GEF funds 7 new projects

Huntington – The Board of Directors for the Gateway Education Foundation voted unanimously to award funding for 7 new projects at their February 1 meeting. The projects, totaling $4,850, cover each school in the district and are the results of Funds for Learning applications submitted by Gateway teachers.

Since the Foundation’s Funds for Learning program started in September 2012, it has funded 58 projects totaling $36,455. All applications submitted during this round were funded.

Staff at Littleville Elementary School won two grants this round. Gail Gingras and Margaret Petzold were awarded $500 for a school-wide family literacy night in May, where children who attend will receive books to keep. First grade teacher Jennifer Bak received a $300 award to bring the Creature Teachers program to Littleville this month.

Kristen Baker, fifth grade teacher at Chester Elementary School, applied for $800 to defray the cost of an overnight trip to Chimney Corners Berkshire Outdoor Center in April. Fifth graders will learn about ecology, plant life, bioaccumulation and the food chain at this two-day STEM program; the overnight trip was approved by the Gateway Regional School Committee at their January 25 meeting.

Sixth graders at Gateway Regional Middle School will meet with Richard Bowker, author of the book, “The Portal”. His presentation will include reading an excerpt, discussing his career as an author, and answering student questions. Teacher Matt Collins submitted the $300 proposal.

Three grants were approved for the high school. The Model United Nations Club received $1500 to help pay for two upcoming overnight conferences: Eagle MUNC at Boston College in March, and the UNA-USA Global Classrooms International Model UN conference in April. Club adviser Lexi Thompson submitted the application. Gay-Straight Alliance adviser Meghan Wasiak won $250 to bring Jacoby Ballard to do a workshop with GSA members on social justice, community building, and stress reduction techniques for advocates. Finally, science department teachers Dan Shea and Abigail Janneke have $1200 to replace the turtle tank currently housing two red-eared slider turtles, who have outgrown their existing 50 gallon tank. The turtles were donated to the department by a graduating student who could not keep them. The species is not indigenous to this region and the turtles cannot be released to the wild. Students will be invited to do presentations to younger grades about the changing and long-term care needs of animals like these turtles, who have grown substantially and now need a 180 gallon tank.

“We are so pleased to be able to fully fund all requests this round, and are grateful to our many donors who make this possible,” said Shirley Winer, President of the Gateway Education Foundation.
Upcoming fundraisers for the Gateway Education Foundation include Boston Celtics Tickets (orders are due February 27 for the March 24 game in Boston against the Phoenix Suns) and Valley Gives Day on May 2. Donations are tax deductible and can be made any time by mailing a check payable to the Gateway Education Foundation, 12 Littleville Rd., Huntington, MA 01050. Online donations are also accepted from our website (www.GatewayEducationFoundation.org). For more information, please contact Wendy Long (wlong@grsd.org or (413) 685-1003).

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*Photo (left): Gateway sophomore Autumn Marchetto at a Model UN Conference held in Cambridge, MA last month. Gateway’s Model UN group earned $1500 to defray the cost of attending the final two conferences this year.*