

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION



2016-2017 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Community Members –

I'd like to personally thank all of our generous donors, supporters and volunteers. Together, we have made a huge impact on our community!

The REF Board of Trustees set an aspirational goal three years ago to increase our impact to the community by significantly increasing our rate of grant giving. By the time REF celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2021, we want to have awarded **\$2M** in grants.

Since setting this aspirational goal, REF has, in fact, significantly increased the rate of grant giving. Last year alone, REF positively impacted our community by:

- Awarding our third annual Founders' Grant of **\$25,000** to Rockford Public Schools to create 'Makerspaces', which are focused on **STEAM** (science, technology, engineering, the arts and math) curriculum in elementary schools.
- Funding our first **\$25,000** of a \$125,000 five-year commitment to expand Rockford Public Schools **early college program** with Grand Valley State University and Ferris State University.
- Awarding **70 student, small and large grants** totaling over **\$70,000** across our public and parochial schools.

While we have accomplished a great deal, we still have much more to do! In order to continue to ensure we are making a significant impact in the community, REF must continue to grow and evolve. Therefore, this year, the REF Board of Trustees will be revisiting its long-term vision, strategies and goals. Through this process, we plan to accelerate REF's impact in our community.

I invite you to learn more about the exciting things happening at REF, and please take a moment to look through our annual report. I believe you will see the passion for education put into action, along with the tremendous impact that REF is making in our community.

Regards,

Brian Kraus
Chairperson, REF Board of Trustees

\$25,000 FOUNDERS' GRANT



The third annual Founders' Grant, underwritten by the Wolverine Worldwide Foundation as part of a five-year commitment to REF, was awarded to expand Makerspace classrooms in Rockford Public Schools (RPS) elementary buildings.

In the fall of 2016, Maggie Thelen, Director of Instructional Technology at RPS, introduced the REF Board to the concept of Makerspace when she applied for and was awarded a \$5,000 grant to implement the first of its kind within the District.

Makerspace classrooms are designated space that infuse imagination, problem-solving, collaboration and innovation for all students. All of the materials are hands-on in nature and allow for students and teachers to discover and create.

The first classroom for the initial grant awarded to Roguewood Elementary piqued the interest of teachers at the other RPS elementary schools, which inspired Thelen to apply for the \$25,000 Founders' Grant. This grant allowed the District to implement Makerspace classrooms in 6 additional elementary schools including Belmont, Cannonsburg, Crestwood, Lakes, Meadow Ridge and Valley View.

THE FOUNDERS' GRANT WAS NAMED IN HONOR OF REF'S FOUNDING TRUSTEES

REF has accomplished a lot in the past 25 years, and plans to continue increasing our impact for years to come. A visionary group of leaders founded REF in 1991 to fill gaps created by school funding shortfalls by providing funds for classroom and community projects. Those first trustees paved the way for many more volunteers to continue their mission to support education in our community. From the first years of its inception of awarding \$4,000 to educational grants to the organization's commitment to awarding \$125,000 annually back to education in Rockford, the REF graciously thanks and honors all of the past and current trustees.

Jeremy Amshey	Tom Healy*
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*Denotes Past and Current Board Chairs

2016-2017 GRANT RECIPIENTS

FOUNDERS' GRANT

Makerspace implemented in RPS elementary schools

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Early College Program

BELMONT ELEMENTARY

Minds on the Move
TAB Painting Equipment
Walking and Wondering
Books for Guided Reading
Flexible Seating
Learning Through Play
Rockin' Rams - Ukuleles

CANNONBURG ELEMENTARY

Reading Mascot

CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY

Resource Room Timers
Empty Bowls Service Project
DK Language Arts & Math Groups
Flexible Seating

EAST & NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOLS

ERMS/NRMS - Orchestra Literature
ERMS/NRMS - Life Skills Class - CPR Training and More
ERMS/NRMS - Wireless Microphones & Lighting
ERMS/NRMS - Headphones & Splitters
ERMS - Supporting Lifelong Readers
ERMS - Science Classroom Tools
ERMS - Dr. Beat and ZOOM to the Rescue
ERMS - 40 Book Challenge
ERMS - Fostering Literacy with new books
ERMS - Huddle Boards
ERMS - Math Gets Real
NRMS - Reading Intervention
NRMS - Spanish Immersion Books
NRMS - Orchestra Music Software

NRMS - Hands on Algebraic activities

NRMS - STEM Box

NRMS - Very Special Art Supplies

NRMS - Sewing as STEM

NRMS - The Ascendance Trilogy

NRMS - 3-Dimensional Geometric Models

NRMS - Building School Climate and Culture

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

Hands-On Spatial Reasoning

LAKES ELEMENTARY

Chick Incubators
Firsts in the Forest Supplies
Sensory Wiggle Stools
NEW STEM Opportunities

MEADOW RIDGE ELEMENTARY

Sing to Learn
Mindfulness through Yoga
Rockin' Rams - Ukuleles

OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION SCHOOL

STEM Month Materials
Art Printing Plates

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

The Shape of Things to Come
Adaptive Gymnastics for ASD Students
Microphones & Recording Booth
A Seat For All
Learning Tools for ASD Students

REGION 1 TRANSITION SERVICES (RITS)

The RITS Card Shop
Healthy Learning

ROCKFORD COMMUNITY GRANTS

Reading Rocks Author Visits
Seniors Unlimited
Preschool - Play to Learn Science

ROCKFORD FRESHMAN CENTER

Orchestra Literature
Student Art Portfolios with Technology

ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Speed Ropes
Dune Buggy Project
Statistical Data Analysis Software
Downtown Abbey in Spain
Creating Student Art Portfolios with Technology

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT WIDE

Elementary Music Teacher Workshop
Social Skills Detectives
RtI Math Manipulatives

ROGUEWOOD ELEMENTARY

App Robot
Headphones
The Art of Literacy
Music- Flexible Instrumentarium
Classroom Books
Invent to Learn Creating a Makerspace

ROGUEWOOD SPANISH IMMERSION

Learning Through Games

ST. PETER'S PRESCHOOL

Math Manipulatives

VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY

Listening Center

STUDENT REQUESTED GRANTS

NRMS - Spanish Books
Parkside - Composter
RHS - Dune Buggy Project
RHS - Jazz Band Instruction
RHS - Octoball Pit
Roguewood - Expanding Spanish Books

FUNDING STEM / STEAM

From the youngest of learners all the way to those close to graduating, REF is seeing an influx of requests pertaining to STEM/STEAM initiatives implemented by Rockford Public Schools (RPS) and parochial schools. What was once known by many as STEM, the new initiative in education today known as STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math.

STEAM-based curriculums provide real-life situations to help students learn. They are collaborative, experimental, hands-on and outcome based. By exposing students to STEAM and giving them opportunities to explore related topics, the intent is that they will develop a passion for it and hopefully pursue a life-long career in a position in the STEAM field. Why is this important? It is important because all sectors of our economy are moving faster and faster to a digital stance.

In the 2016-2017 school year, REF received several STEAM related grant requests, and we expect those to increase in future years as the initiative builds momentum.

Sarah Stevenson, Belmont Elementary kindergarten teacher, requested materials to promote collaboration skills in her class. These materials included Gonge Riverstones to help with sensory, gross motor coordination skills, and as a visual for learning sight words; or Magna-Tiles for STEAM activities, and to improve collaboration skills, and; Engineering Building Blocks, used for STEAM, fine motor and collaboration skills.

Our Lady of Consolation 2nd grade teacher, Karen Scholar, received a grant for materials to assist her in hosting a "STEM Month" in her classroom. The materials gave her students the opportunity to experience hands-on labs to help students engage in activities just like scientists.

North Rockford Middle School teacher, Matthew Stargardt received a grant to create a STEAM Box, an organized set of tools that will allow students to create unique solutions to real-world challenges. They could build a variety of different

solutions such as sailboats, barges, dragsters, motorized racers, turbine, roller coasters, rockets with simple materials such as wood, foam, paper, aluminum, copper, wire, etc. The students loved the STEAM toolbox. These exercises teach them to be collaborative, creative, critical thinking problem solvers

Rockford High School students from Ryan Whitmore's Advanced Engineering class benefited from a grant to assist with the rebuilding of car engines.

STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses science, technology, engineering, art and math as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking. The end result is students who are innovators and learners of the 21st Century. At REF, we see great opportunity to provide assistance and boost the efforts already underway in our community's educational institutions.



BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!

What's more exciting than reading a brand new book that is accessible in your own classroom?! REF heard from many teachers seeking updated reading materials for their classrooms to help keep students coming back to borrow more books to read!

Belmont Elementary 2nd grade classes benefited from 6-packs of books to help young readers follow along as they read in small groups.

The students in the 6th grade magnet, Health Quest, at East Rockford Middle School were surprised with new updated titles of books for their annual "40 Book Challenge" in their classroom.

A 7th and 8th grade English teacher at ERMS received a grant for a new library of books for students to share amongst each other for the school year. Often the same books are being read over and over. Now, having more books accessible during an English class makes it even easier for students to enjoy.

REF was able to help fill the Spanish bookshelves in the library at North Rockford Middle School (NRMS) for the Spanish Immersion students. Two Spanish Immersion students also received grants to purchase more Spanish books for both Roguewood Elementary and NRMS.



OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

\$120,000

IN GRANTS AWARDED IN 2016-2017



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS



\$25,000

Founders' Grant Underwriter
Wolverine Worldwide
Foundation

\$5,000

Ferris State University
Integrated Packaging
Machinery, LLC
Brian & Dana Kraus

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Byrne Electrical Specialists
GMBae Architecture +
Engineering
Meijer
Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.
Mike & Linda Tenbrink

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Jeremy & Kelly Amshey
Applied Imaging
Berkshire Hathaway
HomeSevices
William & Bobbi Jo Blanton
Cedar Crest Dairy Inc.
Doug & Jeri Derks
Ross & Beth Dornan
Rick & Jill Ericksen
FASTSIGNS of Grand Rapids
James & Ashley Feldkamp
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Steve & Janet Gulis
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Scott & Peggy Keane
J. Kelly and Associates P.C.
Luan and Angela Le
Jason & Sarah Mahar
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Duncan & Christina Purvis
Rockford Ace Hardware
Jim & Cheryl Scales
Chris & Colette Smiley
Neal & Jill Silverman
Jeff & Kelly Timmer

United Bank
Kevin & Sarah VanderWoude
Joane Van Luven

\$500 - \$999

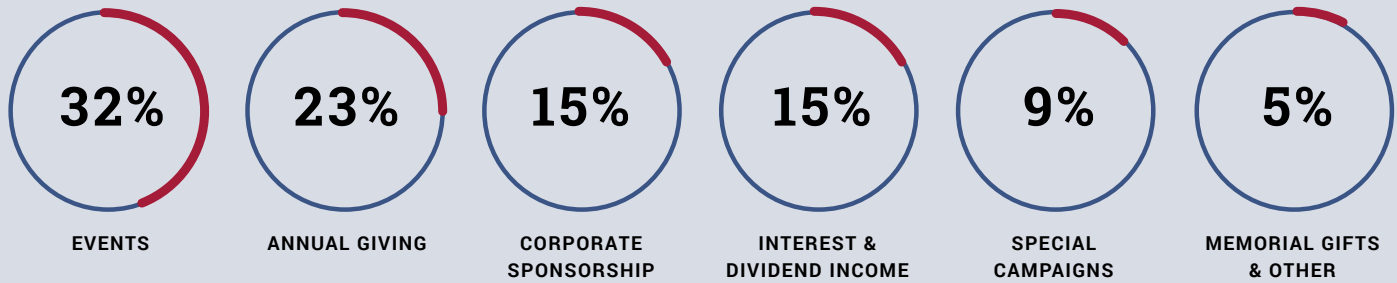
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\$250 - \$499

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TOTAL REVENUE OF **\$166,500** IN 2016-2017



FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW LUNCHEON 2017

In early Spring of 2017, REF hosted a luncheon to showcase grants and the impact the organization is making on education in our community.

The luncheon with the fitting title “Foundation For Tomorrow” had an end goal of raising funds to continue to build REF for tomorrow and beyond.

The luncheon featured comments from Rockford Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Michael Shibley, Director of Instructional Technology, Maggie Thelen, and students from East Rockford Middle School and Roguewood Elementary School. The presenters explained and displayed great examples of donor dollars at work. Everything from the Early College Partnership with the District to the implementation

of Makerspace to the Roguewood students showing the guests how fun programming Sphero robots can be!

Fundraising events help make it possible for REF to explain the positive impact we are making in education and how you as donors make that possible!

Look for more information on the next fundraising events at www.rockfordEDfoundation.org.



Pictured from left to right: **Kathy Munger**, retired RPS employee, **Brian Oberlin** - RHS, 1994, **Edward Downes Lewis** - RHS, 1994, **R. Graham Greenland, DDS** - RHS, 2006, **Leonard Post** - RHS, 1970, Paula Kruer in honor of her father **Peter Kruer** - RHS, 1972.

RPS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES INDUCTEES FOR CLASS OF 2016-2017

The Academic Hall of Fame was hosted in the fall of 2016 in partnership with the Rockford Public Schools (RPS) and Rockford Education Foundation (REF). Every other year the event recognizes those who have demonstrated exceptional achievements in their chosen field or who have made significant contributions to RPS or the Rockford community. The Hall of Fame induction event is a weekend-long honor of the inductees’ achievements. The inductees kindly and proudly present to students within the District all day Friday and are then honored at an induction dinner on Saturday. Proceeds from the Saturday evening event benefit REF.



Mission: To provide resources for increased educational opportunities for people of all ages in the Rockford community.

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

REPORTING FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2017



REF

Rockford Education Foundation
P.O. Box 777 Rockford, MI 49341
www.rockfordEDfoundation.org
616.863.6317

SAVE THE DATES

SPRING 2018

The New Taste of Rockford

FALL 2018

Academic Hall of Fame