



## The Power of \$1 a Week! Would you consider supporting the Foundation?

The work of the Foundation can only happen with your support. We are a non-profit organization that depends on gifts from individual donors, corporate donors and fundraising events.

If every KPS team member gave \$1.00 a week, we would raise over **\$60,000** per year. And with 100% participation, we would have an incredible story to share to possible corporate donors.

### \$1 a week - would you miss it?

#### CONSIDER:

- It's one can of soda...
- It's a candy bar....
- It's the spare change you get back during a single day...

And your support is tax deductible meaning it will actually cost you less than \$1.00 per week

For more information, or to have a payroll deduction form sent to you, drop a note to our treasurer, Jim Swoboda at [jameswoboda@comcast.net](mailto:jameswoboda@comcast.net)



2012

The Kentwood Public Schools Educational Foundation is a community funded, volunteer driven organization. Our mission is to increase the value in our community's public education through...

- Educational Grants to Kentwood Public Schools Faculty
- Scholarships for Kentwood Graduates
- Corporate and Memorial Scholarship Opportunities
- Partnering Business Giving with Classroom Needs

## Fall 2011 Grants Awarded!

### 1. 12 grants awarded

The Foundation received 27 grant requests of which 12 were approved. All detailed in this newsletter.

### 2. Just under \$14,000 was awarded

Checks were delivered to the awardees during the month of November.

### 3. Grant Scoring Rubric Used

The grant committee uses a formal scoring system for each grant request. This scoring "rubric" is available for download at our website, [www.kpsef.org](http://www.kpsef.org).

### 4. Deadline for spring 2012 grants

April 1 is the deadline for spring applications. Grants will be awarded by May 10.



## Kentwood Cares Clothing Closet

The homeless population in Kentwood Public Schools has dramatically increased over the past few years. Homelessness, compounded with our students living in near poverty situations, is a problem which needed assistance. Melissa Trombley submitted a request for, and received, a grant in the amount of \$2,200. The funds have been used to establish a free-clothing closet for the families of Kentwood. This closet serves as a service-learning opportunity for East Kentwood's National Honor Society and students with special needs. Collaboratively, they are building vocational skills while helping out their community. With the implementation of a clothing closet, we can empower our students to help fulfill the needs of families in the community, thus creating a better learning environment.

## From "At-Risk" to "Achieving Above and Beyond Expectations: A Library of Hope."

In the words of Lisa VanZegeren, English Teacher in the Freshman Academy, "Do you remember that feeling when you first read a book which truly spoke to you? My students come from all walks of life, but the one thing they all have in common is they are all \*At-Risk." I want a classroom library filled with books written by authors who were once 'at risk' themselves but persevered."

The Foundation strongly believes the Freshman Academy is a wonderful example of Kentwood Public Schools leadership in working to make sure every student knows he or she can learn. This project was funded with a grant of \$195.00.

## Did You Know?

The Kentwood Public Schools Education Foundation has awarded over \$113,000 in scholarships since it's inception in 1986.

Your financial support is tax deductible subject to your individual tax status.

## Balancing Numbers: Creating Number Sense by using Number Balances

Bowen first grade teacher Lori Swoboda submitted a request for, and received a grant in the amount of \$381 to purchase Number Balances.

As students obtain number sense through hands-on activities, number balances help students develop an understanding of the following math concepts: greater than, less than and equal to. Number balances also create an understanding of number bonds, which are the basis for addition and subtraction facts. By having enough number balances for a classroom to work in groups of two, students can experiment and manipulate numbers in a meaningful, concrete way and build the basis for future math learning. These balances are housed on a cart in Bowen's Curriculum Room where all teachers kindergarten through third grade could access them for classroom lessons.

## Addressing Sensory Needs In the Classroom

Bowen Resource Room Teacher Sandra Schwartz shared: "Many of the students in our classrooms have sensory needs that are not being addressed. When these students are not given the stimulation they need, not only does their learning suffer - but often the learning of others as well. They may engage in other behaviors, such as tapping things or moving/getting out of their seats frequently. Simple and inexpensive tools and toys can allow their needs to be met directly in the classroom; freeing up more of their attention for learning.

Sandra requested and received \$460 which is being used to purchase items that allow students to work with their sensory needs. Examples of sensory item are move and sit cushions, fidgets, weighted items, thera-bands and other related items. They are located in the Resource Room and shared across many grades levels.

## A Place for Everyone Classroom Carpets

Lower elementary instruction is often delivered at a gathering area on the floor. However, with larger class sizes, it has become increasingly difficult to gather students in a common area. Management often becomes an issue with students sitting in close proximity, thus taking away from valuable instructional time.

After talking to several lower elementary teachers at Challenger Elementary who are presently using "A Place for Everyone Classroom Carpets," Brookwood Teachers Kerianne Sherwood, Sheri Riekels, Sunshine Dykstra, Cheryl Kimble and Sue Horning decided they would like to provide their students with this structured learning tool as well. They requested and received \$1,072 to purchase these carpets for their classrooms. (see picture on page 4)

## First Tech Challenge

Crestwood Science Teacher and Robotics Coach Gina Smith shared: "We are competing for the first time in an advanced robot building competition called First tech Challenge. We were given a \$1250.00 grant from the US First organization to pay for our entry fee into competition as well as the initial parts for robot build. We are working with engineers from GE Aviation Systems and need to purchase some additional supplies to reflect student design of robot. We will be competing in December and again in March.

This is a middle school extension of FLL (First Lego League) and a step towards the high school program (FRC).

Gina submitted a request for and was granted \$500. The funds were used to procure additional parts/components to insure the robot would be able to compete.

## Meadowlawn Book Room

Meadowlawn first grade teacher Sarah Kresnak and second grade teacher Amanda Tollas requested a grant for and received \$1,650 to add to the building's shared book room.

Sarah and Amanda shared: "If we are awarded the funds for this grant, the money will be used to help organize and purchase books for our shared book room utilized by classroom teachers and interventionists. We have a good start to our book room, but are in dire need of supplemental materials and books to make this room functional and usable for teaching staff to meet the needs of our diverse student population. With the grant, we will be able to finally complete the Meadowlawn book room project and even increase the amount of books needed to assist all students to meet or exceed the Common Core State Standards."

## Reciprocal Teaching with Math and the Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards are asking teachers to challenge students to think about concepts taught in the classroom in a real world way.

Explorer fourth grade teacher Amy Weatherford submitted for and received a grant in the amount of \$2,640 to secure 11 sets of text focused on using math skills in real world settings.

Using reciprocal teaching, students will work in groups of four to read a text about the math concept and how it relates to everyday life. They will use four core comprehension strategies: predicting, questioning, summarizing and clarifying to comprehend the text and gain a deeper understanding of the math concept. At the conclusion of the group work, students will begin a study of the concept through a series of hands-on activities and real-world practices.

## Restoring the Southwood Nature Trail

Eleven years ago Shawn Dennany, a former Southwood student, designed the Nature Trail as an Eagle Scout project. He

loved going in the woods behind the school so much that he wanted to create a clear path and an outdoor classroom space.

Over the years, the condition of the trail has deteriorated to the point that walking on it is not easy for young children. The Fourth Grade students at Southwood spent time discussing how to improve the trail and researching the prices of the items needed to restore and maintain the trail.

As a class, they had been helping write the grant proposals and brainstorm ideas for fundraisers. Their plan was presented to teachers, administrators and parents to keep them informed of the efforts of the group. Along with the items needed to restore the trail, and the outdoor classroom, the student team also desired to purchase books and magazine subscriptions that we can use to learn more about Earth, habitats, and conservation. As such, they submitted a grant request for \$551. The grant was awarded and the learning materials have been obtained.

## Communicating with Students with ASD

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders typically have difficulty communicating their needs and desires to others. It is extremely difficult for those who are non-verbal. Assistive technology has evolved over the past decades from simple signing, pointing to pictures and using communication boards. Recently the iPad has made a significant leap in the communication world for those with disabilities. The use of the iPad as a communication device was highlighted in a 60 Minutes segment.

East Kentwood Freshman Campus teacher Dave Meyer requested and received \$3,040 to purchase iPads and a communication program designed especially for students with ASD.





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## Challenge Day(s) a HUGE success!

Can you imagine spending a day cheering, laughing, sharing and crying with people you didn't know? Well, that was the Challenge Day experience for over 300 students, plus staff, parents and community members at East Kentwood High School over a period of three days in the fall. The Challenge Day experience is a one day program designed to build connection and empathy through the celebration of diversity and truth. About 100 participants attended each day.

I attended this event not knowing what to expect. I was blown away by how the two facilitators were quickly able to establish an atmosphere of comfort and trust among strangers. All the students and adults freely shared their thoughts about various issues that occur in our schools today. We were all challenged to be the CHANGE we would like see in our school, in our community and in our world. We were all challenged to NOTICE what's happening around us, to CHOOSE - create a vision for what you want your life to look like, and to ACT - do something! We were challenged to have the courage and commitment it takes to be the CHANGE.

I was also blown away by the positive impact the Challenge Day experience had on all the East Kentwood students who participated in this one day program. They eagerly made a public commitment to be the CHANGE they want to see in their school. It was indeed a life-changing experience for all students and adult participants.

The Challenge Day program was funded by the Kentwood Public School Educational Foundation. This is one of many ways the Educational Foundation uses its funds to support Kentwood students and staff.

Cindy Charles  
 Kentwood Public Schools Educational Foundation  
 Trustee

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# More images from Challenge Days!



## Be the Change!

- Be inclusive
- No put downs or teasing
- Compliments and love encouraged
- Listen with your ears and heart
- Be open minded
- Drop the waterline/get real
- Be the Change you wish to see in the world!

