

District 39 Educational Foundation FOUNDATION FOCUS

Investing in our Future

Summer 2009

New Grants, Initiatives, and Excitement in District 39 in 2008-2009

WJHS SmartBoard Partnership

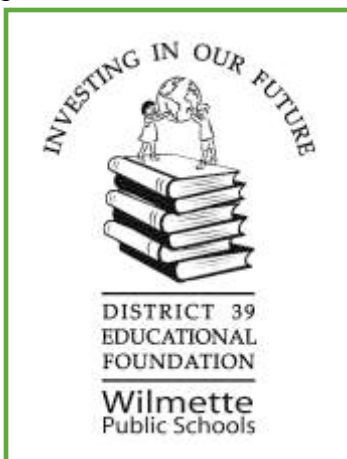
In January 2009, the Foundation announced an exciting partnership with District 39 to share the costs of installing SmartBoard interactive screens in all WJHS math classrooms. This technology allows teachers to move seamlessly from lesson plan to Internet visual or application, while students' work solving problems on the screen is captured for an instant replay or later download. SmartBoards were first introduced through a 2005 Gripp Grant at WJHS, and the grant feedback played a key role in recent technology purchases across the District.

13 New Gripp Grants Approved

Since 1993, the Foundation has awarded over 200 Gripp Grants funding innovative educational programs, experiences, and technologies that expand, enrich, and complement the D39 schools' curricula. In 2008-09, 13 new Gripp Grants were funded, supporting initiatives for students from kindergarten through 8th grade, and across all six D39 schools as well as the broader community. New software and technology trials, whole-body fitness equipment, photography equipment, and programs aimed at teens and 'tweens were among the new grants.



First graders enjoy the Romona W.E.L.L. Garden's hands-on harvest.



The Foundation's support for the District's interest in green learning helped bring about two new Gripp Grants. At Highcrest, a Gripp Grant for new indoor grow lights will let students start food crops from seeds and observe the growing process as part of the 6th grade life cycles unit. The plants will then be transferred to the Foundation-supported Prairie

Garden, which continues to thrive as a center for learning, relaxing, and quiet contemplation for students and staff. At McKenzie, an Outdoor Classroom area will be created, allowing teachers to make full use of the school's two existing gardens, which also were created with help from the Foundation.

SUPPORTING WILMETTE SCHOOLS

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Math & Science Initiative Programs

It was a great year to dive into math and science in District 39. Over 1,500 WJHS and Highcrest Middle School students had the opportunity to hear first-hand about careers involving math and science. At WJHS in October, Dr. Robert Higgins shared his experiences working in the exciting field of heart transplant surgery. Students saw a video of an actual heart transplant, and were able to examine new prototypes of artificial hearts.

At Highcrest, the Foundation's "Math – Let's Get Real!" program in April brought in an architect, airline pilot, and a basketball coaching staff member to share

Recent Foundation Gripp Grants at WJHS

WJHS Auditorium – The Foundation spearheaded the renovation of the school auditorium and sound system in 2005, through both Gripp Grant funds and other grants.

Black/White Photography Equipment – Gripp Grants have furnished the school's darkroom with enlargers and timers, allowing WJHS to be one of the few junior highs in the area to offer B/W photography classes.

Electronic Dictionaries – A recent pilot Gripp Grant funded a set of hand-held electronic dictionaries for an 8th grade reading classroom, with the goal of assessing how these tools can enhance vocabulary development.

Council Ring – A 2005 Gripp Grant allowed for the installation of a stone ring in the school's prairie garden, creating a seating area for students in this outdoor classroom at WJHS.

Other WJHS grants have been awarded for professional development, art, writing, and drama-related programs, workout bicycles, technology pilots, teen programs, and many other areas. We welcome grant submissions every February and October from teachers, administrators, parents, students, and members of the community.

NEXT grant deadline: October 15, 2009

Your contributions to the District 39 Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1993, support these initiatives in District 39 schools. For more information, see www.d39foundation.org.

with students the importance of math in their work. Students learned how geometry, estimates,

percentages, and accurate calculations are essential to all these careers, as well as many aspects of everyday life. This program was designed to tie in with the 5th grade math fair, where HMS students solved real-life problems using their math skills.

Laughing Out Loud

In October, the Foundation proudly presented its fifth free community arts program, bringing the world-renowned Second City comedy troupe to WJHS with a custom-written show for the Village of Wilmette. The packed house enjoyed cameos by current and former D39 superintendents. The "SAM" Fund, a special endowment established in 1998 in honor of retiring Superintendent Sam Mikaelian, provides a free community arts program every two years, along with in-school programs. In October, students at HMS and WJHS learned improv skills through workshops that had them reacting to new situations, and exploring their creative sides.



Local architect Healy Rice shares the tools of her trade with HMS 5th graders at the Foundation's "Math - Let's Get Real!" day.