

Your Donations Make A Difference:

Foundation Grant Sampler, 2020 – 2024

2023-2024 School Year

Learning to Grow Tomato Plants

Mountain View Elementary School

The purpose of this multi-year grant was to establish an outdoor classroom and garden area where students will engage in hands-on learning across all subject areas, with a focus in science. The objective was to create a continuous project-based learning experience where all students at Mountain View begin by growing tomato plants. This project will extend past the classroom and into the community by having students continue to grow the tomato plant, take data, read their plant-focused book, and participate in "Tomato Tuesday" during the summer months from home. By the summer of 2025, an outdoor garden will be created with raised beds where additional fruits and vegetables will be grown. Students who are in the PETC program's extended year program will help maintain the raised garden beds for community members to collect produce to take home and enjoy. The hope is that this project will have strong "roots" and become sustainable for years to come.

Launching Central Fourth Graders Into Space

Central Elementary School

Fourth grade students and teachers launched into their Project Based Learning Experience with a visit from the Science Museum of Western Virginia. The science museum visited each fourth grade classroom and presented an overview of space as a part of their outreach program. In this PBL experience, students and teachers learned more about Earth, the Moon and the entire solar system. As a result, students were able to not only explore space, but to create interactive and engaging exhibits for their own Museum of Space that was visited by all students, teachers and staff at Central Elementary. This activity incorporated writing as part of the exhibits by creating a Google slides presentation, posters or notes for the students to use to deliver their presentations.

All Bears Bike

Central Elementary School

The purpose of this grant was to ensure that all kindergarten students had the opportunity to learn to ride a bicycle for at least the next ten years (the expected life of the bikes). The school was able to purchase twenty-four bikes, helmets, and pedal conversion kits, along with storage racks, teacher bikes, and teacher training to start a program to teach students to ride through their PE class. Since many of the students do not have this opportunity because of affordability or lack of a safe place to ride, this grant enabled the school to provide the training. The school paired this program with their One School, One Book program by selecting a book where the main character rides a bike.

Learning Through Play, Part 3

Natural Bridge Elementary School

This grant focused on acquiring contrabass bars (the lowest sounding instrument) and temple blocks (rhythm) to add to the current instrumentation at NBES. This grant completed the full set of Orff xylophones for the student body. The Foundation had given a grant for the purchase of instruments during the 2019-2020 school year. The instruments are being used by all students on a regular basis during music classes. The students have used them in multiple planned performances. These instruments will continue to be used for many years to come.

2022-23 School Year

Promoting 21st Century Skills Through Breakout EDU (2 separate grants)

Central Elementary School

Natural Bridge, Fairfield and Mountain View Elementary Schools

Breakout EDU is a program that gives teachers an innovative way to teach young learners the importance of collaboration, communication, and problem solving as a team to meet an end goal. The program creates an environment and situation that fosters problem solving, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. Using the Breakout kits, teachers have been provided an exciting way to teach and review concepts, and to challenge their students while also making instruction engaging and productive

teaching the soft skills needed to work with peers. This ultimately falls in line with the RCPS vision to produce students who are ready for the challenges of a changing world, and are capable of being productive and responsible citizens thanks to their ability to effectively communicate, problem solve, and work with others.

Muscles with Russell (Social Emotional Learning)

Central Elementary School

Dogs CAN teach! Thanks to donations to the Foundation, all 400+ students at Central connected with a well-trained friend named Russell who helped teachers in bringing out the best in children, including those with special needs. Grant funds purchased books and supplies for children that support their many language experiences with Russell, a therapy dog who accompanied the speech therapist twice a week through many classroom visits, interventions, and conversations.

Bring on the Boogie Boards!

Natural Bridge Elementary School

Boogie Boards, which are rewrite boards, were be used for the first time last year with each first grade student enabling interaction with the teacher and student through technology. The rewrite boards are a reusable writing tablet just for kids. By using these boards, students are able to learn new forms of technology which can increase their engagement, motivation and learning. Increased participation in class can lead to increased learning of necessary skills for success. These boards will continue to be used for years to come.

2021-22 Year

Plasma Cutting at RCHS

Rockbridge County High School

Learning how to plan and complete complex cutting procedures with automated technology is the forefront of modern manufacturing. Thanks to a successful grant request, students in the Manufacturing Systems class can now build marketable manufacturing skills with a technology that had not been available at RCHS: a PRO Plasma Cutting table. The technology has multiple beneficiaries and applications across RCHS Career and Technical Education. Just one example: it enables the Manufacturing students to take and produce custom orders from other CTE classes such as Auto Body Technology, thus advancing technical skills in a real-life entrepreneurial context.

2020-21 Year

Habitat Helpers

Central Elementary School

In midst of a global pandemic, students and teachers at Central found a way to care about local birds. In an ambitious project, 4th grade teachers paired with their 1st grade colleagues to create a memorable STEM project that combined language arts, engineering, technology, and science -- plus citizenship and kindness. Thanks to donors to the Foundation, teachers were able to purchase two bird suet feeders for almost 200 children as part of a peer-to-peer project in which 4th graders taught 1st graders about local birds and their needs. In addition to the school-based components, everyone participated in home-based backyard observations and journaling. The project spanned winter into spring and created a memorable learning community (and love of birds!) despite challenging times.

Next, it was time to visit the first graders and present our webpage. After the presentation, the first graders were given two suet feeders and two suet cakes along with one of the student-made bird identification pamphlets. We left the first graders with a challenge of observing what comes to their feeder in hopes they would like to visit the fourth graders with their findings. Two weeks later, on Earth Day, first graders arrived to share their bird journals. It was heartwarming to see their drawing and to hear their stories about their feeders. -- Teresa Torrence, CES gr. 4 teacher

How Healthy is Your Water?

Maury River Middle School

During the Spring of 2021 , most students were able to attend in-person school only twice a week, and some were learning completely virtual at home. To unite their learners, 6th grade science teachers developed a project-based learning (PBL) unit that connected students to science and each other through water quality testing wherever they lived. With a grant from the Foundation, the teachers created a lending library of simple, non-breakable test kits that enabled students to share and compare water quality data across Rockbridge County. The project connected students to their families, to their local creeks, and to hands-on meaningful learning. Added bonus: the project will continue to be an active part of their Grade 6 curriculum.