

**Press Release**

**ESM Foundation Awards \$5,225 for 6 District Grants**

The East Syracuse Minoa Education Foundation (ESMEF) has awarded its first six grants totaling \$5,225 to staff of the ESM Central School District.

The Foundation was formed to raise funds and provide financial support for ESM School District programs that are not otherwise funded by tax dollars or state and local funds. A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, the Foundation is a separate organization from the ESM Central School District.

Grant Awards include:

- \$1,050 for **Book Cooks**, a program to teach Minoa Elementary students that they can eat healthier by connecting books to food preparation.
- \$1,000 for the District wide **Festival of Nations** organized by Central High School staff, students and parents.
- \$975 for **Motivating and Instructing Students with Flip/Pocket Video** at Minoa Elementary.
- \$1,000 for **Winning Wednesdays**, a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program (PBIS) program at East Syracuse Elementary School.
- \$600 for **Fremont Playhouse** presents “The Best Little Theater in Town,” a collaboration for building a foundation in musical theater.
- \$600 for **Brazil: A Changing Land of Sight, Sound and Movement** to enhance the Minoa third grade social studies unit on Brazil by bringing in a visiting musician.

“We were pleased with the number of applications and the creativity of them. This has teachers thinking outside the box,” said Dan DeLucia, chairman of the ESMEF Grants Committee. There were 14 grant applications requesting about \$22,000 in funding.

“We tried to stay within the mission of the foundation and also made sure we did not fund things that really should be funded by the District and its taxpayers,” Mr. DeLucia explained. For example, the Foundation did not fund laptops or computers. Some projects received partial funding.

“This is a great first year. The grant money will enhance the programs we funded. We expect more applications in the next round now that people know what kinds of projects we funded and the dollar amounts,” Mr. DeLucia added.

The ESMEF, which bestowed the grants, relies on community volunteers. If you are interested in lending a hand, being on a committee, or becoming involved in any way, please let the Foundation know by sending an e-mail to [info@esmef.org](mailto:info@esmef.org) or visiting them online at [www.esmef.org](http://www.esmef.org).

The ESMEF’s next fundraiser is its second annual golf outing Sunday, September 12 at The Links at Erie Village.

An explanation of each grant follows:

The **Book Cooks** program at Minoa was developed from a cookbook for young children titled “Book Cooks: Literature-based Classroom Cooking” by Janet Bruno. This \$1,050 grant will be used to teach students in grades 1-5 at Minoa Elementary that they can eat healthier by learning about and incorporating the love of books with the actual hands on preparation of food. In 2007-2008, ESM initiated a wellness program to promote healthier lifestyles. This grant will expose students to different kinds of healthy food experiences that they may not have otherwise. As young people are struggling with the problem of obesity nationwide, this after-school program will teach students how to make better food choices in a small group setting. The books will be resources to help students come up with new ideas for food choices, which in turn will promote the love of reading. This program is beneficial to Minoa’s students because they are being taught life skills. Field trips are planned to Wegman’s and Joey’s

Restaurant and students will showcase what they have learned in May for parents and staff. Tina Nabinger, Minoa's Library Media Specialist, is the grant project leader.

ESM's first **Festival of Nations** was held March 3 with assistance from a \$1,000 ESMEF grant. The event exceeded expectations as attendees visited booths representing 18 countries and regions and enjoyed cultural food, crafts and authentic entertainment. The goal of the festival was to celebrate the diversity of the ESM District while promoting tolerance, awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages. It was held during National Foreign Language Week. Exhibits representing the nations/regions surrounded an area for live entertainment in the center of the gymnasium at the high school. Parents, students and staff contributed to the development of each exhibit. Doug Morhorter, assistant principal, and Darlene Baker, DECA advisor, were the grant project leaders.

**Motivating and Instructing Students with Flip/Pocket Video** is a \$975 grant for Minoa Elementary. This grant will provide a set of flip or pocket video cameras to actively engage and motivate students in activities that develop higher-level thinking skills, collaboration and motivational skills throughout all areas of the curriculum. The video cameras will allow teachers to create 21st century learning opportunities for students through grade-appropriate lessons. Existing lessons are also readily available on the Internet. Potential uses in the classroom include website presentations, sharing information and celebrations with parents and students, self-evaluation activities, podcasts and using them on field trips. Paul Kaczanowicz is the grant project leader, but all Minoa teachers will be able to use the cameras for their classes.

**Winning Wednesdays** will enhance East Syracuse Elementary's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program (PBIS) using a \$1,000 ESMEF grant. ESE students earn "Cheetah Paw Prints" for demonstrating respect, responsibility and safety in school and on the bus. Each Wednesday, a Paw Print with a name from each grade level is drawn for a prize and one monthly prize winner is drawn. The grant will allow more students—36 per week—to receive incentive rewards. Winning students will come to the "Winners Circle" to collect their incentives. Pictures of the student winners will be displayed on the Wall of Fame in the Character Education hallway. In addition, this grant will allow ESE to recognize parent volunteers and other adults, including staff, who provide additional support to students during and after school. Student Council members will help, which will foster youth leadership roles. Principal Pat Charboneau is the grant project leader on behalf of the school.

The **Fremont Playhouse** will use its \$675 grant to present "The Best Little Theater in Town." The goal of the project is to increase student achievement and participation in the theater arts through a collaboration of teachers, parents and students. Students will take part in all aspects of musical theater production including acting, singing, choreography, sound production, staging and set design in preparation for a public performance in the high school auditorium. In addition, students will benefit from the opportunity for project-based learning that incorporates 21<sup>st</sup> century skill building in creativity, innovation and collaboration. Thomas Decker, Fremont Music Teacher is the grant project leader.

**Brazil: A Changing Land of Sight, Sound and Movement** is Minoa Elementary's effort to breathe new life into the third grade social studies unit on Brazil through a visiting musician. The \$600 grant will be used to highlight the arts by integrating them with classroom learning to support core curriculum. The focal point of this project is the creation of "Sound Boxes," a tool that Syracuse musician Edward Ruchalski has developed to increase sensory experience around a topic. The boxes are collections of visual and auditory elements that will be arranged within a box. Mr. Ruchalski will bring his own instruments handmade from recycled materials to encourage creative solutions. Connections will be drawn to Brazil's many environmental concerns, and thus the benefits of using recycled materials. The unit will incorporate third grade social studies, science, English language arts, visual arts and music in interdisciplinary fashion. Minoa Art Teacher Christy Sanzaro is the grant project leader.