Aquaponics Provides Hands-On Learning to Ridgeview Kinders

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Arts Apprenticeships Provide Life-Changing Skills for Students

by Lauren Savage, Lane Arts Council

Earth friendly. Heartfelt. Brave. These words describe the artwork and experiences of students participating in the second year of the innovative and successful Arts Apprenticeship program managed by Lane Arts Council and supported by the Springfield Education Foundation.

In March, Lane Arts Council showcased 16 Hamlin Middle and Gateway High School students and their artistic mentors at Emerald Art Center. The event featured a live performance of “Lean on Me” and several examples of the power of visual arts for self-expression. Students also spoke about their experiences working with professional artists.

One student, Ali, struggles with cystic fibrosis, and while her hospitalization could have kept her from participating, her mentor, painter David CP Placencia, wouldn’t let that happen. David delivered art supplies to Ali and kept track of her progress via social media.

The night of the showcase, Ali shared her work and how painting helps her to process so many of life’s difficulties. In addition to learning art and music techniques, students are mentored about the business side of being an artist.

Ali was quite successful – she sold her first three paintings that night. Her principal and teachers beamed with pride and tears, but no one seemed prouder than Ali herself.

The Arts Apprenticeship program continues to empower students to build on their creative passions, fostering relationships to help students envision themselves in the professional world.
5th Gala Fundraiser is the Most Successful Yet

Last fall, about 400 people gathered at the 5th annual Night of 11,000 Stars to celebrate and support the nearly 11,000 students attending Springfield schools.

Held at Willamalane Center, the night featured innovative educators sharing information about their programs, funded by SEF donations. They shared opportunities to keep them engaged and challenged is a wise investment. This is an underfunded program and underserved population,” Ronnel Curry, SEF executive director said.

SEF works closely with district staff and TAG coordinator to ensure that our support inspires student learning. SEF funds go toward these and other TAG programs:

• Additional monthly “Learn Together Programs” that engage students and families with fun activities;
• Middle school geography bees;
• Summer engineering workshops;
• Destination Imagination; and
• Taking “Brain Bowl” teams to regional championships, which hasn’t occurred in years due to lack of funding.

Thanks to the success of this event, we are reaching and impacting the education of almost every student in the school district.

The night successfully kicked off the annual fund campaign, netting $105,000. A special thanks to our Guiding and Gold star 2015 sponsors Fred Meyer, Burrito Amigos, Kendall Subaru, Wells Fargo Bank and International Paper.


The SEF Grant Givers award A3 teacher Jim Olsen (holding sign) $2,000 that will connect the Delgani String Quartet to his music students.

Last fall, SEF awarded 24 innovative Education Grants totaling $49,060 and impacting 6,618 students at 14 schools. Since 2004, SEF has funded 246 grants totaling $308,000, helping to build bright futures for 32,000 students. These grants help increase participation, test scores and attendance while also recognizing teachers and educators who go above and beyond for their students. Awards are made on merit of the program and scored by volunteers without knowledge of which school, classroom or teacher is involved.

The Focus is published twice a year for donors, parents, Springfield Public Schools employees, educators, alumni and volunteers—supporters of Springfield Public Schools. To obtain an electronic version, please email ronnel@springfieldeducationfoundation.org.

Funding for Talented and Gifted Programs Expands with SEF

Springfield High School’s Marrachi del Sol performed at the 2015 Night of 11,000 Stars.

For the first time, the Springfield Education Foundation gave a gift of nearly $20,000 to grow and expand opportunities for the school district’s talented and gifted students (TAG). “Investing in our brightest children and providing them with unique
Funding for Talented and Gifted Programs Expands with SEF

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Aquaponics Provides Hands-On Learning to Ridgeview Kinders

by Kelli Warner, SEF Board Member

With full-day kindergarten, teachers now have the ability to introduce additional curriculum to bolster learning in science, math and social studies. With support from the Springfield Education Foundation, kindergartners at Ridgeview Elementary School are studying the water cycle and the life cycle through aquaponics! Teacher Treva Thompson was awarded an SEF Innovative Educator grant last fall to purchase an aquaponics kit. This has enabled students to see and learn how waste from the classroom’s five goldfish turns into nitrates and ammonia, which feed lettuce plants growing above the tank, and in turn purify the water and keep the tank clean! This hands-on project has ignited the students’ curiosity to explore, touch and analyze plant and animal life. The students also created a colorful hallway display to show what they are learning. What great lessons we help support!