

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Ridgewood Education Foundation Awards Spring Grants**

At the March 9th Ridgewood Board of Education meeting, the Ridgewood Education Foundation (REF) presented a variety of classroom mini-grants totaling \$4428.00 for Board of Education approval. For the Spring 2009 cycle, the Foundation made awards to five grant applicants from four different Ridgewood schools covering a wide range of study. The Spring 2009 grants are as follows: Life Cycle of a Chick at Orchard Elementary School, Electrify the Strings and The Way of the Brush at Ridgewood High School, Willard is Leading the Way at Willard Elementary School, and the Power of the Graphic Novel at Benjamin Franklin Middle School.

**The Life Cycle of a Chick** will help Kindergarten students at Orchard Elementary School gain an understanding of the structure, characteristics and basic needs of organisms and investigate the diversity of life. During their non-fiction, reading, science and writing units, students will experience first hand the life cycle of a chick. The children will be exposed to strategies and characteristics of non-fiction. The teachers and students will also discuss and follow proper safe handling practices. The grant was awarded to Kindergarten teachers Danielle Duffy and Helen Poulis in the amount of \$293.00

**Electrify the Strings** will benefit the Orchestra students at Ridgewood High School. String players are often classically trained. They are often never even exposed to alternate styles of playing their instruments. In this program students will learn the history of and begin playing jazz, fiddling and electric strings. The program will include an introduction of improvisation and alternate styles of playing. This grant covers a spring 2009 workshop with one expert in the field of alternative string playing. Amy Hutto, RHS Director of Orchestras, was awarded the grant in the amount of \$1500.

**The Way of the Brush: East Meets West** will have art students at Ridgewood High School developing expressive brush techniques belonging to the art of Sumi-e - Japanese brush painting as well as expose them to its rich history evolving from Chinese calligraphy. This will supplement the current art curriculum by providing further in-depth instruction so that the students may build their repertoire of drawing and painting skills. Kellie Conforth, Art Teacher at RHS, was awarded this grant in the amount of \$1625

**Willard Leading the Way** will be this year's Theme Day at Willard Elementary School. It is meant to motivate students as to how they can "Make a Difference" in their community. While giving of oneself is an abstract concept for young children, this will be a day filled with hands on examples of how one person can have an impact on his/her community. There will be learning by listening, learning by doing and learning by questioning. This grant covers the cost of the crafts for the learning by doing portion of

the day. Second grade teacher Donald Friel was awarded the grant in the amount of \$350.

**The Power of the Graphic Novel** will introduce students at Benjamin Franklin Middle School to the medium of the graphic novel, specifically the graphic novel “classic” *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. The focus of this unit will also include a holocaust study to be done in conjunction with social studies. The use of the graphic novel as a viable non-fiction genre has exploded in the last decade. This is a unique and important opportunity for our students within the context of our Social Studies and Language Arts curricula. Jason Ordini and Noreen Clarke were awarded this grant in the amount of \$660.

The mission of the Ridgewood Education Foundation is to enhance the quality 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. We are able to do this thanks to the generous support of our members and other friends.

Whether it is through these Classroom Grants, the RHS Arts Fund, Alumni Teacher Development Fund Grants or, most recently, the ongoing North Star Literacy Campaign the Foundation’s objective is to support the quality of education in the Village's schools in whatever way we can.

The Foundation receives no government funding and is solely supported 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 Foundation membership and programs, visit our website at [www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org](http://www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org), or call 201.652.2903.