

Another busy year for BCS Foundation

Students across Bedford Central School District benefitted this past school year from the work of parents, community residents and local businesses that supported district-wide, innovative, educational programs through the Foundation for Bedford Central Schools.

Established in 2012, the Foundation's mission is to provide enhanced learning opportunities beyond the programming funded by the District's annual, voter-approved budget. "This nonprofit community initiative seeks to increase academic learning beyond traditional education to support lifelong learners who start their educational journey in the Bedford Central School District," said Fran Hauser, Foundation board chair.

Through the support of the Bedford Central community, the Foundation provides programming in four key areas: classroom curricular enhancement, equipment and supplies, program and experiences tied to curriculum objectives, and professional development.

This past academic year illustrated the Foundation's commitment to impact students in all seven district schools.

The Foundation held its second community-wide book drive last winter, which collected thousands of gently-used books for classroom libraries across the district. Dr. Joel Adelberg, assistant superintendent for academic affairs, said, "Not only did [the Foundation] and our families far surpass our expectation in the sheer volume of books collected, but the amount of organization that the Foundation did to prepare the collection is unbelievable. You left us with cartons of books by author, reading level and by topic. We've shared this information with grade-level teaching teams to get these books into our classroom libraries for our students to enjoy as soon as possible."

This year's book drive correlated with the district's partnership with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, which provides professional development to the District's K-5 teachers around best teaching practices for young readers and writers.

Grants from the Foundation this



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Students at West Patent Elementary School, including fourth-graders Liam Provo, left, and Antonio Cambareri, built their own computers working with kits purchased through a grant from the Foundation.

year included several targeted at enrichment in elementary classrooms. At Pound Ridge Elementary School, the Bit of Heaven Horsemanship Project provided third-graders with an experiential learning opportunity designed to support different learning styles. It gave students a shared experience they could apply to their nonfiction writing, while targeting important social and emotional communication and positive interaction skills. Cheryl Starace, teacher for K-5 English of Other Languages classrooms, spearheaded this project for its second year, and was recognized for her efforts by the New York Agriculture in the Classroom 2019 Teachers of the Year award, an outreach program of Cornell University.

At Mount Kisco Elementary School, the Reading Club was granted funds to purchase books to support its Newbury Awards-style book club for several dozen fourth- and fifth-graders. The Club hosted regularly scheduled lunch discussions to encourage building skills around critical discussion

of shared text, inquiry formulation as well as language and vocabulary development.

Last fall, second-graders from Bedford Hills Elementary School traveled to ARC Stages, where students began their exploration of the world of theater. They were exposed to performances of student written plays. Later in the academic year, the Foundation funded an Arc Stages/Visions and Voices residency, where kindergarten and second-graders learned about play writing. Individual classroom visits let students work more closely to develop stories and turn them into plays that were performed by ARC staff during a spring trip to the ARC performance space.

Students at West Patent Elementary School exhibited their innovations at a recent, community-wide fair. Among other opportunities, fourth- and fifth-graders in Dorothy Venditto's Build Your Own Computer enrichment class worked with Piper Computing Kits purchased through a grant from the Foundation. With

these kits, students built their own computers and learned computer languages to perform a variety of tasks. They also learned to work collaboratively and develop critical thinking as young innovators.

Fox Lane Middle School sixth-grade teachers were supported throughout the year with a professional development grant focusing on methods for developing and implementing a new sixth grade interdisciplinary capstone project. Their process included defining the objectives of a capstone project to build consensus across teacher teams and move forward with a "research road map" building student research and study skills. To begin their individual projects, sixth-graders visited Philadelphia's Franklin Institute.

For a second year, the Foundation supported the seventh-grade capstone project and trip with a focus on water. The experience culminated with a tour of the Capitol in Albany and a Hudson River experience.

At Fox Lane High School, earlier this spring the Foundation sponsored a mock college interview afternoon in conjunction with the guidance office. The Foundation plans to offer more hands-on learning opportunities for college prep and job skill-building, Ms. Hauser said.

The Foundation also funded the purchase of virtual reality headsets to support a wellness initiative in the high school, which aims to help students engage in technology-assisted mindfulness-based, stress reduction. In addition, the Foundation supported addition of a food science segment to the community science curriculum, where student demand continues to grow.

Lastly, through the efforts of the Foundation's board, over \$30,000 of furniture was donated to various campuses. Equipment included computers, monitors, flat screen TVs, and tables and chairs to upgrade learning spaces and classrooms.

Each year the Foundation hosts several fun fundraising events. It also publishes a newsletter with updates to residents and conducts other outreach.

For more information, visit foundationbcs.org.