

# REF

2023 - 2024

## Rockford Education Foundation Annual Report

### WHO WE ARE

Students, teachers, staff, parents, alumni, friends, and community partners—together, we are Rockford.

### MISSION

At the Rockford Education Foundation (REF), we're passionate about igniting educational dreams and driving innovation within the Rockford Public Schools. From vital resources to groundbreaking programs, we support our schools in every possible way.

### WHAT WE DO

Thanks to your generous support, the Rockford Education Foundation (REF) provides essential funding and grants to expand educational opportunities in our community. We fund innovative programs, classroom resources, and special projects that inspire and engage students and educators alike. Together, we're making a tangible difference—thank you for being a crucial part of our mission.



**47**  
GRANTS  
AWARDED



**12**  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED

# GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

At the Rockford Education Foundation, we're excited to celebrate another successful school year. This year, we awarded nearly 50 grants totaling over \$100,000. These grants have provided valuable resources and opportunities, helping our teachers and students excel. Thank you for being a key part of this success!



## LEGO EDUCATION

We were thrilled to support the Rockford Public Schools' STEAM program, reaching all elementary students from DK to 5th grade! The STEAM team has enriched the curriculum with LEGO supplies and training, covering gears, motion, measurement, problem-solving, and more. It's all about hands-on learning—no tech required, just pure, engaging fun!



## SMART TVS FOR LAMP PROGRAM

REF supported Ms. Deak and the Cognitive Impairment and Autism Spectrum Disorder programs at Rockford High School with a generous grant to purchase mobile smart TVs for their LAMP software program. These TVs will screencast LAMP, an app-based communication tool designed for minimally speaking or nonverbal students. This addition will enhance communication and help students participate more meaningfully in the classroom.





## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM GRANT

Eagle Scout, Allison, secured a REF student grant to create an outdoor classroom at Parkside Elementary School. This new space offers students from kindergarten through 5th grade a unique learning environment and opportunities to connect with nature. The students at Parkside are enjoying their outdoor lessons and thriving in this new setting! This grant is a great example of the exciting opportunities available for students through REF.

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## MARCH BOOK MADNESS

While many were caught up in college basketball brackets, librarians at ERMS and NRMS were gearing up for their own March Madness—the March Book Madness! They selected popular titles to compete in the ultimate reading challenge for March is Reading Month. REF was thrilled to support this exciting project at both Rockford middle schools with a grant to expand their book selections!

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## ENHANCING P.E. WITH REF SUPPORT

Students at Rockford High School are benefiting from a REF grant for new, rugged P.E. equipment designed to withstand daily use. This grant supports 240 students each day, including those in female strength training classes, with high-quality gear that promotes physical and mental well-being. REF is thrilled to contribute to improved student health and fitness with these valuable additions.

# ABOVE & BEYOND CAMPAIGN: GOAL SURPASSED!

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all our Above & Beyond donors! We are thrilled to announce that we not only met but exceeded our campaign goal thanks to your incredible generosity.

The Above & Beyond Campaign was launched in 2020 during a challenging time for our schools and students. REF set out to raise \$406,000 over three years to address critical needs identified by Rockford Public Schools, especially those intensified by the pandemic. Thanks to our community's remarkable support, we have achieved this goal.

The campaign has funded several impactful projects, including the Rockford Book Bus, which brings books directly to children; the Essential Needs Fund, providing essentials like food and clothing; the Instrument Fund, ensuring every student can join music programs; and mental health initiatives like the Counseling Dog program. This success reflects Rockford's incredible spirit of generosity and our shared dedication to supporting education.



22%



## THIS YEAR'S IMPACT

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



**\$440,000**

TOTAL REVENUE



**422**

REF DONORS



**47**

GRANTS AWARDED

## NEW SCHOLARSHIP PARTNERSHIPS

REF is proud to partner with Rockford Public Schools to manage scholarship funds. We've begun transitioning these scholarships to REF, and this year, we awarded 12 individual scholarships to graduating seniors from Rockford High School and River Valley Academy.

This new partnership highlights REF's commitment to supporting students' educational journeys. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous scholarship donors and look forward to expanding our scholarship portfolio.



**\$257,828**

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



**12**

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

## \$440,000 RAISED

IN 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

