



Rockland Education Foundation

THE “STARS WERE FALLING” IN ROCKLAND LAST YEAR THANKS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS’ JENN ROBACK AND MEGHAN BYRNE FROM ESTEN SCHOOL WHO BROUGHT “MORE STARFALL” TO THEIR STUDENTS. THIS PHONETIC-BASED ACTIVITY HELPED STUDENTS GAIN SINGLE PHONEME RECOGNITION AND BEGINNING READING SKILLS FOR THE YOUNGER GRADES. THE USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY INFUSED INTO THE PROCESS OF PHONETIC-BASED TEACHING, MADE “STARS” OF THEIR STUDENTS! THIS IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF THE PROGRAMS OFFERED TO ROCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS LAST YEAR. THANKS TO THE ROCKLAND EDUCATION FOUNDATION.

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Each year, the Foundation gives Rockland school personnel an opportunity to apply for grant funding to provide programs and materials for their students. Last year, \$17,782 was awarded directly to Rockland Public School educators to implement their programs.

In addition, a \$5,000 grant was awarded in honor of Rockland High School graduate and artist Michael Keane, to allow artist Bren Bataclan to create wall murals in each of the three elementary schools. These murals were the result of a workshop conducted by the artist, in which he demonstrated different techniques and ideas, and then used student input and designs to create his murals.

Lastly, the Foundation also appropriated \$10,000 for the Rockland Public Schools, which was presented to Superintendent John Retchless and will be used for an upcoming initiative. These grant funds are made possible by the hard work and dedication of the members of the Rockland Education Foundation, now in its nineteenth year. To date \$432,920 has been awarded to the staff of the Rockland Public Schools. Please take a moment to read about the exciting things taking place in the Rockland Public Schools, and take note of the educators who went the extra mile to submit their grants for consideration.

MARYELLEN CONCANNON, Esten School Nurse, submitted a grant which allowed her to purchase books for the Esten School library for Grades 1-4 focusing on nutrition and healthy life choices. This grant was particularly timely as it coincided with the implementation of the new Rockland Public Schools’ Wellness Policy, and targets the growing problem of child obesity.

The Special Education Departments were very well represented with grant awards at all grade levels. JENN ROBACK and MARABETH LAWRENCE from Esten School provided “*News 2 You and Unique Learning System*” to their students. This program targeted a population with, but not limited to, global developmental delays, language disabilities, limited life skills, and those who have difficulty reading. Students gained knowledge through the weekly articles on social science topics.

MEGHAN BYRNE at Esten School was “*Visualizing and Verbalizing*” with her students, a program that developed concept imagery as a basis for comprehension and higher order thinking. The targeted population that received this intervention made consistent progress in regards to finding the main idea of a passage, sequencing events, answering higher order thinking questions, and learning the definitions of selected vocabulary words.

At Rogers Middle School and Rockland High School, FREEA LEAHY and LAWRIE DAWSON implemented “*Kids of Promise*”, to create a support group for students impacted by addiction or drug/alcohol abuse within the family system. Through a collaboration with Caron Treatment Centers,

students developed personal tools to help them cope with a loved one’s addiction. They were able to feel comfortable and open about their feelings in a safe and nurturing environment.

LAUREN PARKER, Speech Therapist at the Jefferson School, facilitated “*Let’s Express!*” The goal of this project was to help students to express their thoughts in a clear, organized and cohesive manner. Too often, students today rely on technology, and this multisensory tool stressed the importance of verbal and interpersonal communication skills.

English Language Arts was the focus of the next grant awards, beginning with KAREN NEE, MICHELLE SCHEUFELE, CHANTELLE KAVKA and DIANE HAYES at Esten School who were “*Using Picture Books to Teach Comprehensive Strategies*.” This involved the purchase of numerous books to enhance reading abilities within their third grade classrooms at Esten School. The focus was on visualizing, questioning, seeking answers, making inferences, making predictions, determining importance, and summarizing. These books can be used for years to come to model read aloud strategies effectively and improve instruction.

PAMELA SHERIDAN at the Jefferson School provided a “*Reading and Writer’s Workshop Literacy Library*.” The books purchased through this grant linked guided reading themes and writing prompts to the children’s own experiences. The topics of these books, targeted for the second grade, will reinforce the curriculum as it relates to the Common Core Standards.

“*Books Before Bed*” was the focus of a grant awarded to MICHELE BISSONNETTE, MONICA BABCOCK, MARIA CASTAGNOZZI, JAN MARIE KILLINGER, and BARBARA LABOLLITA at the Memorial Park School. As the title implies, first and second grade students were treated to a “*Tuck in Night*”, where, clad in pajamas, they enjoyed stories read by guest readers, were able to read by themselves, and they were also given the opportunity to select a book to take home and begin compiling a library at home for their reading enjoyment.

MELINDA LEARNING, SUE WELLS, KAREN DUFFEY, and KAITLYN JUFFRE at Esten School purchased the book series “*I Survived*” for their fourth grade students. These books, written by author Lauren Tarshis, tell a frightening yet thrilling story about a true event in a period of history, told through the fictional character of a young boy. These historical fiction books captivated students – even reluctant readers. Among the titles were Hurricane Katrina, The Bombing of Pearl Harbor, The Japanese Tsunami, and The Battle of Gettysburg.

“*Books, books, and more books*” were the wish of Jefferson School teacher MELISSA FRAZIER, who stated that “the heart of the classroom is the classroom library.” Her wish was granted, and allowed for the purchase of fiction and non-fiction books to engage her fourth grade students and encourage reading across different genres.

Math & Science were also represented in the grant award process. **MICHELE BISSONNETTE** at Memorial Park School gave her students a head start with *“Mathstart.”* Students in grades 1-3 were provided Mathstart books, a series that encourages cross curricula teaching and learning in alignment with the Common Core Standards. Filled with colorful illustrations, engaging stories, and math vocabulary, these books promote the idea of reading within math and math within reading.

THE ENTIRE MEMORIAL PARK STAFF provided a *“Family Math Night”* for their families. On this evening sixty-four families participated in a night of shared games and activities that focused on math concepts and reasoning. From simple materials, teachers created games, and each family was able to take one game home to continue to build on number sense, math understanding, and family interaction.

KATHLEEN SULLIVAN, JESSICA ROBERGE, and Instructional Team Members at Jefferson School were *“Engaging Exemplars”* this past year. The Exemplar: Problem Solving for the Common Core resource for grades 1-4 prepared students to clearly communicate their thinking and show their mathematical strategies. Also provided were rubrics and anchor pages to help assess students’ problem-solving skills, and ultimately improve their MCAS math scores.

Bill Nye, of late famous for “Dancing With the Stars”, is best known for his many contributions to the field of science. **SUE LONERGAN** and **TRISH FALLON** at Rogers Middle School brought *“Bill Nye for Science”* to their fifth grade students. This series of videos helped prepare students for their first science MCAS tests, and presented the science curriculum in a fun and engaging genre. The hands-on activities that accompany the videos are important instructional tools and add to student understanding of science concepts.

To enhance the science curriculum at Esten School, **KATHY FERRY** received grants for two in-house “field trips” for the second grade classrooms. The First *“Rip Roaring Raptors”*, showcased many live birds of prey. Children learned how these birds can adapt to their surroundings and are consequently unique hunters indigenous to the New England wildlife scene. *“Massachusetts Habitats”* helped students learn that all animals need food, water and shelter, and taught them all the varied places in Massachusetts that animals call home. These programs were presented by the Blue Hills Trailside Museum staff.

Technology is a valuable tool when it comes to student learning in the 21st century as demonstrated by **SHANNON LOONEY, JEAN PAGE, GLEN ENOS, THERESA WALSH**, and **KELLY HOWES**, fifth grade teachers at the Rogers Middle School. *“Sumdog”* is an educational game website generated for students which enables them to practice skills in Mathematics, Reading, and English Language Arts. Using laptops, their students played a variety of educational games against their peers and against other schools across the nation. Collectively, students answered a total of over 354,490 questions in Mathematics, wrote a total of over 12,915 words in Writing games, and answered a total of over 24,381 questions in English Language Arts related games and activities.

Memorial Park School educators **MARY WELLS, CELINA TEIXEIRA, MICHELE BISSONNETTE**,

MARIA CASTAGNOZZI, MONICA BABCOCK, JAN MARIE KILLINGER, and **BARBARA LABOLLITA** again brought *“BrainPop”* and *“Enchanted Learning”* to the students of the Rockland Public Schools at the elementary and middle school level district-wide. BrainPop was used as an introduction to new materials, reinforcement of materials already covered, or for test reviews. The bonus of BrainPop access at home allows students and families an opportunity to share information and reinforce learning skills at home. With an app for iPod, iPhone & iPad, it is truly a tool with relevance for today’s students. Learning is by no means boring when it is *“Enchanted Learning.”* This interactive website provides students with challenging lesson reinforcement and also provides valuable teacher evaluation tools.

DARCIE MACDONALD was able to purchase dry erase boards for the four first grade classrooms at the Esten School. These eco-friendly tools are environmentally friendly and allow students to take risks without fear of failing. Mistakes can be easily erased, and they allow the teacher to focus on individual handwriting skills, word study words, writer’s workshop, or math practice. They can be used in whole group instruction, small guided groups, and learning centers.

In order to move forward into the future, we must also embrace and celebrate our past. **AMY WOODWARD** at Rockland High School once again brought the timeless works of William Shakespeare to life during a *“Shakespeare Festival”*, which involved student actors, musicians, technicians, set decorators, and food preparers and servers. Costumed performers presented skits from Shakespeare’s plays, and medieval-style food and entertainment was provided. Court jesters, fortune-tellers, comic witches, a royal court (with Superintendent John Retchless as the Festival Court King), music, and poetry recitations were among the many varied activities enjoyed by all those in attendance.

The past came alive in the shape of dinosaurs for **MONICA BABCOCK, MARIA CASTAGNOZZI**, and **MICHELE BISSONNETTE’S** students at Memorial Park School, and for all second grade students at Esten School thanks to **KATHY FERRY**.

Children were *“Digging into the Past”* at Memorial Park when the Boston Museum of Science came to the schools and provided students a hands-on look at the field of paleontology. Esten students enjoyed a presentation entitled *“Fossils”*, where they learned not only about dinosaurs, but minerals and fossils as well. Each student received a bag that included geodes, dinosaur egg shell fragments, fossilized shark teeth, colorful agates, quartz and other materials.

Last, but by no means least, was the creation of an *“Elementary School Choir”*, the objective of elementary music teacher **CAMERON ESTRELLA**. Through his efforts, interested students in Jefferson and Memorial Park Schools in grades two through four were able to participate in a choral group before school that not only fostered their love of music, but taught them a new way to effectively communicate emotions and moods through music. Students were encouraged to sing alone and also with others, in unison and in two-part harmony. The success of this activity was evident when these students sang in concert and their audience was wowed by their performance!

THE ROCKLAND EDUCATION FOUNDATION SALUTES THE EDUCATORS OF THE ROCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THEIR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO BRING INNOVATIVE AND DIVERSE PROGRAMS TO THEIR STUDENTS. THE FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO BE THE VEHICLE THAT ENABLES THESE GRANTS, AND LOOKS FORWARD TO ANOTHER GREAT YEAR OF COLLABORATION WITH THESE DEDICATED AND COMMITTED INDIVIDUALS. GRANT MONEY IS RAISED BY INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS, THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES, AND MONIES RAISED AT THE ANNUAL RALPH “GUS” LORDI GOLF TOURNAMENT EACH JUNE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.ROCKLANDEDUCATIONFOUNDATION.ORG.

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