

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION AWARDS \$31,700 IN GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHING PROJECTS

Palo Alto public school students will be introduced to organic gardening, motor design, monitoring invasive species and other thought-provoking projects thanks to a new round of teaching grants recently awarded by Partners in Education. The non-profit education foundation is giving nearly \$31,700 this semester to teachers who have sought funds for innovative educational fields of study.

Teachers and aides throughout the district applied for the highly sought after grants, which help pay for programs that normally would not be covered by district funds. A total of 23 grants were awarded, ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 to teachers from all levels and at schools throughout the district.

"There are a variety of reasons we have grant programs – to support innovation, creativity, and excellence in education. But they are also one of the few ways we can motivate and reward teachers. This is especially important in this economy," said Al Russell, a PiE board member who heads the teacher grants committee.

At Terman Middle School, an organic garden project will provide hands-on instruction in the areas of sixth grade botany and ecology and seventh grade biology. The electricity and motor invention project at Addison Elementary School will further fourth graders study of electricity, allowing students to design and build creations such as boats, carousels, fans, and planes using motors, wires, and batteries. Palo Alto High School students will use high-tech to monitor invasive species through the purchase of a Global Positioning System (GPS). The new GPS will allow students to avoid more labor-intensive and less accurate methods of tracking the spread of invasive plants in the Baylands and elsewhere.

Elisabeth Rubinfien, a classroom aide at Addison Elementary school, is among the new grantees. Rubinfien was awarded \$800 to revise and condense a textbook series on the Ohlone Indians. The money will allow Rubinfien to update a two-decades-old book used by children throughout the district.

"The Ohlone unit is a wonderful part of Palo Alto's elementary school curriculum. The main textbook -- written 20-plus years ago by a former Palo Alto teacher -- is comprehensive, but out of reach for some students. Also, there are now materials available in color that can enrich the text in new ways. The PiE grant makes it possible for us to adapt the textbook into new forms that will be more accessible and engaging for all kids," Rubinfien said after hearing news of her grant.

Fred Berghout, a science instructional supervisor at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School (JLS), received \$1,071 to refurbish many of the school's microscopes and Triple Beam Balances.

“It was more cost-effective and environmentally friendly for us to repair the scopes than to buy new ones. In addition, the optics in the scopes are good quality so, by repairing them, we have better scopes than we could afford to purchase in today’s market,” said Berghout. “Students will benefit greatly from the revitalized microscopes and triple beam balances. Thanks for the great news and all your excellent work on behalf of PAUSD.”

This is the 43rd round of grants awarded to Palo Alto Unified School District teachers. The grant program was established in 1987 by PiE's predecessor organization, Palo Alto Foundation for Education. In the past 22 years, more than \$1 million has been awarded to district teachers under the grant program.

PiE is a non-profit educational foundation dedicated to raising money for public education in Palo Alto. For more information about PiE, please visit www.papie.org <<http://www.papie.org/>> .

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