

# Harrison Educational Foundation

## Grants Awarded in 2008/2009

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### All Elementary Schools

#### **1) Beginning Reading at Home - (2008/09 School Year)**

Mary Ellis, Supervisor of Elementary English / Social Studies, has requested funding for Kindergarten Book Bags. These bags are given to all incoming kindergartners at orientation each spring with a letter stressing the importance of reading to young children. This program helps establish a supportive relationship between home and school. Each bag contains several books, a handbook for parents and information about the Foundation.

#### **2) Curriculum Connections: Building Libraries that Support Content - (2008/09 School Year)**

Mary Ellis (Supervisor of Elementary English / Social Studies), Kent Leo (Supervisor of Elementary Math / Science) and Aaron Slack (Director of K-12 Technology) have requested funding for library books with direct correlation to the K-5 science curriculum. The request covers 215 titles, two copies at each elementary school, totaling 1,720 volumes. To make meaningful connections between literacy and the content areas of math, science and social studies, teachers and students need access to a wide variety of engaging texts. These books would allow library media specialists to provide direct support to the science program and to further students' acquisition of critical strategies for reading in the content areas. This grant would give the elementary schools the unique opportunity to build a broad-based, strong collection in highly relevant science topics.

### Harrison Avenue Elementary School

#### **3) Purchase College Performing Arts Trip - (2008/09 School Year)**

Jen Horowitz, a Second Grade teacher at HAS, has requested funding for tickets and transportation to a *Tom Chapin and Michael Mark: In My Hometown* folk music performance at the Purchase Performing Arts Center. All 80 second graders would attend this show which explores the concept that community is the center of our lives, a theme that ties directly with the second grade's study of communities. The experience is designed to help the students make connections between literature and other arts, and expand their abilities in all areas of language arts: reading, writing, listening, speaking, representing, and viewing.

#### **4) Artist in Residence / Reaching Toward Our Goals: Inspirational Mural - (2008/09 School Year)**

Christine Vitarello would like to have 200 students in the third and fourth grades work with a professional artist to produce two murals for permanent display in the school's main staircase. Two years ago the entire fifth grade produced a patriotic mural which is displayed in a central hallway. Last year students produced a mural that supplemented first graders' learning about families and their role in the community and fourth graders' studying immigration and national culture. This year's murals will have themes connected to growing and reaching for dreams and goals, with visual elements connected to the growth cycle of plants and butterflies.

To create the murals students will work together on references, composition, drawing and color palette. Students' original drawings will be enlarged and used for mural design with the help of the Artist in Residence. Ms. Vitarello believes that in addition to helping students make connections with their science curriculum, this program will help students learn about the role of fine arts in society and culture, about problem solving skills and persistence in art careers, and about fine art production.

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### **Parsons Memorial Elementary School**

#### **5) Parent/Child Literacy Program - (2008/09 School Year)**

Karen Kaczmarcyk, an ESL teacher at Parsons School, has requested funding in connection with a parent/child literacy program. A series of three workshops will feature model literacy practices for all parents in kindergarten and first grade. Workshops will be delivered in English with Spanish and Japanese translations. Activities are designed to support phonics, phonemic awareness and early literacy skills. The project is in line with district goals of early literacy intervention and a balanced literacy curriculum. To reinforce the skills taught, parents may request a recording of the workshop that will emphasize modeling of letter sounds, sight word pronunciation, simple games to play at home to help teach sight words, and read-aloud programs with questioning strategies that can be used in the child's native language. The goal of the workshops is to increase parental support, involvement and awareness while helping children achieve academically. The grant will cover the cost of phonics games, magnetic letters, and other training materials provided to parents. Approximately 100 students/families will participate in the program.

#### **6) First Grade Trip to Stone Barns Center - (2009/10 School Year)**

Dorianne Nardi and Karen Kaczmarcyk (teachers at Parsons School) have requested funding for a first grade field trip to Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture (approximately 100 students). The trip (scheduled for next fall) has been designed to align closely with the district's first grade science curriculum and NYS standards. Students will explore the diversity of plant life, discover what plants need to thrive and understand that plants have different purposes. They will observe the structures and life cycles of plants, and they will observe a sustainable garden, which works in harmony with nature with minimal negative environmental impact.

#### **7) First Grade Courtyard Garden - (2008/09 School Year)**

Dorianne Nardi and Karen Kaczmarcyk have requested funding for a sustainable green garden to be housed in the Parsons courtyard and cultivated by all first grade students and their teachers. Through maintaining a classroom garden students will learn all about plants, organic farming and recycling. They will apply their knowledge to a real-life setting and develop an appreciation and understanding of the importance of sustainability. With guidance from a professional landscape designer, the garden will be started in March and harvested in late June. As a culminating experience, students will enjoy a salad feast. The grant will cover the cost of beds, frost covers, seeds, tools, advisory fees and a small garden library.

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### **Samuel J. Preston Elementary School**

#### **8) Electronic Tablets for Elementary Art and Technology Instruction - (2008/09 School Year)**

Melissa Gusmano and Thomasine Mastrantoni, Preston's Art teacher and Librarian, have requested funding for electronic tablets to be used as part of the Art and Technology curriculum. The K-5 art curriculum recognizes that art instruction should encompass a wide range of media, and in addition to all traditional media, students need to understand how to appreciate and how to express themselves through electronic media. Electronic tablets let students create mixed media art using scans of their physical artwork and enhancing it electronically. Adding an electronic component to art instruction would broaden the appeal of art, reaching students who might otherwise dismiss art as not relevant to them. Being able to use specific drawing tools to illustrate concepts and convey ideas will allow students an additional medium of expression and technology competence.

#### **9) First Grade Family Literacy Workshops - (2008/09 School Year)**

The first grade Literacy Team at SJ Preston School (Cindy Neese, Donna Murphy, Jasmine Maiolini, Yanira Maezano, Kelli Pallone, and Jennifer Winters) will be conducting a series of three literacy workshops for first grade parents and students. The workshops focus on reading strategies, comprehension strategies and support for year-round reading. Research on family literacy reveals the positive connection between parent involvement and literacy development. Studies show that the linguistic development of children is directly related to their exposure to print at an early age and to their reading habits outside of school. This grant will fund one hardcover book for each student to take home and for parent training materials in English and Spanish. There are approximately 50 students participating in the program.

### **Purchase Elementary School**

#### **10) Readers' Theatre through Traditional Tales - (2008/09 School Year)**

The Second Grade teachers at Purchase School have requested funding for a readers' theatre program using traditional tales in a play format. Multiple copies of books are used during guided reading groups, literacy centers, quiet independent reading time and/or readers' theatre time. Objectives include improving decoding skills, comprehension and fluency. Students also work in groups, which helps build interpersonal skills and positive character traits. The grant would cover the cost of multiple copies of 12 separate titles. These materials would be reused each year.

### **LMK Middle School**

#### **11) Spotlight Night/Science Fair - (2008/09 School Year)**

Scott Fried, the LMK principal, is making this request on behalf of the school. Spotlight Night is a school-wide Arts and Science Festival. This night is a "show and tell" for various art, writing, science and just about any other type of student projects. Many members of the community attend this event from grandparents on down to younger siblings of current students.

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### 12) Literary Magazine/Writing Competition – (2008/09 School Year)

This request is being made by several of the English Teachers at LMK. The grant will support a recognition ceremony similar to the one funded at the High School for their writing journal. The program has two parts:

LMK Literary Magazine, "Literature Molded by Kids", is open to all students. Writing pieces are submitted to the English teachers and/or editors of the magazine for approval. This magazine provides a stimulus to encourage children to creatively express themselves in an artistic manner whether through writing or drawing. Knowing their hard work will be rewarded through the publishing process, children generally invest significant time in the creation and revision process. The National Council of Teachers of English annual literary magazine competition has ranked the Literature Molded by Kids magazine as Excellent among national middle school literary magazines. The printing of this journal is funded by the district.

Writing Competition – students submit writing samples to be evaluated and included in a journal. Awards are issued in multiple categories.

### 13) Technology Education: Aerodynamics - (2008/09 School Year)

This request is being made by John Bergen, a Technology teacher at LMK. The Technology Education classroom teaches the concept of design cycles by allowing students to create hands-on projects by designing, constructing and testing their own solutions to problems. One important design concept is aerodynamics. This grant would fund the purchase of a wind visualization tunnel, which would be used to aid in the development and understanding of projects that incorporate aerodynamics. The wind tunnel would be used in the Seventh Grade Aerospace project and the Eighth Grade Dragsters project. Students will be able to measure the effects of airflow, identify drag components and redesign to make projects more efficient.

## Harrison High School

### 14) Writers Among Us - (2008/09 School Year)

David Luhman is making this request on behalf of the high school English Department. Grade level teachers will be responsible for selecting writing pieces during the school year. Upon selection, each student is recognized in various ways cumulating with a recognition breakfast held in May for the writers, parents, BOE and the Superintendent. Last year The National Council of Teachers of English annual literary magazine competition ranked Harrison High School's magazine, Imagine, as excellent among national high school literary magazines. The cost of the program covers food, gifts (writing journals) and a keynote student writing workshop.

### 15) Law Day - (2008/09 School Year)

Veronica Sullivan, a teacher of Law Studies is requesting funding for Law Day to be held in May 2009. Harrison High School will host a mock trial as part of a national celebration of law. HHS is inviting approximately 6 high schools from the area to participate, and 20 community leaders and citizens will serve as judges. Students compete in a mock trial and have the opportunity to experience law first hand. The program is intended to bolster the understanding and appreciation of the law, encourage civic involvement and foster a sense of community. Students develop critical thinking skills and have the opportunity to explore career options and interact with adults from the community. The cost of this program includes a breakfast, lunch, awards and printing costs associated with publicity for the event.

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### **16) Endangered Species and Our Role - (2008/09 School Year)**

Josie Cain, the AP Environmental Science teacher is requesting funding for an in-house program for science students given by the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, NY. The WCC will provide a trained environmentalist and naturalist who will conduct a program on the endangered wolf species. As part of the program they will bring a live wolf to the school so that students can truly connect with nature. Approximately 60 kids taking AP Environmental Science and others will be included in this program.

### **17) Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival: Access Shakespeare - (2008/09 School Year)**

Amy Scatenato and Gary Glauber, both English teachers, have requested funding for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade English classes to have the experience of seeing the play *Macbeth* performed in the new Performing Arts Center. This particular performance is immediate and accessible, encouraging interest in reading the play itself. Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival creates performances like these to appeal to kids' modern sensibilities, but the language remains Shakespearean. For the 2008-09 school year *Macbeth* is part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum. Students would view an 80-minute performance of the play and then participate in a question/answer period.

### **18) Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival: Shakespeare Students on Stage - (2008/09 School Year)**

Amy Scatenato has requested funding for 10<sup>th</sup> Grade English classes to have the experience of working with Shakespearean performers. Workshops run by the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival include student participation as well as performance of parts of the play students are reading in class. The workshops get students involved with the text, they create an interest in understanding the rest of the play, and kids remember the lines and scenes that the actors perform. The students receive dynamic strategies to engage them in learning and in unpacking the difficult language of Shakespeare; they work directly with actors to create meaning through performance, not just reading or listening to the text.

### **19) Sound Systems Additions to HHS Performing Arts Center - (2008/09 School Year)**

Fred Pasqua and Charlie Breim, on behalf of the High School Performing Arts Department, have requested funding for high priority post-construction enhancements to the sound system in the recently renovated Performing Arts Center. After several months of testing and multiple performances, the Department has determined that several changes and additions are necessary to optimize the sound in the room. While the current equipment is functional for small performances, background noise from a large production does not allow some of the existing microphones to function properly.

In order to produce state of the art sound during large theatrical productions, this grant will fund an additional down-fill speaker and several higher quality microphones, including professional quality earset microphones, stage microphones, choral condenser microphones and wireless handhelds.