exposure to correct pronunciation, proper fluency and a rich more advanced vocabulary.

Clicking Our Way to Math (\$4,975)

Teachers: Susan Bird, Debbie Lacombe, Daly Heimer

This program will help find new and exciting ways to make math more relevant and fun. Students will have individual, handheld remotes that allow teachers to gauge student learning, allowing teachers to target student needs.

Write Around the Classroom (\$5,000)

Teachers: Richard Stelter, Stephanie Quinn, Dana MacRoberts, Sue McInnis, Misti Dunlap, Nancy Lindley

Imagine writing as a collaborative activity. Imagine the ability to instantaneously display and use a student's writing sample to explain a new language concept. Imagine teachers and students with the ability to lead classroom activities, using portable digital chalkboard tablets to edit proofreading activities. Write Around the Classroom will turn their instructional dreams into reality.

Canyon Lake High

Building Reading Skills and Resiliency in the Library: Teen-Centered Book Clubs (\$3,150)

Teachers: Dee Dee Davenport, Sharon Monzingo, Theresa Daniels, Randa Kirchner, Officer M.C. Joseph

The project will implement teen-centered book clubs in the library to bolster reading comprehension, foster resiliency, and encourage student participation. Students will explore contemporary issues through literature, and build deep connections with books and other people.

Piano Lab (\$5,000)

Teacher: James Kritikos

Piano classes are a great way to get student excited about music! A piano lab will foster a class setting that teaches musical concepts and ideas such as music theory, history and pedagogy, as well as life skills like self-discipline, determination and performance etiquette. Using innovate technology, students will use computer software to compose music promoting creativity and individuality.

Bug Net (\$957)

Teachers: Therese Pilzner and Dee Dee Davenport

Remember the bug collection from your high school biology class? This project takes that to the next level. Students will collect insects, catalog and photograph them, create an insect web page (Bug Net) which can be used by students throughout the school district. It will establish a guide to what insects are in this locality, what they look like, and what their behaviors are.

Freiheit Elementary and Goodwin Frazier Elementary

From Novelty to Necessity (\$4,975)

Teachers: Doris Hasten, Terry Beasley, Peggy Perry, Jamie Sales, Jennifer Saeger, Tammy Griffiths, Megan Heath, Shana Siebert, Rachel Levine, Mindee Engler, Kateresa Loving, Stephanie Kubala, Diane Winkelmann, and Whitney Tovar

A student response system will answer the needs of students who want more technology and teachers who want more time. This system interacts with existing software, exports grades, has TAKS support and is easy to use. The system places technology tools in students' hands and gives teachers an instant snapshot of the skills learned by students.

Goodwin Frazier Elementary

D.A.M.S.E.L.--Developing Appropriate Motor Skills Empowers Learners (\$4,676)

Teachers: Sheila White, Tracy Tate, and Veronica Barriga

The project involves age-appropriate tools and opportunities for students' ages three to five years old to develop and improve all their skills. Hands-on learning will help students stimulate all developmental areas: emotional/social, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive/intellectual, receptive and expressive language skills. Young children have the developmental need to use muscles for physical growth used for reading, writing and math.

Hoffmann Lane Elementary

I Beam, You Beam, We All Beam for eBeam (\$4,650)

Teachers: Janice Tubb, Sheila Pfeffer, James Orth, Heather Alexander, Michelle Broderick, Rosie McConaghy, Cheryl Schmidt, Gena Orth, and Sara Early

eBeam technology transforms ordinary whiteboards into interactive learning environments. The system makes it possible to integrate computer software and the internet into instruction to create interactive classrooms that aid learning, increase student participation and improve communication and collaboration between the entire campus.

Arlon Seay Intermediate School (will be Elementary School in 08-09)

Let's Get It Started! (\$5,000)

Teacher: Lori Moczygamba

Proficient reading is important for academic and personal success. The "Let's Get It Started!" reading program is a focused instruction approach to phonemic awareness for Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st grade students, which is important in the development of early reading. "Let's Get It Started!" will help ensure that early childhood students have an excellent reading foundation for future success.

Floored By Learning (\$4,824)

Teachers: Tamera Tidwell, Lesli Rodriguez, Debbie Dowd, Melody Revel, Peggy Martin, Cathy O'Dell, Judy Murray

The Learning Carpet will help students understand math concepts through physical movement. This gridded 100 square carpet helps demonstrate concepts such as place value, patterning, multiplication, division, measurement, geometry, graphing and problem solving, while fostering independence, cooperation, confidence and self-esteem. There are also uses across the curriculum for reading and Language Arts.

Startzville Elementary

Building the Future Toolboxes (\$874)

Teachers: Barbara Taylor

The toolboxes will be a unique learning aid which will offer students a versatile style of grasping new math concepts while reinforcing basic skills. The toolboxes will contain a variety of real world manipulatives, which students will use on a daily basis. The individual kits are designed for every student and will invite opportunities for exploration with hands-on materials. Each toolbox will allow the classroom teacher to meet the needs of students with different and special learning styles.

Raiders of the Lost Dig (\$3,475)

Teachers: Jennifer Curtis, Noel Balcar, Matt Herzog, and Shay Grice

This project will recreate an archaeological dig site. The reusable dig site will provide a unique hands-on experience for students by relating their day-to-day education with real world, practical uses. Digging up their own "ruins" on campus will give the students the experience of what it would be like to work as an archaeologist in "the field," as well as broaden their understanding of the types of professions they may be able to pursue by successfully continuing their education.

Let's Play Dress Up (\$4,893)

Teachers: Cec Pearson, Glynis Esmond, Theresa Ricker, and Katie Marie Tolbirt

Let's give students the opportunity to dress up in authentic Civil War uniforms and become a part of history. This is a fun and exciting way to bring history to life year after year.

Project STARS (\$3,417)

Teacher: Mary Silvers, Carly Weiswurm, Shay Grice, Angie Mickey, Kaci Gibbons, Carrie Columbus, Tracy Buxkemper, Francene Ray, Julie Page, Suzanne Ouellette, and Nikki Jones

Every child wants to be a STAR. This project will let students help their peers as Student Teachers And Readers. Fourth-grade students will serve as reading coaches for second-grade students, including writing lesson plans, selecting books, making vocabulary cards and keeping an electronic journal of their experience. This will promote fluency in word recognition, and benefit all students with comprehension and social skills development.

The Nano Nanny Project (\$4,318)

Teacher: Theresa Ricker, Liz Salazar, Cynthia Lively, and Robin Lindeman

The project will use iPod Nanos to help teach English language learners and early readers as they listen to podcasts, books on tape, student-recorded readings and other student-created projects. Just like a nanny cares for children in families, the Nanos will be used to simulate a child being read a book or taught a specific reading skill.

Startzville Elementary and Hoffmann Lane Elementary

Teacher, What Are President's Made Of? (\$7,949)

Teacher: Sheri Wersterfer, Stacy Wilkie, Cec Pearson, Rachael Croom, Katie Marie Tolbirt, Carla Shipley, Theresa Ricker, Janalyn Moos, Kelly Carson, and Vanessa Schwab

Satisfy a child's curiosity by answering questions and involving future voters during this historic election year through a presentation from author/illustrator Hanoch Piven as he reads from his book *What Presidents Are Made Of*. Students will work on writing and illustrating skills and publish their work.

Timberwood Park Elementary (Opening Fall 2008)

Building Success with Sensational Science (\$3,449)

Teacher: Tracie Reed and Melissa Bartek

The Quirkles science program will provide Kindergarten and pre-1st students with the unique opportunity to integrate science and literacy through stories and experiments. By beginning the scientific process early in a child's education, the program helps create independent thinkers using simple observations and experiments involving science principles.