

news

from Ashland Schools Foundation

Our mission is to support quality education in the Ashland public schools through fundraising in the community.

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Serving Students Where Traditional Schooling is Not Enough

SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT GRANTS

For a number of students, a traditional education isn't a good fit. Whether it's due to learning modalities, social issues, cultural differences, or challenging life circumstances, these kids become the ones that often "fall through the cracks." For this reason, Ashland High School, a leader in innovative education, offers alternative programs such as Life Skills, Catalyst, Social Action and Environmental Justice (SAEJ), and the Lincoln Center Alternative Education Program (formerly the Continuation Center) to challenge and engage students who might otherwise opt out of public education. With an emphasis on experiential learning, these programs are aimed at creating resiliency in students by providing opportunities for meaningful participation both academically and socially while seeking to attain educational goals.

All four programs are recipients of Ashland Schools Foundation Impact Grants this school year. Thanks to donor gifts, these grants fill in funding gaps for these important programs.

"To be motivated to learn, students need to know that their school work has relevance to their lives," comments Holly Johnson, AHS Life Skills teacher. Last year the Life Skills class purchased a stove to do cooking projects. This year the students are building and running a year-long clothing swap business. Both were funded by ASF Impact grants. "This is real life and a lot of kids don't have practical skills," says Johnson. "Without ASF, we wouldn't be able to do these really practical projects. It's been wonderful! I am really grateful."

"Parents tell me that this is the first time in 10 years that their kids have been excited about school," says Caroline Spear, AHS Catalyst teacher. "Many of these kids wouldn't be in school if we didn't have these programs," adds Spear. Catalyst students study many aspects of the environment including ecological renewal with the Lomatkatsi Restoration Project. Complimenting their environmental studies, Catalyst received an ASF grant for students to participate in an EarthTeach Forest Park ropes course to learn teamwork, how to meet personal challenges and problem-solving. "Kids take away from this experience the message that 'I can be a part of this team and there is a place for me.'"



AHS Catalyst students tethered on the Earth Teach High Ropes Challenge Course

"Serving" continued on page two...

About the grants

EDUCATION SUPPORT GRANTS

These district-wide grants are used for restoring the most critical components lost in public education.

SIGNATURE GRANTS

These school-wide grants are successful, on-going programs that are funded on an annual basis.

IMPACT GRANT

These classroom-based grants are awarded to teachers for quality educational activities that directly engage students both inside and outside the classroom.

Fall '06 Impact Grants

ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Professional Video Editing
AHS Clothing S.W.A.P.
AHS LC/S.E.E.K. Collaboration
EarthTeach for Catalyst
Learning from the Masters
SAEJ Backpacking and the Arts

ASHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

US History through Performance
Recetas Sabrosas
Bringing History Alive!
Bottle Rocket Inquiry
Broadway Musical, Jr

WALKER ELEMENTARY

World Arts Program
Blender Enrichment

Applications for funding in the spring are anticipated from Bellview Elementary, Helman Elementary, John Muir School, and Willow Wind Learning Community.

For more details on these and other grants, go to www.ashlandschoolsfoundation.org.

All About Drama at AMS

SPOTLIGHT ON A SIGNATURE GRANT

From Shakespeare to original plays about middle school life to Disney musicals, students bring to the stage theatre productions twice a year at Ashland Middle School through the direction of AMS teacher Dianna Warner. "This would not be possible without the support of Ashland Schools Foundation and the Youth Activities Levy," states Warner. "The theatre program is very popular at AMS with as many as 80 students participating in each production."

Additionally, vocal music that was not available at AMS until last year is provided through the theatre program. "The musical program in public schools was one of the first casualties when state funding was cut several years ago. Until very recently this program brought choir back to students," says Warner. "Now it supports and expands music opportunities."

Besides providing a challenging experience rich in literature and reflection, Warner believes that it is critical for middle school kids to have a place to belong. For that reason, Warner has a 'no cut' policy that allows all kids to be included. "Ms. Warner says that there is a place for everyone," explains 8th-grader Angelica Florio. "It's true. You can work on sets, lighting, or costumes – not just acting. It gives you great experience in 'the biz' and it's really fun."



Fall 2006 AMS play "Nightmares in my Backpack."

"Serving" continued from page one...

SAEJ is a smaller program similar to Catalyst but for 9th- and 10th-graders. In high demand, there is a waiting list of students who wish to be admitted into SAEJ. "The kids who are in the program are quite bright and not necessarily 'in trouble.' They use this program as another way to become successful in school," explains SAEJ teacher Jay Preskenis. And like the other programs, there is an emphasis on outdoor experiential learning. SAEJ's grant will be devoted to field education via a number of backpacking trips. "Backpacking is a favorite activity. It creates a real bond between teachers and students, and between the kids [themselves]. Our budget is very limited, so I am really thankful of the financial support we receive from ASF."

Another program in demand is the Lincoln Center taught by Lloyd Lasley and Reed Sorensen. "Lincoln Center serves students who may have a lower chance of success in a traditionally organized system," explains Lasley. "Each student has a personal education plan that provides a more basic education, more independent projects. Our goal is to instill self-motivated life-long learning." One component within the program funded by ASF is a collaborative project with non-profit agency SEEK (Self Esteem Exploration and Knowledge). The impact grant is funding study of different cultures from Nepal to Hawaii integrating science, math, history, and geography with experiential learning. Students are also expected to work on life skills such as conflict resolution, anger management and communication. One way 'Lokahi' – the Polynesian word for unity, connection and synchronization – is built is through the program's outrigger canoeing trips. SEEK facilitator and instructor Kim Marie Murphy talks about the closeness students feel and how appreciative she is of their genuineness. "It makes it worthwhile when you hear, 'That was awesome!,' from a student."

World Arts

SPOTLIGHT ON AN IMPACT GRANT

In Dan Hamnett's & Diane DeMerritt's multi-age community classrooms at Walker Elementary, 2nd-5th grade students are experiencing geography and culture through music, dance, food, literature, and art.

World culture is taught yearlong as part of elementary education curricular goals in geography and social studies. This fall's impact grant provided students with workshops taught by Steve Berman, Steph Thompson, and Olaf Soderback in ethnic visual and performing arts. "Professional musicians and artists work in cultural motifs with students," shares Dan Hamnett. "[Working with these motifs] reinforces what we are teaching about how cultures interact or merge and can be illustrated with music and art." Regarding one workshop given by Steve Berman, Hamnett says, "Steve is an extraordinary musician. He performed and talked with students, shared chirangos (a stringed instrument) made of armadillo and wood, and demonstrated Spanish influences in Latin American music."



A world arts student

Although the emphasis this year is on Latin America, the students study places from all over the world. These are chosen as a confluence of opportunity and serendipity. For example, this year SOU has an exchange student from Australia. Hamnett and DeMerritt were able to have her work with the classes, enabling students to learn about Australia directly from a native with lessons and activities relating to her country. Parent volunteer Jennifer Longshore presented a lecture and slide show on Aborigine art and Stef Thompson worked with the students in pointillism style of art characteristic of Australian Aborigines.

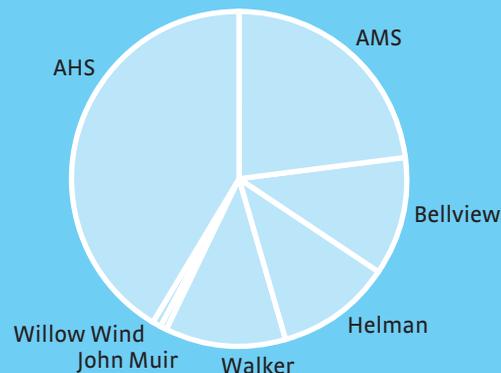
When asked about how the ASF grant impacts their classrooms, DeMerritt says, "Our students' world view is expanded and their appreciation of others is enhanced by our study and by working with these artists."

ASF Funding 2006-2007

TOTAL FUNDING	\$250,686
Educational Support	\$177,686
Signature Grants	\$18,000
Impact Grants	\$15,000
Gardner Grout Fund	\$30,000
Buy-In for Books	\$10,000

BY SCHOOLS*

AHS (\$90/student)	\$99,627
AMS (\$82/student)	\$55,296
Elementary (\$84/student)	\$82,263
Bellview	\$27,472
Helman	\$26,813
Walker	\$27,978
John Muir	\$1,500
Willow Wind	\$2,000



*Doesn't include Buy-In for Books dollars.

I want to support great schools!

Name _____

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email _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Ashland Schools Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit public benefit corporation, organized exclusively for educational and charitable purposes. Your tax-deductible donation made through December 2007 will be used in support of educational programs this coming school year.

I'd like to contribute:

- \$50 \$25 Other _____
 My check payable to ASF is enclosed.

I'd like to contribute by:

- Visa M/C
 One time contribution
 Monthly contribution

of _____ for _____ months

CC# _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____

- I'd like to make a gift of stocks and/or wish to include ASF in my will. Please call.
 I'm interested in making a donation to the ASF Endowment Fund. Please call.

Buy-In for Books

Last year's donations purchased more than 650 books for the schools! This year's donations support math and language arts books. Become a yearlong sponsor for a \$500 donation, or a month-long sponsor for a \$100 donation and help support the textbook fund for the schools.

YEARLONG SPONSORS

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For a listing of our monthly sponsors, go to www.ashlandschoolsfoundation.org.



AHS students trying out the new Computer Lab provided by the Gardner Grout Technology Fund.

New Computer Lab debuts January 30 thanks to the ASF Gardner Grout Technology Fund

SPOTLIGHT ON A SIGNATURE GRANT

More and more, students need to graduate with technological skills that will help them succeed in college and the workplace. Now, thanks to a technology fund made possible through the generosity of the Gardner Grout Foundation, a charitable non-profit organization, the district will be able to make a real difference in the technology available to Ashland High students for years to come.

A new computer lab, first on the list of high-priority technology needs, was opened on January 30, giving students the access they need to thirty new computers for research, projects, and homework and will allow for state-required CIM and CAM testing which must be done on computer.

Over two years AHS will have \$60,000 available for the purchase of much needed technology. Principal Jeff Schlecht, Superintendent Juli DiChiro, and Information Technology Director Steve Mitzel will be assessing the technology needs for the high school and will decide the best use of the funds.

Thank you Gardner Grout Foundation!

Acorn Design (acornology.com) — Donated graphic design services for identity and collateral materials
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