COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY

Partnership In Education

May 7, 2025

at

Mid-Hudson Discovery Museum

Mid-Hudson DISCOVERY MUSEUM

PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION SPONSORS

Tonight, we celebrate the Community Foundations' Annual Partnership in Education program which recognizes the teaching profession and the value of education.
We are grateful to the following community leaders for their sponsorship of this grant program and celebration:

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The Fund for Excellence in Education is supported by the following funds of the Community Foundations:

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Dennis J. Markle Memorial Scholarship
Stephanie D. Brown and Barbara J. Murphy Memorial Scholarship

MID-HUDSON DISCOVERY MUSEUM
Jeff Sasson, Executive Director

GRANTEE PRESENTATION
Erika Wahlers & April Rose Roe
George Fischer Middle School

NUVANCE HEALTH TACONIC IPA SCIENCE
&
FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
GRANTEE GROUP PHOTO

FINAL REMARKS

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Community Foundations annually provides more than $400,000 in scholarships and awards to students through the generosity of our donors. Tonight, we will award students planning for a future in education.

DENNIS J. MARKLE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Established by the family and friends of Dennis Markle, a beloved history teacher at Poughkeepsie Middle School, the scholarship is available to a graduating student of Poughkeepsie or Millbrook High School planning to major in education or history.

2025 Scholarship Recipient

JA'SIRE FREEMAN, POUGHKEEPSIE HIGH SCHOOL

STEPHANIE D. BROWN AND BARBARA M. MURPHY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Established by the family of Stephanie Brown and Barbara Murphy to honor their memories. Stephanie was devoted to children and was tragically killed in a car accident. Barbara was a devoted mother to Stephanie, a Board member of the Community Foundations and held many job titles including that of teacher. This scholarship is available to female Dutchess County high school graduating seniors who intend to major or minor in Education with career plans to teach in Elementary, Middle or High School.

2025 Scholarship Recipient

RILEY HALL, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL

NUVANCE TACONIC IPA SCIENCE EDUCATION GRANTS

This fund was created by Taconic IPA, whose mission is to provide the premier healthcare delivery network in the greater Hudson Valley. Grants from this fund are awarded to secondary school science teachers in Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties to expand student learning opportunities in the sciences through the acquisition of classroom and laboratory equipment.

2025 GRANTEES

Jessica Benson
Newburgh Free Academy

Cathryn Biordi & Renee Ferarra
Sargent Elementary School

Rosellen Hardt
Wappingers Junior High School

Shira Teich
Poughkeepsie Day School

Elyse Joy & Lauren Perucki
Orville A Todd Middle School

Matthew Mayer
Newburgh Free Academy

Andrew Nikola
John Jay High School

Michael Polotaye & Steve Hertzog
Arlington High School

Michael Traudt & James McQuade
Dutchess BOCES CTI

Paige Van Tassell & Tricia Muraco
Arlington High School

Stephanie Hertel & Megan Holohan
Anderson Center for Autism

FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION GRANTS

Fund for Excellence in Education Grants are awarded to recognize the important contributions that teachers make in their community; support the personal and professional enhancement of teachers; and champion teacher initiatives to improve learning opportunities.

2025 GRANTEES

Erin Appelle
Carmel High School

Melissa Lynn Beeman
Orchard View Alternative High School

Michael Collyer & Marc Ouimet
Arlington High School

Amanda Clemenza
Union Vale Middle School

Gordon Garrand
High Meadow School

Jennifer Geer-Ennist
Morse Elementary School

Amanda Thornwood & Shira Teich
Poughkeepsie Day School

Nathan Lawrence-Paine
Poughkeepsie High School

Christine Molino
Carmel High School

Cathie Morton
Millbrook Middle School

Andrew Nikola & John Sammon
Wappingers Central School District

Marc Ouimet & Michael Collyer
Arlington High School

John Keener & Crystal Sessoms-Wiggins
James V. Forrestal Elementary School

Alison Ventriglia
Kingston High School

Erika Wahlers & April Rose Roe
George Fisher Middle School

Reagan Liberatore Weissenberg
Kingston High School

Christopher Williams & Patricia Huestis
Mahopac Central School District

Allison Woolston
Carmel High School

DENNIS J. MARKLE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Originally established by the Dutchess County United Teacher's Council, the Markle Community Service Grants are awarded to public school teachers for projects involving their students in community service. These community service awards are made in memory of Dennis Markle. Dennis was a history teacher at Poughkeepsie Middle School, Secretary of the Dutchess County United Teachers Council, and a member of the Selection Committee for their Partnership in Education Grants program for many years.

Allison Woolston

Carmel High School

DAVID KENNON MOODY AWARD

Established by Dr. F. Kennon and Mrs. Mary Moody in honor of their son's graduation from law school, grants are awarded for either professional development in teaching writing or for a specific program designed to enhance the writing abilities of a teacher's students.

Jennifer Geer-Ennist

Morse Elementary School

DOROTHY'S MARIONETTES AND PUPPETS AWARD

Established in 1996 by Roy Volpe, Dorothy's Award is to support projects which incorporate student and/or teacher made marionettes and puppets in the curricula and classroom.

Christopher Williams & Patricia Huestis

Austin Road Elementary School

GRANT SUMMARIES

NUVANCE TACONIC IPA

Jessica Benson, Newburgh Free Academy

3D printer for Biology classes

Funds will support a Bambu Lab P1S 3D Printer for students to use to make biological models. This will allow students to visualize and understand key concepts in biology and also allow them to address standards regarding engineering practices. The 3D printer will mostly be used with the College Biology and College Anatomy and Physiology classes as well as for Living Environment classes. In College Biology, there are many intricate processes that students are required to understand. Typically students draw 2-dimensional models depicting the processes or concepts. These 2D models have served the students well thus far, but the use of a 3D printer will allow the students to create more accurate models while allowing them to develop their engineering practices which is part of the Next Generation Science Standards. For instance, DNA replication and protein synthesis are complex processes that students would have the opportunity to design and model with a 3D printer. Students would be able to take the models home to use as a study tool and share with their families and communities. Jessica's yearly individual supply budget is $450 and most of the funds are to purchase consumable items for about 100 students. Items include iodine, Benedict's solution, Biuret, dialysis tubing, pH test strips, chromatography paper, petri dishes, disposable pipettes, disposable vials, string, fetal pigs, earthworms, grasshoppers, fruit flies, glue sticks, poster paper, etc. Little funds are typically left over to purchase models or equipment--all of which usually exceed the entire budget. Grant funds will have a great impact as the cost of a 3D printer is more than double the yearly supply budget available.

Cathryn Biordi & Renee Ferarra, Sargent Elementary School

Microscopes and 3D Printer

Funds will support a class set of microscopes and a 3D printer for science, technology and math classes. Acquiring a class set of microscopes and a 3D printer will significantly enhance learning opportunities by allowing students to engage in hands-on, inquiry-based learning. Microscopes will enable detailed exploration of the microscopic world, fostering scientific curiosity and understanding of biology. The 3D printer will promote creativity and problem-solving skills by allowing students to design and create tangible models of complex concepts in subjects like engineering and geometry. Together, these tools encourage "out of the box" thinking, making abstract ideas concrete and inspiring innovation and critical thinking across the curriculum. Microscopes are often not included in the operating budget for elementary students due to several factors. Budget constraints mean that essential supplies like textbooks, basic classroom materials, and technology upgrades take precedence. Sargent built an elementary science lab last school year and want to equip it with essential scientific tools and materials to enhance hands-on learning experiences for their students and these grant funds are a piece of the puzzle to reach that goal.

Rosellen Hardt, Wappingers Junior High School

Large Screen Classroom Lab Microscopes

Funds will support the purchase of 10 wireless digital biological microscopes with screens. Science discovery and learning process will be improved by having these microscopes that can be easily viewed by 3 students at a time and can be interfaced with the classroom computer to put images on the promethium or smart board in the front of the classroom as well. Student engagement will be greatly increased as instead of spending precious classroom time on the difficult search, always leaving behind some students who never get to master the experience, students can go above and beyond while sharing views and information between groups and presenting findings easily to the class. Students can move on to the creative learning processes and discussions rather than the

typical "wait around" with minimal experience. Thes hands on and collaborative ways of engaging in science are a huge beenfit to our Wappingers students!

Shira Teich, Poughkeepsie Day School

Inflatable Heart to Learn Circulatory System

Shira plans to utilize funds to purchase a giant inflatable heart that students can walk through. Students of all ages pre-k through 12th grade will engage at their level to better understand the circulatory system. It will provide opportunities for older students to create lessons and learning experiences for younger students and increase student engagement. Shira can see lessons like using different colored balloons to represent oxygenated vs deoxygenated blood, involving music to talk about heart rhythms, Spanish language vocabulary, and of course health and biology. Without a budget to support this project, grant funds are critical to creating a space and this interactive equipment to engage students in learning.

Elyse Joy & Lauren Perucki, Orville A Todd Middle School

Good Vibes

Funds will support materials and equipment to study energy, light, sound, and waves. Elyse has written many grants in her career to expand programming in her classroom, but this is by far, one of the most important. Since COVID, and the use of Chromebooks, cell phones, and smart watches, students have been disconnected with each other and there has been a palpable energy shift in her classroom. Students are glued to their devices and not picking up on body language, subtle energy clues, environmental frequencies cues that would tune them into their natural vibrational energy that is there to warn them, protect them, and guide them. Through the study of energy, frequencies, and waves, she will help students understand that their energy has a frequency and that their frequency attracts energy of the same frequencies. Through science experiments and lab investigations, they will explore the meaning of “good vibes”.They will use sound, waves, and light to help students understand vibration and frequency and then circle back to energy conservation and transformation to help students understand that energy can be transformed.

Matthew Mayer, Newburgh Free Academy

Forensic Science Electrostatic Shoeprint Lifting Kit

Funds will support purchasing Sirchie ElectroStatic Dust Print Lifter Kit for their College-Level Forensic Science, AP Biology, Human Anatomy & Physiology, and Honors Biology. 9th through 12th grade students will have better learning outcomes as their understanding and insight about probability and statistics around DNA analysis and DNA fingerprinting will improve greatly and students will be more apt to understand the concepts that are taught involving the correlation between science and the world around us. Statistics in biology is a growing field as the job market in the field of bioinformatics continues to exponentially grow. Teaching statistics in the high school setting can be difficult and this directly supports that learning. It will also help foster new found interests in science and chemistry careers, such as criminalistics, that they can strive for in the future. This equipment provides visual aids for ways that crime scene investigators, criminalists, and forensic scientists lift impression evidence at a crime scene and is critical to working with students who are visual learners. With a great need for enthusiastic workers in the fields of STEM, Matthew hopes to foster a lifelong love for learning and science. The small budget that each teacher receives for science supplies only covers perishable supplies for laboratory investigations and is far from being enough for actual equipment. This equipment is the current technology that scientists use in the field and will give students insight into the innovations and changes that have helped shape modern laboratories.

Andrew Nikola, John Jay High School

Enhancing STEM and Creative Design through 3D Printed Chocolate Designs with Cocoa Press

Funds will support a Press 3D printer to enrich the educational experiences in their science and robotics departments, as well as family and consumer sciences (FACS). This project will integrate engineering, chemistry, food science, and creative design, fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration among students. This is a specialized 3D printer that uses chocolate as the printing medium, will enable students to develop skills while working with a unique, real-world material. The Cocoa Press will be used across multiple subject areas. Cocoa Press is not available through the standard budgeting process due to its unique nature and specialized use. School budgets typically prioritize essential materials and general classroom equipment, while the Cocoa Press is a niche tool that supports multiple departments—science, robotics, and family and consumer sciences. Its combination of food science and 3D printing is innovative but falls outside typical funding categories. Additionally, ongoing costs like chocolate filaments and maintenance are not included in standard allocations. As an emerging technology, it's not yet widely adopted, making grant funding essential to acquire this forward-thinking tool.

Michael Polotaye & Steve Hertzog, Arlington High School

Hydroponic Plant Program

Grant funds will be used to purchase start up equipment for a newly proposed Hydroponics Plant Science course. Items include hydroponic towers, water pumps, tubing, LED grow lights, net pots, seed starter media and concentrated nutrient fertilizers for the various systems. Students enrolled in the Hydroponics Plant course as well as students enrolled in Honors Biology will have an opportunity to design, engineer and build their own hydroponic system as well as maintain and improve on classroom systems that act as an inspirational model for the course. This new equipment will provide a true learning experience that aligns with the NGSS standards.

Michael Traudt & James McQuade, Dutchess BOCES CTI

HVAC Practical Models and Projects

Funds will be used to acquire essential equipment that will enhance their HVAC, Electrical and Computer Programs. This equipment will provide students with hands-on experiences and foster collaboration among peers, enriching their learning in these vital trades. With the new equipment, students will have the opportunity to work together on various projects, encouraging teamwork and innovative thinking. They will also be able to develop their own experiments, promoting creativity and independent problem-solving skills. Opportunities will be available for collaboration across the HVAC, Electrical and Computer content areas. Instructors will design projects that include intentional faults or challenges, allowing students to practice troubleshooting and critical thinking in real-world scenarios. The equipment needed is compact, ensuring that students enrolled in various trades programs have access to the tools and equipment needed to create their models. The acquisition of this equipment will not only enhance the educational experience for students enrolled in HVAC, Electrical and Computer programs but also foster collaboration, creativity, and sustainability.

Paige Van Tassell & Tricia Muraco, Arlington High School

Vital Signs Kits

Funds will support Vital Signs Kits for the Anatomy & Physiology course at Arlington High School. 122 students are currently enrolled in 4 sections of the course. Each section of the course will receive a Vital Signs Kit. The Kits will be utilized during multiple units of study to forge connections between the classroom and real world applications in the health-related fields.The science department budget covers only chemicals, microscopes, and general supplies. This year the budget is especially tight due to the purchase of supplies needed for the new required investigations in the biology and earth science courses, so these grant funds will go a long way in providing essential and modern tools for our students to learn from.

Stephanie Hertel & Megan Holohan, Anderson Center for Autism

Special-Needs Hydroponics Systems for Growth, Learning, Health, and Resilience

Funds will support two hydroponics systems, growing supplies, and add-ons. Students receiving instruction in math, science, horticulture, biology, chemistry, physical education, and occupational and physical therapy will participate in the hydroponics systems' maintenance and upkeep. Teachers and therapists will incorporate their curriculum learning with the hydroponics systems via hands-on activities in the school that includes planting seeds, measuring and monitoring nutrient pH levels, maintaining plants, harvesting produce, and weighing, packaging, and delivering this fresh produce to the cafeteria. Students will also participate in handling internal inquiries regarding the growing system. Autistic students are often concrete thinkers and may struggle to understand abstract concepts. In ACA's classroom, home, and work environments, staff use many tools to help students integrate abstract thinking into real world situations ie., picture exchange systems that break down complicated processes into simple, step-by-steps students can visually see and accomplish one at a time to achieve the desired outcome. ACA has a single hydroponics system that gives a limited number of students this hands-on learning experience. This interesting activity produces outcomes rapidly and gets students thinking about abstract concepts in new ways, enhancing interest in learning and improving comprehension.Their current single hydroponic system produces 250 pounds of fresh green produce that supplements their school cafeteria meals for 140 students and 100 staff. Adding two new hydroponic systems will allow them to engage Anderson's Speech and Occupational Therapy departments in the project, increasing their growing capacity to 975 pounds of fresh salad greens per year.

FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Erin Appelle, Carmel High School

Life Skills and Apartment Living

Students in the PACE program learn independent skills including apartment living where they focus on cooking small, simple meals/snacks and light cleaning. Due to everyday use, teachers need to replace their small appliances that break down with so much use. Funding will support these needs. Erin and teachers in PACE have the advantage of teaching the same students throughout their high school careers. When she can track their progress day to day and then year to year, she can truly see the progress that is made. Erin notes her personal goal is to help her students to believe in themselves and become their best selves through this program. The impact of the program and having working appliance and supplies helps students to take pride in learning life skills, making meals and reaching new levels of independence.

Melissa Lynn Beeman, Orchard View Alternative High School

Beyond School Hours Conference

Melissa plans to utilize funds to attend the Beyond School Hours conference in Orlando, Florida. This year's conference theme is "Education Amplified" and focuses on the ideas that are shaping the current landscape of education including: Artificial Intelligence in Education, Behavior Management Strategies, Conflict Resolution, Increasing Student School Safety, Social-Emotional Well-Being, Leadership Development, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This conference will provide Melissa with vital professional development opportunities and is a chance for her to connect with peers and experts and will be exponentially beneficial to her as an educator in the post-pandemic world. The start of this decade changed the face of teaching and that transition continues as we consider the skills needed to teach today's teenagers in modern classrooms. Melissa believes after attending this conference she will take home new classroom management skills, teaching tools, and a renewed passion for improving learning outcomes.

Michael Collyer & Marc Ouimet, Arlington High School

Physics Pasco Carts

The Smart Carts will be used in many lab activities throughout each year in physics including: Newton's Second Law, Newton's Third Law, Constant Velocity, Acceleration and Deceleration, Inclined planes, Frictional Force Experiments, Kinetic and Potential Energy Exchange, Energy Loss Due to Friction, Elastic Collisions, Inelastic Collisions. These carts come with integrated sensors for position, velocity, acceleration, force, and more, reducing the need for additional equipment. Their multifunctionality reduces the need to purchase separate sensors and tools, consolidating lab resources and minimizing time spent setting up or switching between lab equipment since all the sensors are built in the carts.

Amanda Clemenza, Union Vale Middle School

Virtual Reality Becomes Our Reality

Funds will support Amanda to implement a VR program in her middle school classes to provide students with immersive learning experiences that enhance and increase engagement. VR will help to deepen student comprehension and retention of subject matter as the experience will be tied to the content directly, further deepening the understanding of the curriculum and solidifying the experience as a core learning memory. Amanda notes that students with special needs and disabilities can particiapte in personalized, highly engaging activities tailored to their individual needs. For example, VR simulations can be used to transport a student directly into a region during one of our interdisciplinary units in the ancient world, instead of simply reading about the area and looking at pictures. They can walk through the Colosseum, Mt. Olympus, the Middle East or Asia instead of reading a passage about them.

Gordon Garrand, High Meadow School

Uniforms for Extended Day Physical Education/Athletics program

High Meadow School is in the development stages of implementing a successful interscholastic athletic program that reaches beyond the school day. Funds will maximize the offerings for their programs that will compliment both their physical abilities and the curriculum they adhere to in the classroom. This grant will allow Gordon and his Director to increase participation in this program and build relationships with students and families by incorporating a beneficial program to the overall health of those involved. By being able to provide uniforms and equipment for the students, funds help contribute to the success of the program without creating an undue burden on the families and it will have benefits beyond just this first year of programing. Gordon notes the impact of receiving this grant for his students will increase their overall sense of community and will assist in the adolescent development of their overall health triangle including their social-emotional and mental health. Studies have proven many benefits of students overall health when they are able to participate in an athletics program as an extension of their school day.

Jennifer Geer-Ennist, Morse Elementary School

Students Becoming Authors

3rd, 4th and 5th graders will work with a local author who is from the Dutchess County community and a graduate from Poughkeepsie High School. The author will collaborate with 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers on creating and publishing a grade level book. A local publishing company-Fervent Glow Publishing will publish the collaborative books. The books will be based on a grade level conflict including the problem, rising climax, and the solution to the overall problem of the story. The author and teachers will use graphic organizers and notebooks to help students organize information to create the books. Workshops will be for a month, and final projects of the grade level collaborative books will be published about one month after the workshops. 150 – 200 students will benefit from Jennifer's project. Jennifer noted the collaborative nature of this project which includes multiple teachers, a local author, and local businesses working together to create memorable, lasting and tangible books for the students.

Amanda Thornwood & Shira Teich, Poughkeepsie Day School

The Writing Revolution

Amanda and Shira, an elementary and secondary educator, will both be able to engage in professional development trainings for The Writing Revolution (TWR), also known as The Hochman Method. This is a method for teaching writing that breaks down the steps for teachers and students, and can be applied to all types of scholastic writing. Advancing Thinking Through Writing (Grades K-2) focuses on TWR strategies that build the vocabulary and language skills necessary for future success in writing. TWR faculty will present age-appropriate examples and techniques for scaffolding and differentiation. Advancing Thinking Through Writing STEM (Grades 3-12) will focus on strategies that can be integrated into any STEM content. There will be opportunities to both practice and create activities, as well as receive feedback from TWR faculty in both courses. This training will give educators more structured approach to teaching writing across the curriculum, disciplines, and grade-levels and provide tools to set up a more robust student writing mentoring program.

Nathan Lawrence-Paine, Poughkeepsie High School

Poughkeepsie High School Environmental Club

This is the second year that the Environmental Club will be running the vegetable gardens at PHS. The first year was a resounding success with the help of a grant from the Community Foundations. This year they anticipate expanding to a new courtyard site as well as continue the gardens from last year. This project is ongoing, from growing microgreens in our grow room this winter to planting and maintaining the gardens in the warmer seasons. This grant will allow Nathan to share his passion for gardening and form very strong bonds with students. These bonds translate into better connections in and out of the classroom which both makes his job easier and much more rewarding. Nathan notes that seeing students working in the garden who had previously never considered doing so is amazing. He has students who have a genuine fear of bugs who now weed amongst them without a problem! Students are also learning better eating habits as they take home food from the garden and last year they even hatched chickens in the classroom, which became the spectacle of the hall!

Christine Molino, Carmel High School

Forensic Facial Reconstruction

Students will reconstruct the face of a historical figure, King Richard III, using facial reconstruction kits developed by Kim Seattle. This hands-on, interdisciplinary project will utilize historical data to guide students in reconstructing the face. This project will be done in a Forensics class as part of the Anthropology Unit. Students will work in pairs to utilize the materials in the kit; a skull, clay of various colors, historical data, step-by-step directions, sculpting tools and acrylic eyes. Students engaged in this activity will be exposed to a career that incorporates arts and science. Additionally, students will learn about facial bones, bony landmarks, and facial muscles, fostering a comprehensive understanding of human anatomy. Christine notes that gaining new skills in interdisciplinary teaching and project-based learning, is both personally satisfying and intellectually stimulating. By pioneering interdisciplinary projects, she contributes valuable experiences and insights to the educational community, possibly influencing broader educational practices. She hopes to achieve enhanced engagement, skill development, career awareness, cultural insights and historical insights and anatomical knowledge with these hands-on collaborative activities.

Cathie Morton, Millbrook Middle School

Ready, Set, Doodle!

Funds will support 3-D printing pen technology. With the materials purchased through this grant, students will have the ability to utilize 3D pens with a variety of educational activities in the classroom as well as for independently selected projects in the library MakerSpace. Students will have access to the resources during study halls, lunch periods, and through arrangements made with the library media specialist and content area teachers. Through grants such as this, the hope is

to expand and create a thriving MakerSpace environment for all students in the school to utilize. 3D printing pens can be used to make a variety of projects ranging from custom characters for student-created board games to 3d models of structures such as the Eiffel Tower. When classroom learning goes 3D, a concept goes from a page or a screen to an object that students can make and hold in their hands. This sparks connection and understanding – making learning possibilities limitless - and is great for project based learning. It is Cathie's hope that this "Ready, Set, Doodle!" project will draw more students into the school library and MakerSpace. During these visits, students will be drawn to other materials and special displays in the library, resulting in increased usage and literacy. This will positively impact her students by providing a new means of self-expression through the creation of custom 3D printing pen projects, as well as serve as a STEM extension to several core area curriculums by allowing for a new way of designing and creating manipulatives and other project resources they wouldn't otherwise be able to create.

Andrew Nikola & John Sammon, Wappingers Central School District

Putt for Progress: STEM Mini-Golf Design for Children's Health

Andrew and John will engage in a collaborative project-based learning (PBL) activity in which students from multiple grade levels (K-12) in the Wappingers Central School District design, develop, and construct mini-golf course holes. The project will integrate Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) focused on properties of matter and forces in motion, as well as mathematics and measurement standards. Elementary students will work alongside high school technology education classes to design and create these mini-golf holes. Students will collaborate through research, brainstorming, and hands-on creation to develop mini-golf holes that include barriers and obstacles, utilizing properties of matter and forces in motion to influence gameplay. The designs will be developed for children who are patients at Maria Fereri Children's Healthcare Services at MidHudson Regional Hospital.To enhance the children's experience, the grant will provide simulators, enabling children to interact with and play the designs and compare to their real life designs. This PBL experience not only fosters collaboration among students of different grade levels but also reinforces critical STEM skills in a real-world application that supports community outreach and children's well-being.

Marc Ouimet & Michael Collyer, Arlington High School

Physics of Motion

Funds will support the purchase of materials to be used to conduct several physics labs. These wireless, reliable, data collection materials will greatly enhance the experience of the students conducting lab investigations and is intended to replace older, broken items that are mostly no longer functional. The wireless smart gates will be used for hands-on activities that are student centered, inquiry based investigations. The gates can be used to measure the speed of a projectile (launched horizontally or at an angle to the ground), which will then allow students to devise a method for calculating the height, range, and time of flight for this projectile. They can be used to measure the motion of the dynamics carts so students can verify that momentum in conserved in both elastic and inelastic collisions. They can be used to measure the acceleration of a freely falling object which will allow students to verify the acceleration due to gravity on Earth. One of Arlington school district's core values is that change is essential for progress. Marc is a veteran teacher in his 28th year and is always looking for ways to change, improve, or adapt what he teaches and how he teaches it. He noted that this equipment will help bring him into the 21st century and beyond the paper and pencil type of data collection.

John Keener & Crystal Sessoms-Wiggins, James V. Forrestal Elementary School

Resonating Rhythms: Enhancing Student Creativity with Contrabass Bars

Students will use contrabass bars along with the existing Orff xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, and other classroom instruments in the music room to add depth to the creation and/or performance of musical improvisations, compositions, and arrangements. The contrabass bars offer a unique and rich sonic experience due to their low-frequency vibrations, which create a

profound sensory experience for students. These low pitches resonate through the body, allowing students to physically feel the sound in a way that can be both soothing and regulating. For many children, this physical sensation of vibration provides a calming and grounding effect, which can be particularly beneficial for those with sensory processing challenges. The bars will provide a sonic foundation for music made as a class and will give students a new and effective way to practice steady beat and rhythm while contributing to the overall tonality of the music made in the classroom. John noted how the grant will enhance his teaching experience in providing better resources to meet the needs of neurodiverse learners and support students in two of their special education programs. By creating an inclusive environment, students of all abilities can engage in musical expression inlcuding those who may struggle with the fine motor control needed for traditional instruments. By engaging with the low sonic vibrations and larger mallets, these students can actively participate in music-making, improving their confidence, coordination, and sensory integration in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Alison Ventriglia, Kingston High School

KHS Indoor Garden Displays

The KHS Agricultural (Environmental) Biology classes will use grant funds to create an indoor gardening project that integrates into classroom learning throughout the academic year. The students will research suitable indoor plants (e.g., succulents, ferns, herbs) to determine which are most suitable for indoor growth in a seasonal climate. They will design the layout for the display, considering space and aesthetics and the current uses of the proposed indoor space. Once designed, students will create informational signs about each plant's care and benefits. Throughout the year, students will research and present about indoor gardening and the different plants being grown in the space. This is a way not only for students to build a sense of responsibility but a way to build working relationships and caring for community space. Students will work to design, assemble and maintain the infrastructure of the garden space itself (vertical garden frame, hydroponic systems) as well as researching the best plants and soil for the proposed space and the care and maintenance of those plants in an indoor growing space year-round. An indoor garden creates a vibrant and engaging space, increasing the opportunity to create hands-on, engaging lessons. Professionally, teachers will have the opportunity to build lessons around caring for plants, which teaches students about responsibility and the consequences of their actions, increasing their empathy and creating an opportunity to improve classroom interactions. Overall, this project aims to create a nurturing and dynamic learning environment that supports both academic and personal growth, ultimately leading to more well-rounded students.

Erika Wahlers & April Rose Roe, George Fisher Middle School-Music

Music is for Everyone – Accessible Music Instruction

This year, Erika and April Rose we were able to start a music class for their Personal, Academic, and Community Experience (PACE) students at the middle school level. This class is being developed in collaboration with the Special Education Department and the Music Department. The students in the PACE program have intellectual and developmental disabilities. These disabilities can be prohibitive of participation in traditional music classes and have prevented these students from being able to join the grade level. This is a space and class where these students can thrive. Grant funds will support the purchase of instruments and items for the PACE music class that will last for years to come. In addition to learning musical skills, some of the supplies will help these students work on their gross and fine motor skills. These instruments will also allow students to learn more about different cultures and the music associated with these cultures. Some non-instrument items for students would include whisper reading phones to help students focus on hearing their own sounds that they make using their voice. For the teachers, having these supplies will help them grow and connect with their students in new ways with these musical intruments that they don't typically have in a middle school music classroom.

Reagan Liberatore Weissenberg, Kingston High School

KHS Sensory Garden

The KHS Agricultural Program will be using funds to expand their sensory garden. The students would like to incorporate herbs like lavender, mint, and rosemary, along with flowering plants like jasmine and gardenias to stimulate the sense of smell. They would also like to add plants with various textures, such as lamb's ear (soft), agave (spiky), or ferns (feathery) to engage touch. Vibrant flowers in different colors, such as marigolds, zinnias, and coneflowers, would please the sense of sight. In addition, sound features such as wind chimes for auditory stimulation or water elements such as a small fountain or a pond with gentle water sounds to create a soothing atmosphere would benefit the space. The students would also like to improve the pathways and layout of the space. Improvements include, curved pathways with different materials (gravel, wood chips), more seating areas, and interactive elements such as touch stations for tactile exploration. Other things to add will include garden art, educational signage, informational labels to educate visitors about the plants and their sensory attributes, encouraging exploration. It will becomes a lasting resource that benefits future classes, creating a space where everyone can learn, grow, and find peace. This holistic approach to education can lead to a more fulfilling and interconnected teaching experience. Ultimately, a sensory garden creates a holistic learning experience that nurtures students academically, socially, and emotionally, fostering a love for nature and learning that can last a lifetime.

Christopher Williams & Patricia Huestis, Mahopac Central School District

Revolutionary Puppets and Green Screens Bring Art History to Life

The Art & STEAM Teacher at Austin Road Elementary will continue a collaboration with 4th grade teachers to engage students in creating puppets for a multimedia performance. Students will design & build a self-portrait hand puppet. In addition, students will create costumes and props for puppets to become historical figures. This will allow students to have their own puppet, but also transform a puppet for the show. Students will create a performance that includes elements of live puppetry and pre-recorded scenes with a green screen. Students work as a production team to produce recorded scenes with puppets. Students will be responsible for developing a script, shooting scenes, editing video & sound clips, in addition to sourcing images for backgrounds. 4th grade teachers will incorporate this project into ELA & Social Studies and curriculum by imagining key moments in the American Revolution in New York. This experience not only builds rapport with the Art & STEAM teachers, but also with the 4th grade team. The teachers are eager to build on the experience. Including work time on the puppets during the Art and STEAM allows for more collaboration. This opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other allows us to create an authentic learning experience using Technology & Art to teach ELA and Social Studies.

Allison Woolston, Carmel High School

Feeding Families in Need

Carmel High School is located in Putnam County which is a small county that lacks the services available to some of the other counties local to us. Allison is parterning with Feeding Westchester for an opportunity for her PACE students to create "Help from Home" bags. These bags are filled with meal items for breakfast, lunch, or dinner and are distributed at food banks. Allison's class will be bringing "Help from Home" bags to Putnam County and distribute them to the existing local food banks. If this initiative is successful, her hope is to expand the project to create a food bank program within the school building where people in need from the community can pick up food items to feed their families. The students in the PACE program are ages 14-21 and are working on life skills and independent vocational skills. This project will require them to shop for specific items, follow directions to pack the bags, and deliver the bags to local food pantries. Most of the students are developing pre-vocational skills and a school-based enterprise provides them with the opportunity to volunteer and practice the skills in a meaningful way. If the project goes as planned, after the initial startup the hope is that the school community and greater community will help Carmel sustain and expand their "Help from Home" food bag program.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to the work of the Community Foundations. We would like to thank the following individuals for the time, talent, and energy they provided in selecting the recipients of tonight's scholarships and grant awards.

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Our Mission: The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley delivers community and philanthropic leadership to inspire and celebrate local charitable giving and civic engagement.

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