

# Ridgewood Education Foundation

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At the November 2, 2009 Ridgewood Board of Education meeting, the Ridgewood Education Foundation presented nine classroom grants for seven schools totaling \$10,035.69. The funded grants for the Fall 2009 cycle are: “Dinosaurs Rock!” for the Ridgewood Early Developmental (RED) program at Glen School; “Shoot for the Moon: Tales of Astronomy, Stargazing, and Space” at Hawes Elementary School; Building Bridges Through Books” at Orchard Elementary School; “S.T.A.M.P. Out Bullying”, a joint program at Ridge, Orchard & Somerville Elementary Schools; “Ridgewood: Our Community Through Art”, Somerville Elementary School; “Storming into 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – an Introduction to Robotics”, also at Somerville; “Storytime with Paws for Literacy” at Willard Elementary School.; “Willard’s World of Wellness” also at Willard; and “The Physics of Vision – The Interaction of Visible Light with the Human Eye” at Ridgewood High School.

An introduction to robotics entitled “Storming into 5<sup>th</sup> Grade” was written by 5<sup>th</sup> grader students with their teacher Scott Lupia at Somerville Elementary School. They will purchase 3 Lego Mindstorm NXT 2.0 robot kits to be used as part of the science unit on Systems in Motion. Students will begin by working in small groups to build a robot with special sensors. Next, they will use software to program their robot using object oriented programming. Finally the students will be given missions to complete using what they have learned. Once the unit is over, the robots will continue to be used on rotating basis in the classroom as open exploration.

For the past 2 years the “Paws for Literacy Club” has operated after school at Willard Elementary School. Each semester there are more children wishing to participate than the teachers are able to serve. So, Willard teachers Dr. Elizabeth Holley and Donald Friel along with librarian Linda Diorio have created and designed the “Storytime with Paws For Literacy” project to service not only all students in Willard School but eventually all students in Ridgewood - or any where! The “Storytime with Paws For Literacy” show will be available online on the Willard School website where students can view Dr. Holley and/or Mrs. Diorio along with Willard School’s literacy dogs, PedroMiguel and JuanCarlos. The students in the audience will have the opportunity to improve their reading skills by either listening or reading along with them as they model expert reading. In addition, the carefully selected books can serve as a vehicle for parental discussion of elementary appropriate social issues. Because it is “Storytime with Paws for Literacy”, the webcast reader will be accompanied by a certified therapy dog. Students will have the opportunity to practice the skills the expert reader modeled by reading to a “virtual” dog that will be available online at the Willard School website.

“Ridgewood: Our Community Through Art” is an interdisciplinary project for third grade students Somerville Elementary School. It will integrate language arts, science, mathematics and social studies through the medium of art. Students will learn about the history of Ridgewood both past and present via interclass social studies lessons. The students will study map skills, learn about early settlers of Ridgewood, discuss important

Ridgewood geography and see how Ridgewood has changed over the years. As a reflective interdisciplinary project, students will create a Ridgewood activity book. Students will collaborate in groups or work independently on creating color pages, crossword puzzles, fact sheets and other activities for their peers to enjoy. Their work will be bound together in an activity book that they will receive as a reward at the end of their downtown Ridgewood walking tour. Teachers Susan Chambre, Kate Droske and Samantha Stankiewicz wrote the grant.

Students at Orchard Elementary School will experience “Building Bridges Through Books”, written by teacher Megan Bozios. This program will provide 20 copies (1 to each classroom where reading/writing instruction occurs) of 4 different texts. In November, January, March and May, each classroom will receive a copy of the chosen book for that month. During the month, teachers in each of the classrooms will use the book as a class read aloud and develop talk and learning around the topic of the book. At the end of the month, students will use Orchard’s weekly Community Building assembly to share the thinking that their class did about the text. This will allow all members of the community to feel connected to each other as they hear the ideas of others. Additionally, these books will become part of each classroom’s library so that teachers and students can refer back to them during Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, Social Studies and Open Classroom discussions.

The goal of “Dinosaurs Rock!” is to spark the interest of the students in the Ridgewood Early Developmental class (RED) at Glen School in the topic of dinosaurs and fossils. This will be done through an exciting, interesting, highly educational and entertaining program. Students will be exposed to museum-quality specimens that they can see up close and touch. Topics include prehistoric animals, fossil formation and the Ice Age. Museum-quality dinosaur fossils and prehistoric items are brought to the school for a fossil dig – and the students take home their “discovered” fossil at the end of the program. R.E.D. Program Director Karen Price wrote the grant with parent Kelly Buchsbaum.

“Shoot for the Moon: Tales of Astronomy, Stargazing, and Space” will bring storyteller Jim Weiss to Hawes Elementary School. This will encourage the students’ interest in listening to good stories, and by extension, to continue their enthusiasm for reading and writing. Students who participate in the workshop portion of the day will draw connections between storytelling, literature and composition. Through hands-on exercises, the children will build confidence in their oral communication skills and also learn specific storytelling techniques, such as organizing and shaping the story, creating vivid characters through description and plot and voice characterization. Additionally, this program supports Hawes’ continued focus on space studies, which has been a strong component of the school’s science curriculum. Mr. Weiss has been asked to select tales that relate to astronomy, early navigation and space exploration. Teachers Terry Dunn, Ellen Steiner, Jane Kalfus and parents Jill Feeney and Emily Young wrote this grant.

“Willard’s World of Wellness” is a full year program for the whole school. This initiative includes a series of monthly assemblies covering a variety of important wellness

topics. Each assembly will have specific theme and will be supported by a wellness bulletin board. It will highlight important information on the topic and will provide the students with a way to make this learning experience a little more interactive. For each topic a selected teacher will be featured. This teacher will have a little background information posted about them and how they make healthy choices in their lives. There will also be an interactive section where student feedback will be posted. Teachers Mike Lucchese and Kevin Blois wrote this grant with parent Dorothy Duffy.

“S.T.A.M.P. Out Bullying” is a joint program of Ridge, Orchard & Somerville Elementary Schools. The Ridgewood Public Schools are schools where students can feel safe and confident to be who they are. As a district we embrace the Open Circle Program which promotes and encourages a positive learning environment and positive peer interactions. A speaker will be brought in to share his knowledge on the subject of bullying. The students will learn ways to be proactive and prevent bullying at school in two different assemblies, one for K – 2 students, and an age-appropriate version for the grade 3 – 5 students. Ridge principal Jean Schoenlank and Ridge teacher Molly Sher wrote this grant.

“The Physics of Vision – the Interaction of Visible Light with the Human Eye”, written by RHS teacher Dr. Harold Nelson, will tie together multiple elements of the physics curriculum at Ridgewood High School and expand and enhance the educational experience of the students taking physics. Throughout the academic year, students will be given a basic understanding of the selected areas in physics through lectures, classroom demonstrations, lab activities and exercises, video clips and websites. The students will gain a deeper understanding of reflection, refraction, focal length, magnification, thin lens equation calculations, tri-color stimulus theory, color perception, diopter calculations and visual acuity estimates.

The mission of the Ridgewood Education Foundation is to enhance the excellence of education in the Ridgewood Public Schools.

Since 1989 the Foundation has awarded more than \$400,000 in grants for special projects created by forward thinking teachers, parents, students and alumni(ae). We were able to do this thanks to the generous support of our members and other friends.

The Foundation receives no government funding and is solely sponsored by its members.

The Ridgewood Education Foundation is an IRC § 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

For more information about REF grant programs or to become a member, please visit our website <http://www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org>