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NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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**NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$1,500 FOR TEACHER PROJECTS  
New Grant Program Funds Innovative Proposals That Will Benefit at Least 525 Students in 2011-2012**

NORTH HUNTINGDON — Science education, artwork from around the world, and e-readers are three educational projects that the Norwin School District Community Foundation is supporting through its new Educator Innovations Grant program.

Monday, the Norwin School District Community Foundation awarded \$1,500 to educational proposals that will directly benefit at least 525 students in the 2011-2012 school year. The Foundation is a non-profit group affiliated with Norwin School District.

The Foundation’s new Educator Innovations Grant program challenges District teachers to dream up an innovative classroom project that might not otherwise be funded by the school budget. The competitive grant program was supported by an independent review team that scored applications using a rating system that matched the application and without knowing the identities of those who applied.



Dr. John C. Boylan, center, president of the Norwin School District Community Foundation, presents \$500 checks to teachers who are receiving Educator Innovations Grants for classroom projects. From left: Ms. Mollie Brown, Ms. Tara Lynn, Dr. Boylan, Ms. Sharon Welty, and Ms. Paula Giran.

\$500 grants were awarded to support each of the following projects:

Teacher	School	Project Name	Description	Benefits
Ms. Paula Giran and Ms. Sharon Welty	Hillcrest Intermediate	<i>Squeaky Clean or Not?</i>	Students will hypothesize about which areas in the school will have the most bacteria. They will survey their classmates, design the experiment, and test their hypothesis. Students will use swab kits to collect bacteria samples at each site. They will then attempt to grow bacteria in Petri dishes. Slides will be made of the bacteria and will be compared to prepared bacteria slides. Results will be shared with the entire school. A biologist will be scheduled to visit to speak about how s/he uses the scientific method, and a local doctor or nurse may be invited to discuss how bacteria makes people ill.	100 students directly, with a beneficial effect spreading to the entire student body
Ms. Tara Lynn	Hahntown Elementary	<i>Take a Look, It's in a Nook</i>	This project will purchase digital reading devices, or e-readers, for primary-grade students to use as they learn to read and respond to texts on their own. The project will promote new digital literacy practices, encourage independent reading, and extend connections between readers and texts. Students will be able to physically interact with and manipulate stories, improving the reading experience.	20-25 second-grade students
Ms. Mollie Brown	Hillcrest Intermediate	<i>21<sup>st</sup> Century Art Room</i>	A digital projector will be installed into the art room to create lessons around enlarged, projected images of artworks from around the world via the Web to the classroom. Interactivity will be created by adding a Wii smart board and Infra-red pen, Prezi, PowerPoint, classroom Web site, etc. Teacher demonstrations of printmaking will be enlarged for all students to see, and will also be recorded with a Web cam. Even in a museum, students are not able to draw on top of a painting they see or manipulate images of famous works of art, but with this, they can.	400-plus students in grades 5 and 6

These teachers will be recognized at in-service on Wednesday, August 17, 2011.

The 2011-2012 grant recipients received their checks on May 2, 2011, just in time for National Teacher Appreciation Week.

“The members of both the review team and Foundation Board were impressed with the caliber of the applications that came in from our Norwin teachers,” said Dr. John C. Boylan, president of the Norwin School District Community Foundation Board of Directors. “One project motivates students about science and connects to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. Another brings artwork from around the world to an elementary classroom. Another motivates students about reading through the use of e-readers. Their dedication to their students is second to none, and we salute all Norwin teachers who participated for thinking outside the box to provide their students with innovative lessons.”

Funds for this first round of Educator Innovations Grants came from Westmoreland County Day of Giving in 2010, in which donors, on a single day, made online contributions that were partially matched by the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County.

“Bluntly speaking, if it wasn’t for the donors who gave on Day of Giving in 2010, we wouldn’t have an Educator Innovations Grant program today,” said Mr. Jonathan Szish, who serves as executive director of the Norwin School District Community Foundation. “We’d like to see an increase in donations on Day of Giving in 2011 to strengthen the Educator Innovations Grant program.”

The Foundation hopes to continue the Educator Innovations Grant program into the future if people continue to support the Norwin School District Community Foundation throughout the year and on Day of Giving. The next Westmoreland County Day of Giving is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5, 2011.

The Foundation exists to provide enrichment to students of the Norwin School District. It does this by maintaining more than a dozen scholarship funds created by local families, and also by supporting innovative educational programming that might not otherwise be funded through the School District budget. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that includes:

- President Dr. John Boylan
- Treasurer Mr. John Wilson, also Norwin’s Director of Business Affairs
- Secretary Mr. Ian Morrison, also a Norwin music teacher
- Superintendent Dr. William Kerr
- Mr. James Duffy, Esq., Norwin Chamber of Commerce
- Ms. Lisa Coltogirone, Norwin Council of PTAs
- Mr. William Caruthers, Esq., volunteer solicitor
- Mr. Jonathan Szish, executive director, also Norwin’s coordinator of school and community relations

Additionally, Ms. Barbara Flynn of the Norwin Public Library has been recently recommended to become the newest Norwin School District Community Foundation board member, and the Board of Directors is in the process of selecting additional members in specific areas of expertise.

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