

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

REPORTING FISCAL YEAR  
JULY 1, 2017 - JUNE 30, 2018

**REF** | ROCKFORD EDUCATION  
**FOUNDATION**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

*Bobbi Jo Blanton*

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2017-2018**

Brian Kraus, Chairperson  
Bobbi Jo Blanton, Vice Chairperson  
Kelly Timmer\*, Treasurer  
Joane VanLuven\*, Secretary  
Beth Dornan\*, Past Chairperson  
Jeremy Amshey  
Catherine Behrendt\*  
Sandy Buchanich  
Jenn Davis  
Jill Ericksen\*  
Scott Gerhardt  
Nancy Jesko  
Duncan Purvis  
Kelsey Schultz  
Amy Vancil

\*Retired June 30, 2018

### **EX-OFFICIO TRUSTEES 2017-2018**

Dr. Michael Shibley, RPS Superintendent  
Geoffrey Downs, RPS Board of Education  
Terry Hibdon\*, Teacher

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2017-2018**

Jill Silverman

### **NEW TRUSTEES 2018-2019**

Kristy Becker  
George Carroll  
Chris Gervat  
Leslie Poot  
Kelli Rose  
Mary Kay Shaver  
Sarah Reickard (Ex-Officio Teacher Rep)

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2018-2019**

Beth Meyer-Kraff

I would like to thank you for investing in the children of the Rockford community. Your generous assistance has provided necessary and valuable resources to our students, teachers, and classrooms.

Rockford Education Foundation is a powerful organization that makes a difference in the community by providing funding for educational opportunities, both basic and innovative. As we invest in the education of our students, we are enriching a generation that will advance and strengthen our community both socially and economically.

We believe that all Rockford community members should have access to the best educational tools and experiences. With this in mind, we support many academic and extra-curricular programs that help students maintain high self-esteem, achieve, and succeed.

As our amazing community has supported the Foundation, we have been able to empower teachers to help our children, strengthen our mental health through the Developing Healthy Kids program, strengthen special needs programming, and support STEAM education initiatives.

We are proud that the Rockford Education Foundation was able to invest \$90,000 through a three-year commitment (2017-18; 2018-19; 2019-20) to expand the Developing Healthy Kids curriculum to Rockford middle schools and continue the community education program and speaker series. The \$30,000 investment per year will help students thrive by providing access to resources related to mental health issues like anxiety and depression.

*As we move forward, we continue to concentrate on our goal of giving \$2 million dollars in grants to the Rockford community by 2021 to celebrate 30 years of success.*

I encourage you to donate this year and get involved to help the Rockford Education Foundation accomplish our mission. Please take a moment to read through the annual report and also visit our website to learn more about the Foundation's mission and vision. With your help we can continue to make a large impact on the Rockford community.

*Bobbi Jo Blanton*  
Chairperson  
REF Board of Trustees

---

# 2017-2018

## GRANT RECIPIENTS

---

### **FOUNDERS' GRANT 2018 -** RPS Middle School STEAM

### **COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS**

Early College Program (ongoing through 2021)  
Developing Healthy Kids Initiative (ongoing through 2020)

### **SCHOOL YEAR GRANTS**

#### **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary School**

Chromebooks in the Classroom  
Leveled Library  
Classroom Choice Books\*

#### **Belmont Elementary**

Great Walls of Tile  
Phonological Awareness Kits

#### **Cannonsburg Elementary**

Kindergarten Flexible Seating  
Morning Activities

#### **Crestwood Elementary**

Paddle to the Sea books

#### **East & North Middle Schools**

Digital Art Display (ERMS)  
Classroom Libraries (3) (ERMS)  
STEAM tool box (ERMS)  
Video production iPad Pro (NRMS)  
Classic literature collection (NRMS)  
Math Classroom SMART board (NRMS)  
Orchestra Electronic Tuners (NRMS)  
Circuit Playground (NRMS)  
RAM BOT robot (NRMS)  
Art Goes Digital (NRMS)  
Wireless Slate (NRMS)  
Earbud splitters (NRMS)

6th Grade Flexible Seating (NRMS)  
Boom and Wireless Mics (ERMS/NRMS)

#### **Lakes Elementary**

Storybird books\*  
Nine Square in the Air\*

#### **Meadow Ridge Elementary**

Kindergarten Flexible Seating  
The Amazing Shake  
PBIS House System  
5th Grade Flexible Seating  
Buddy Bench and Sports Equipment\*

#### **Our Lady of Consolation School**

Q-ball Classroom Mics  
Leveled Library  
ipads for the Classroom  
1st Grade Flexible Seating

#### **Parkside Elementary**

Great Walls of Tile  
Personal Space Place  
1st Grade Flexible Seating  
Rhyme & Rhythm Books  
Bat House Project\*

#### **River Valley Academy**

Flexible Seating\*

#### **Rockford Community Grants**

KDL Books on the Bus  
BAC Speed Stacks  
Preschool High Scope Curriculum  
Seniors Unlimited

#### **Rockford Freshman Center**

Study Skills Tool Kit  
Headsets

#### **Rockford High School**

Jazz Band Equipment  
Service Learning Library  
Rolling Mill Art Equipment  
Classroom Library for Reluctant Readers  
Books to Support Diversity  
Electric Quad project\*  
ATV project\*  
Mobile Videographer\*  
RC Planes\*

#### **Rockford Public Schools - District Wide**

Science Habitats (Elementary)  
LAMP Software (Special Services)  
GoPro (Elementary)  
Music Whiteboards (Elementary)  
Ukuleles (Elementary)  
Orchestra "Composer In Residence" (6th-10th)  
Battle of the Books New Titles (Elementary)  
Articulation Practice Cards (Special Services)

#### **Rockford Public Schools - Spanish Immersion**

Elementary Book Sets  
Kindergarten Daily Five Activities  
Middle & Elementary Choice Books  
Preschool Books

#### **Roguewood Elementary**

Renewable Energy Science Kit  
Classroom Libraries (2)  
Artsonia! iPad\*

#### **Valley View Elementary**

Hands-On Math Resources

\*Student Initiated Grant

UPDATE

# EARLY COLLEGE

REF continues to partner with Rockford Public Schools to support the Early College Program at Rockford High School. This innovative program assists Rockford families with the cost of college tuition, as well as prepares our future leaders for a successful transition to post-secondary education.

REF is committed to supporting the Early College partnership by providing the district with \$25,000 through 2021. REF believes strongly in assisting all students to continue their education to help them be successful in life.

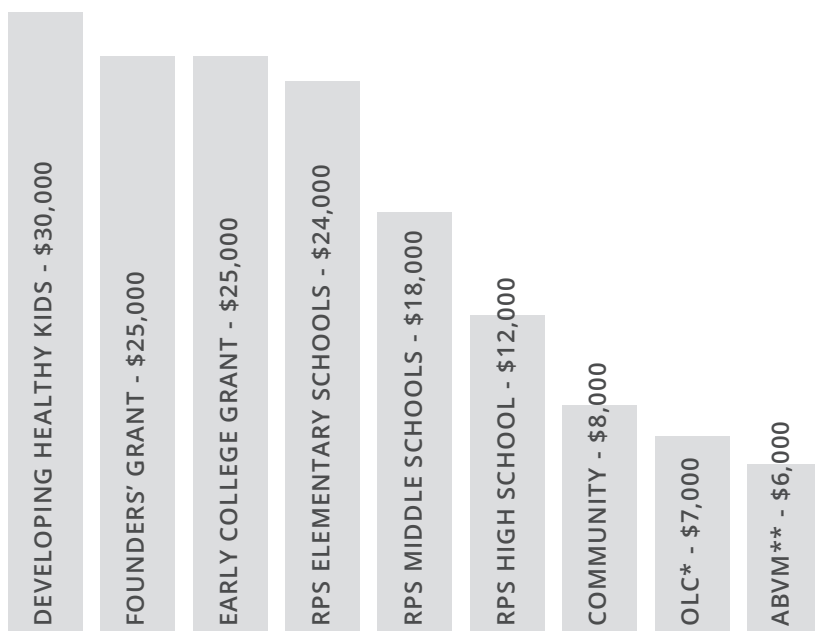
According to Lisa Jacobs, Early College Coordinator for RPS, "REF's support of this program affords students and their families the ability to benefit from achieving college credits while in their high school surroundings."



Many Rockford Education Foundation grants improve the climate for learning and help students thrive. Improving understanding of and access to help to address mental health issues like anxiety or depression is one way to create an optimal environment for learning in our community. That's why the REF was inspired to invest \$90,000 over three years to expand the Developing Healthy Kids curriculum to Rockford middle schools and continue the Community Education and Prevention speaker series. The \$30,000 investment per year for the 2017-18, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years will ensure students and families have access to these potentially life-saving programs.

"It is with the generosity of the Rockford Education Foundation that the RPS Developing Healthy Kids Campaign has been able to enhance and improve the quality of programming provided to our students, families, community and beyond. The collaborative partnership and allocated \$30,000 per year for three years has offered increased opportunities to expand our mental health awareness and suicide prevention mission at the classroom and community level. In the first year, we were able to bring in national speakers to present on the opioid epidemic, the importance of failure and the power of resiliency, and understanding our teenagers today. We also increased our mental health education by adding the Live, Laugh, Love Curriculum from the Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan at the 6th grade level, in addition to screening our students through the Youth Screen in grades 6-9th. For 2018-2019 we will increase our social-emotional curriculum at the elementary level and continue to bring in national speakers and experts for our Community Education and Prevention Series. It is with sincere gratitude to the REF that we are able to partner in Developing Healthy Kids." ~ Kirsten Myers, Executive Director of Special Services.

# OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT



# \$155,000

IN GRANTS AWARDED IN 2017-2018

\*Our Lady of Consolation School | \*\*Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary School



Just like a lamp provides light, Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP) illuminates the way for nonverbal students to communicate with those around them.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math

## 2018 FOUNDERS' GRANT

UNDERWRITTEN BY WOLVERINE WORLDWIDE FOUNDATION

Through the 2018 Founders' Grant middle school students in Rockford will have more opportunities to cultivate their passions for innovation and creativity. Materials purchased through this grant will enhance, inspire and promote design thinking in STEAM classes, computer science classes, and art classes. In 2018-2019 both North and East Rockford Middle Schools will add more 3D printers, poster printers, sewing machines, robots, digital cameras and laser cutters to each school bringing opportunities to students around makerspace, drones, 3D and graphic design, jewelry making and more!

"Being awarded the grant ignited curiosity and passion in the educators who created the opportunities funded by the grant. Excitement continues to grow in the students that are now taking advantage of the new purchases awarded. All it takes is a visit to these classes to see how access to STEAM programs is enhancing student experiences. Students are thinking out of the box, being asked to persevere through mistakes and failures, and to fully engage in the design thinking process. We are seeing students connect with learning in ways that they had not in the past and we thank the REF for their continuous support in making a difference for our students by supporting their learning, their passions, their entrepreneurial spirit and their curiosity."

~ Maggie Thelen



Thanks to an REF grant that funded a pilot program, some Rockford buses are rolling libraries! A Books on the Bus grant application from KDL - Krause Memorial Branch was approved to provide book holders so students can do recreational reading while riding to and from school.

photo credit: Charles Honey and School News Network

Thanks to REF, students at many of Rockford's elementary schools will learn the ukulele through the Uke-Can Do It grant.



When you were a kid, did you dream of building a robot? For Matthew Stargardt's students at North Rockford Middle School, that dream is becoming a reality.



UPDATE

## 2017 FOUNDERS' GRANT

UNDERWRITTEN BY WOLVERINE WORLDWIDE FOUNDATION

Elementary School Makerspaces are up and running! Supplies, Set-up, Training.... before the students got to explore, the teachers helped set up the spaces and had their own "play dates." The Makerspace classrooms were implemented in the majority of RPS elementary buildings over the past year and a half. These spaces are designed to infuse innovation and imagination to create collaboration and problem-solving skills for students.

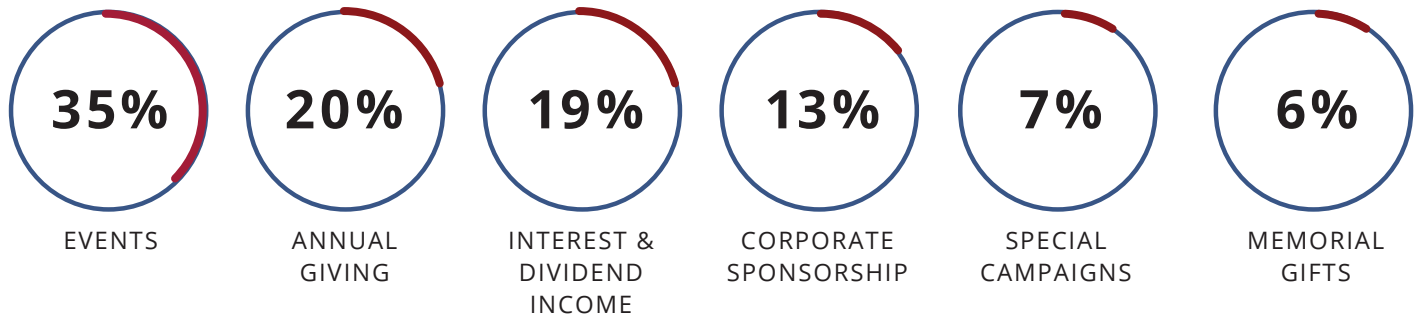


What a child learns in the first 5 years impacts not just kindergarten readiness, but their ability to achieve their full potential much later in life. High Scope preschool curriculum was awarded to ensure our youngest learners have the best opportunities to learn and succeed.



One of the most exciting accomplishments was providing many new titles for the annual Battle of the Books competition between Rockford area elementary schools. Congratulations to Meadow Ridge Elementary school for winning the 2018 competition.

TOTAL REVENUE OF **\$186,500** IN 2017-2018



Thanks to all who joined us for the first Aim for Education event. Held last fall at the Kent County Conservation League, it was a fun day that raised over \$23,000 towards grants in our community.



# The Taste

The Taste was REF's largest fundraising event to date thanks to our generous sponsors and participating restaurants! Local restaurants donated "tastes" or samples to attendees while they listened to fun music played by The Oxymorons and mingled with friends throughout Blythefield Country Club. Mark your calendars and visit REF's website to register for The Taste on April 13, 2019.



Rockford Public Schools and Rockford Education Foundation proudly partner to honor outstanding community members and past graduates during the biennial Hall of Fame Induction Dinner. The 2018 Hall of Fame inductees are Brian Morris (Cultural/Performing Arts), Trillium Hibbeln (Academic/Career Accomplishments), David Nagy (Service to Community), and Randall Sellhorn (Honorary Achievement - Contribution to Education in the Rockford Community).



---

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

---

### **\$25,000**

Founders' Grant Underwriter  
**Wolverine Worldwide Foundation**

### **\$10,000-14,999**

In Memory of Phyllis Grimm

### **\$5,000-9,999**

**GMBae Architecture + Engineering**  
**Integrated Packaging Machinery**  
Brian & Dana Kraus

### **\$2,500-\$4,999**

William & Bobbi Jo Blanton  
**Byrne Electrical Specialists**  
**Die Cad Group**  
**Independent Bank**  
**Meijer**  
**Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.**

### **\$1,000-\$2,499**

**Tim Anders REALTOR**  
**Andrews, Hooper and Pavlick**  
**Applied Imaging**  
**Chow Hound Pet Supplies**  
Douglas & Jeri Derks  
Ross & Beth Dornan  
Rick & Jill Ericksen  
**Durham & Mehling DDS**  
Charles & Sarah Ginebaugh  
Steve & Janet Gulis  
Ron & Nancy Hager  
Christopher & Nancy Jesko  
**J. Kelly & Associates**  
**JK Masonry, Inc.**  
**Lidral Orthodontics**  
Jason & Sarah Mahar  
**Middleville Tool & Die Co.**  
**Old National Bank**  
**Plante Moran**  
Nick & Joan Reichenbach  
Jim & Cheryl Scales  
Joel & Katy Scheffler

Neal & Jill Silverman  
Mike & Linda Tenbrink  
Jeff & Kelly Timmer  
Amy & John Vancil  
Kevin & Sarah VanderWoude  
Joane VanLuven  
Steven Workman

### **\$500-\$999**

Jeremy & Kelly Amshey  
George Andrews  
Dale & Tamara Arndt  
Matt & Kristy Becker  
Eric Bennett  
Jason & Jamie Berris  
**Blue Cross Blue Shield**  
Sandy & Gary Buchanich  
**George Carroll Insurance**  
**Communications by Design**  
**Community West Credit Union**  
Mike & Kristine Cuneo  
Brad & Jennifer Davis  
**Dean's Landscaping and Excavating**  
Michael & Sherryl Despres  
**Heartland Builders**  
**Infinity Homes**  
Tom & Lauren Hosford  
Luan & Angela Le  
**Morris Builders**  
Stephen & Lyn Munson  
Chuck & Mary Polonowski  
**R&W Krause Foundation, Inc.**  
Brian & Tracey Schamp  
Mark & Debra Schremp  
Mike & Connie Shibler  
**Spa Equipment Supply**  
**Sparta Chevrolet**  
**Swanson-Phillips & Associates**  
**Title Boxing Club Grand Rapids**  
**Towner Lund Group**  
**Ward's Hair Place**  
Jeffrey & Kirsten Weyerman  
Bob & Ann Wilson

### **\$250-\$499**

**Action Chemical**  
Jim & Joan Bogart  
John & Sue Burch  
Adam & Melissa Burkholder  
Lowell & Linda Bursch  
Scott & Elisabeth Corder  
David & Donita Coughlin  
Chris & Kim Cruickshank  
Carl & Karen Dufendach  
**Eidex**  
Ken & Claire Fawcett  
Scott & Amanda Gerhardt  
**Hoekstra Transportation**  
Michael & Jo Anne Holton  
Gloria Hosford  
Tim & Lisa Jacobs  
Eric & April Karas  
Rob & Kirstin Kellner  
Amy Noyes Klein  
Randy & Colleen Laufersky  
Jim & Anna Leitch  
John & Gretchen Mousel  
Bill & Ali Nash  
**Patten Monument**  
Duncan & Christina Purvis  
**Rockford Ace Hardware**  
Chris & Colette Smiley  
Paul & Sue Spindler  
Rick & Pam VandeKerkhoff  
Erin & John Wenger  
Thomas & Sarah Williams

### **In-Kind**

Addie Guzman  
Elise Davey  
Amanda Currie

REF

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

SAVE THE DATE

*The Taste*

Saturday, April 13, 2019

NEW FOR 2018-2019

Leave a Legacy at Rockford High School  
visit [rockfordEDfoundation.org/DonorWall](http://rockfordEDfoundation.org/DonorWall)  
to purchase a plaque

YOU MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE.  
THANK YOU!



Rockford Education Foundation  
Reporting Fiscal Year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

