



Golden Apple Foundation Awards more than \$60,000 for Local Classroom Projects

Golden Apple Foundation is pleased to announce the selection of educators who received a total of more than \$60,000 for classroom projects – a record high and \$18,000 more than last year! More than 250 grant applications were submitted this year, more than double last year’s submissions. Projects selected focused on STEM skills; literacy; special education; Social emotional and sensory needs; comprehension; early education and student engagement. All projects feature creative ways to encourage student achievement. These sponsors helped make these grants possible: Collins Aerospace, Meg & Rob Hodge, the Blazer Foundation, Jack Baumann Memorial, Walmart, Sam’s Club, the family of Ann Dooley and the Class of 2024.

- Chris Noble, Harlem High School/Harlem CUSD122; \$2,500 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Waste Less, Inject More” for students in manufacturing classes and the capstone engineering design and development course to design and 3d print high temperature polymers that can be used with plastic injection molding and to construct and test polymers as needed. Plastics waste created can be given new life filling student-created molds.
- Elizabeth Krampota, Auburn High School/RPS205; \$2,500 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Future Problem Solvers Club,” providing students the tools to analyze global issues and develop innovative solutions, funding workshops and competitions for students to develop a mindset of curiosity, gain feedback and thrive.
- Lori Granite, Rockford Christian Schools; \$2,500 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Continue Cultivating Coding with Cubelets” to expand the Cubelet collection with additional cubelets with different functions for ease of differentiation, while introducing new skills and coding opportunities.
- Christine Franklin, Olson Park Elementary/Harlem CUSD122; \$2,468 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Ozobots: Coding and Robotics” to provide students hands-on experience, problem solving opportunities, knowledge and interest through these hands-on coding robots.
- Chris Magee, RPS205; \$2,355.56 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “First Robotics STEM Festival” for three RPS205 schools to highlight the achievements of their first Lego League Explore and Discover programs. Students will be celebrated for their engineering designs and thinking. They will also engage in a design challenge workshop to design and build a movable object out of small motors, simple machines and common household recyclable products. Funds will also provide for hosting needs including awards and team festival t-shirts.
- Sarah Hall, Thurgood Marshall Middle School/RPS205; \$2,128.99 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Go Where the Science Is” to purchase a portable sink station with counter space and storage to help teachers deliver a full complement of science labs and give students access to all components of the science curriculum. The sink/water source can be used outside science classes for after school clubs and other classes and activities as well, providing more students access to this resource.

- Chris Magee, Guilford High School/RPS205; \$1,500 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “SeaPerch Remotely Operated Vehicles.” These kits provide students the opportunity to build underwater remotely operated vehicles. Skills promoted through this experiential project include measuring, construction (soldering, assembling, electrical wiring and the use of power tools), testing, blueprint reading, technical communication skills and leadership skills.
- Crystal Ellis, Stone Creek School/Kinnikinnick CUSD 131; \$1,271.92 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Tech-tastic Adventures: Empowering Young Innovators with Dash & Dot,” a hands-on, technology-driven initiative introducing students to robotics. Students will learn the fundamentals of programming while encouraging creativity and collaboration.
- Hannah Pals, Shirland School District 134; \$1,200 Collins Aerospace STEM grant for “Pi Day Pirates.” The Shirland Math Club/Team will write a book to read to younger students at an assembly on March 14, “Pi Day.” They want to inspire students through literacy to be excited about math and produce enough copies for every Shirland family as well as to share with the community (profits will be donated to a charity). They will learn about marketing, publishing, costs/profits, writing, pi and circles.
- Julie Gibbs, Maria Montessori at Marsh/RPS205; \$1,130.22 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Mathfacts Lab subscription,” an online platform for elementary students that targets math fact fluency in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using number strategies, visual patterning and a student’s own relationship with numbers rather than rote memorization and drills.
- Michaelle Jaeger, Brad Brown, Ramona Drozek and Benjamin DeWitt, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122; \$948.17 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Husky Hounds: Weather Watchers” to provide sixth grade students the tools and resources needed to create and broadcast their own weather reports, promoting STEM concepts, teamwork, critical thinking, technology use and problem solving skills.
- Jill Briscoe, Poplar Grove Elementary/North Boone CUSD 200; \$467.56 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for “Coding Critters Expansion” to accommodate larger class sizes so students can continue to work in pairs allowing more time for them to test their coding skills as they use coding robots.
- Nate Green, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122; \$2,500 special education grant from The Blazer Foundation for “Adaptive P.E. Equipment.” Adaptive equipment for students with disabilities will allow them to participate and progress in physical education classes. (e.g. wheelchair swing platform, wheelchair soccer pad, reusable adult swim diapers.)
- Jodi Graber, Parker Center/Harlem CUSD122; \$2,500 special education grant from The Blazer Foundation for “Enhancing Early Childhood Special Education through Sensory Play” so that 80 special education students can explore texture, sound and movement through sensory materials.
- Kiersten Swanson, IB at Conklin/RPS205; \$2,366 special education grant from The Blazer Foundation for “Materials for Special Education Students”: decodable readers, adaptive equipment and tactile support materials for 31 students with disabilities and IEPs. These tools help their resource teachers and general education teachers help students reach basic academic skills like reading and math.
- Robyn Stolze, Rock Cut Elementary/Harlem CUSD122; \$2,141 special education grant from The Blazer Foundation for “Real Books for Real Readers.” Flyleaf Emergent Readers will allow lowest readers to begin reading real books by learning just a few targeted letter sounds so they can read an entire book independently and to build confidence in reading abilities.
- Keegan Ray, Rockton Grade School/Rockton CUSD140; \$1,200 special education grant from The Blazer Foundation for “Connecting Voices: Empowering Non-Verbal Communicators.” These funds will empower non-verbal students or minimally verbal students by getting iPads to use as an

Augmentative and Alternative Communication tool. Includes training for parents and the ability to take the iPads home to incorporate communications at home.

- Valerie Baumann, Prairie Hill School/Prairie Hill CUSD133; \$2,500 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for “Thematic Decodable Book Sets” as an alternative to predictive text books to help beginning readers sound out words through decoding strategies rather than through guessing strategies to become successful independent readers.
- Addie Wilson, Marshall Elementary/RPS205; \$2,500 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for “Building a Sense of Belonging through Literature” to target the multicultural and diverse population in the second grade at Marshall, embracing their cultures, representing them in literature and teaching peers about their rich heritages. These books will bring awareness in others as well as an opportunity for students to see characters like themselves doing everyday things. They will help support the socio-emotional growth of all students to be inclusive, kind and empathetic to others.
- Jessica Buffo, Carlson Elementary/RPS205; \$1,306.08 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for “CKLA Extension Activities” to take fourth graders to Medieval Times to immerse them in the culture, history and values of the Middle Ages and increase learning and engagement. Students will get real world context to bring to life themes covered in class.
- Aubrey Barnett, Thurgood Marshall Middle School/RPS205; \$1,050 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for “Arts Integrated Literacy” to expand the traditional writing experiences by incorporating visual and performing arts into the curriculum. Students who are English Language Learners, have 504 or IE plans often benefit from alternative, hands-on learning tasks that foster their creativity and unique learning abilities. This unit will be diverse, equitable and engaging for all students.
- Amanda Becker, Auburn High School/RPS205; \$2,400 Golden Apple grant for “RPS World War I Day at Midway Village” to enhance learning by allowing students to experience history, not just listen to a lecture about it. Students will be able to ask questions of re-enactors and analyze artifacts in front of them that they otherwise would not have access to. Students also get voice and choice in learning as they choose which stations to visit at the event.
- Kara Kujat and Jodi Kinney, Durand Elementary/Durand CUSD 322, \$1,300 Golden Apple mental health grant for “Social Emotional Learning through Literature” to buy SEL literature and materials to foster class discussions and practice SEL skills discussed in lessons.
- Jennifer Bell, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122; \$450 STEM grant for materials from Collins Aerospace for a STEM based project, Engineers Without Borders, related to researching renewable energy resources, and understanding energy transformation and efficiency.
- Rohini Gupta, Harlem High School/Harlem CUSD122; \$450 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for digital camera, microphone and headphones
- Jelena Holcomb, STEAM Academy at Haskell, \$420 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for MakeDo Invent Kits
- Jessica Loy, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122, \$439.18 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for calculators, headphones, scissors and math games
- Jeff Doubek, Thurgood Marshall Elementary/RPS205, \$398 STEM grant from Collins Aerospace for a 3D printer
- Jazmin Rodriguez, Belvidere South Middle School/Belvidere CUSD100, \$450 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for books for a culturally representative class library for bilingual and EL students
- Abi Krebs, Rockton School District 140, \$450 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for language translator device, writing, reading comprehension and skill building centers
- Ericka Yancey, Pecatonica Middle School/Pecatonica CUSD321, \$443.10 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for books so all students have a copy for unit work

- Erin Fjelland, Cherry Valley Elementary/RPS205, \$441.45 literacy grant from Meg & Rob Hodge for books for phonics and literature comprehension work in culturally diverse classroom
- Gina Tuula, Whitman Post/Rockton CUSD140, \$415.10 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for books about racism, acceptance and civic engagement to encourage the love of reading, critical thinking, empathy and compassion
- Rose Fuentes, Ledgewood Elementary/Kinnikinnick CUSD 131, \$412.30 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for non-fiction books at grade level for culturally diverse EL students
- Chelsea Rawhoof, Pecatonica Elementary/Pecatonica CUSD321, \$340 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for handwriting rollers, cushions, timers and sensory tools
- Jenny Moss, Olson Park Elementary/Harlem CUSD122, \$338.38 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for books to enhance the digital citizenship unit in the library
- Andrea Sotelo, Winnebago CUSD323, \$337.50 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for books for the entire class for a unit about artists
- Christopher Klarner, Lincoln Middle School/RPS205, \$200 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for a headphone with microphone to use speech to text software and write stories, clay for unit work, fidgets and books of interest
- Molly Butts, Christian Life Schools, \$430 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for social/emotional needs themed books modeling positive behaviors and coping strategies
- Anna Lentini, Rockford Christian Schools, \$450 arts grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for gel press printing plates
- Brittany Carr, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122, \$216 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for a subscription for interactive learning platform Quizizz
- Paula Tesdorff, Rockford Lutheran Junior High, \$450 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for books to help strengthen nonfiction reading skills
- Susan Nicholas, Jefferson High School/RPS205, \$450 literacy grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for an interpreter hub and translator earbuds to increase the ability of ESL students to learn and flourish
- Ashley Banks, Washington Academy/Belvidere CUSD100, \$402.28 mental health grant from Meg and Rob Hodge for diversity and inclusion prompt cards, anger management workbooks, therapy putty kits, social emotional learning activities and games and sensory tools
- Haylee Bahnick, Cherry Valley Elementary/RPS205, \$450 special education grant from the family of Ann Dooley for feelings pillows, Legos and sensory tools
- Todd Anliker, Kinnikinnick School/Kinnikinnick CUSD 131, \$400 special education grant from the family of Ann Dooley for logic puzzles, floor cushions, Gimkit subscription, whiteboard erasers and sensory tools
- Alla Barkon, North Boone CUSD 200, \$447.45 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for yoga mats, cards and guides
- Jessica Carlson, Durand Elementary/Durand CUSD322, \$437.43 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for reading and English Language learner games
- Leticia Taylor, Poplar Grove Elementary/North Boone CUSD200, \$350 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for wobble chair feet and balance cushions
- Kaylyn Hill, Ralston Elementary/Harlem CUSD122, \$450 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for standing desks
- Orlando Smart, Roscoe Middle School/Kinnikinnick CUSD 131, \$421.30 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for kids puppet sets, task and activity cards, vocabulary builder cards and games
- John Polemikos, Harlem High School/Harlem CUSD122, \$110 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for access to the premium version of NaturalReaders.com to embed MP3 files into assignments, giving students read-aloud accessibility.

- Mindy Rice, Loves Park Elementary/Harlem CUSD122, \$230 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for Toniebox bundles, which provide an engaging, multisensory way to promote language development, literacy, and socio-emotional skills through a variety of stories, songs, and educational content
- Jennifer Fuller, Winnebago CUSD323, \$324 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for science books for special education students so all students can have an intact copy for unit work at their level
- Whitney Mohr, Rolling Green Elementary/RPS205, \$420 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for a stand-up magnetic design center, turn and learn magnetic gears and building engineering centers to help special education students understand cause and effect; increase communication with non-verbal students and students with communication difficulties; and increase students' exploration of toys that have multiple modes of use and develop more advanced play skills
- Cindi Reed, Cherry Valley Elementary/RPS205, \$409 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for dry erase boards, math boards, word problems kits for special education students to grow their knowledge of number facts and number sense
- Kari Graffy, Beyer Early Childhood Center/RPS205, \$438.68 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for sensory boards and toys, letter tracing board and calm down corner resources
- Cheryl Zarn, Harlem Middle School/Harlem CUSD122, \$120 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for Screencastify subscription to create read-alouds for special education students
- Bethany Rhodes, Prairie Hill School/Prairie Hill CUSD133, \$450 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for slant boards, pencil grips, twist and write pencils, large crayons and books to address special education students' writing needs such as pencil grip and letter formation
- Julie Gesin, Roosevelt Community Education Center/RPS205, \$245.41 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for non-fiction books written at the level of special education students
- Mary Hunter, Donald C. Parker Center/Harlem CUSD122, \$377 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for Apple iPad, case and gift card for apps to enhance learning opportunities for special education students by incorporating technology
- Allison Rhyner, Donald C. Parker Center/Harlem CUSD122, \$450 special education grant from the Blazer Foundation for snow fort building blocks, obstacle course, balancing stilts, wobbledisk and climbing dome so special education students can experience gross motor time
- Melissa Berg, Kinnikinnick School/Kinnikinnick CUSD 131, \$450 early childhood grant from the Jack Baumann Memorial for Story Champs, a multi-tiered language curriculum, and large story grammar icons
- Amanda Mortimer, Prairie Hill School/Prairie Hill CUSD133, \$428 grant from the Jack Baumann Memorial for Advancing Phonics word work set, magnetic letters, tiles and tiles for reading, phonics and spelling work
- Ingrid Hyde, Machesney Elementary/Harlem CUSD122, \$450 grant from Sam's Club for clay, adhesives and mounting products for mosaic mural being created as an inclusive welcome in the school's front hallway
- Rachel Huetson, Seth Whitman/Belvidere CUSD100, \$450 grant from Walmart for read-aloud packs, sound machine and calm down corner resources
- Emily Rehfeldt, Barbour Two-Way Immersion School/RPS205, \$259.46 grant from Golden Apple Class of 2024 for social emotional support resources including books, calming kits and fidgets
- Jeni Landsee, Belvidere Central Middle School/Belvidere CUSD100, \$450 grant from Golden Apple Class of 2024 for a virtual reality headset and apps for students to immerse themselves in art in low-risk interactions to increase engagement

Golden Apple Foundation opened the application process to enhance the learning of PreK – 12th grade students throughout Winnebago and Boone counties for projects that would go unfunded by school budgets. Since its inception, Golden Apple Foundation has provided funding for 422 projects totaling more than \$340,900. Grant checks will be presented to recipients at a reception starting at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7, at Anderson Japanese Gardens, 318 Spring Creek Road, Rockford. Kristin Smith, Vice President, Electric Power Systems, at Collins Aerospace will be presenting checks to teachers who received STEM grants. She will be available for interviews after the presentation.

Golden Apple Foundation inspires, celebrates and supports educational excellence in our community.

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