

Creative Instruction Awards Announced

We're pleased to announce the following projects receiving Creative Instruction Awards (CIAs) this year. Determining the projects to fund is never easy and this year's applications were many; our \$11,000 designated CIA funds could cover only about one-fourth of the amount requested.

Thank you to all the teachers who sent in applications! Watch future newsletters for pictures of students engaged in learning through these innovative ideas.

Please note: Due to limited space, only a short description of the project/program follows. We're working to refresh our website and provide more detailed information on these educational projects.

Early Elementary

Movement for Kids: "Fancy Footwork" – Movement activities enhance all types of learning. *(Beth Principe, Integrated Arts)*

Visual Learning with Document Cameras – Integrating technology expands classroom interaction and learning. *(All teachers in the Early El)*

Later Elementary

Increasing Social and Physical Skills in a Natural Setting – Recess play for special needs. *(Grace Harrison, Kathleen Kroll, Lenora Lee, and Amy Ludwig)*

River Waders II – Linking hands-on outdoor exploring with Life & Earth Sciences. *(Thom Coder, 3rd grade)*

Filling Buckets: A Year-Long, Life-Altering Project – Illustrating the "pay it forward" philosophy. *(Susan Hagenbarth, Lyndsay Wherley-Kleber, 4th grade)*

What Makes Michigan? Learning Michigan history through hands-on projects. *(Ann Siwula, 3rd grade)*

Cooking in the Classroom - An academic, social and life skills project. *(Grace Harrison, 3rd - 5th Special Education)*

Sensational Kids – Sensory tools improve learning in the classroom. *(Jason Osborn on behalf of all Later El Teachers)*

Middle School

Physics Concepts – Creative learning in this academic enrichment unit. *(Tom Smiddy, Kim Largen, Julie Brazeau, 8th grade Science)*

LanSchool Software – Increasing teacher-student instruction and sharing. *(Pam Cameron, Melinda Paige, Media Center & Technology)*

Books on CD – An alternative learning activity enhances learning. *(Melissa Karsen, 6th grade Language Arts)*

ArtTouch Program called Discovering Islam – Seven presentations explore the second largest religion in the world. *(Chris Kuthe, Nick Goetzinger, Elizabeth Fiske, Karrie Smith, 7th grade)*

The Case of T.P. Trickster – Forensic study using creative content and use of scientific method. *(Elizabeth Fiske, Nick Goetzinger, Karrie Smith, 7th grade)*

Van Gogh Explored – A traveling mural for student research and reaction. *(Kevin Hamman, 6th - 8th grade Art)*

Picture Books for Math – Literature to help explore math concepts. *(Kevin Dykema, 8th grade Math)*

Climate Change Thematic Unit Project – Studying the environment and helping our community in a unique way. *(Julie Brazeau & 8th grade staff)*

Gettysburg Address Exhibit - Students will learn about the Gettysburg Address and create a Civil War museum centered on this traveling mural. *(Christine Tannheimer, Dean Silber, Jeff Hattendorf, 8th grade History)*

High School

MHS Writing Center – Handbooks and guides for student tutors trained through WMU. *(Kyle Krol, Language Arts)*

Interpret, Debate, Write – Focus on content understanding/critical analysis and writing skills. *(Kirt Brown, AP World History)*

Salmon in the Classroom – Hands-on study of the life cycle of salmon. *(Kari Hoikka, Biology)*

Percussion Ensemble Equipment – Beginning a percussion ensemble. *(Bill Boswell, Middle School and High School students)*

The New York Times UPFRONT - Enhancing student comprehension, research, and writing using this magazine. *(Kimberly Kuhtz, Robert Sacksteder, Quentin Solis, English)*

Work-based Instruction – Students learn to run a business. *(John Fairchild, Special Education students)*

Graphic Novel Collection - Visual formats of fiction and nonfiction encourage readers. *(Sandie McGehee, Media Center)*

Discovering Truth: Literature Project – Prejudice and discrimination are topics explored using self-guided literacy strategies. *(Jennifer Nyberg, Kendal Pestun, English)*



Jolene Davey, kindergarten teacher, and students



Sandy McGehee, high school media specialist



Jason Osborn, 4th grade teacher and students

Early El Students Learn Bus Safety

through a grant from the Frank Farthing Memorial Fund

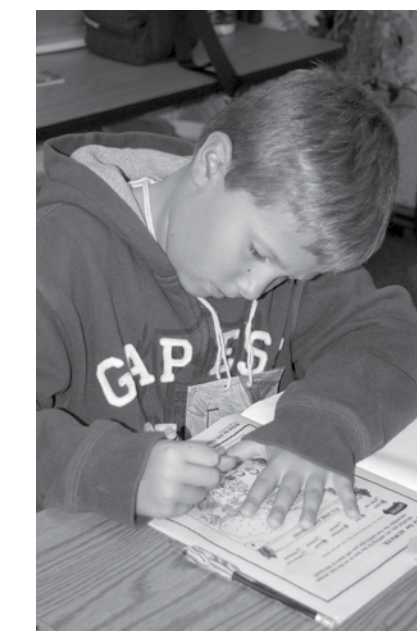
Each year, funds from MPEF contribute to ensuring student safety at Mattawan schools, thanks to the generosity of the Frank Farthing family and close friends. The \$500 grant is provided through an endowed fund honoring Frank, a school employee for 44 years who served as transportation director.

This fall, Early Elementary students viewed two new bus videos and received bus safety information packs, with items designed for each grade (kindergarteners- bookmark about bus safety, first graders - pencil with bus safety tips, and second graders- bus safety workbook).

Mrs. Farthing attended one of the special safety sessions and was happy to see the young students respond so positively to the new video as well as the interactive presentation by Peggy Biland, a paraprofessional and one of our school bus drivers.



Peggy Biland, Early El school bus driver, and Mrs. Edna Farthing



Second-graders explore bus safety with new workbooks provided through an MPEF grant from the Frank Farthing Memorial Fund.

Q&A: "How does MPEF grant Creative Instruction Awards?"

Teachers and staff complete applications in the early fall. Then, a committee, which includes MPEF board members and community volunteers, reviews and awards the grants in October.

What kinds of projects are funded? The review committee looks for new, original, creative ideas that will have a positive learning impact on students. Depending on the amount requested and the amount of available funding, the committee may not be able to fulfill all requests and may also award partial funding to some applicants.

Creative Instructions Awards (CIAs) are funded through community donations from our Annual Campaign and the holiday teacher recognition program – THANK YOU for making CIAs possible!

Who are the winners? Our kids!

Special thanks to everyone in the community – your donations make these awards possible!

Dr. Bird on Education and MPEF

Dr. Patrick Bird is in his first year as Superintendent of Mattawan Schools. He and his wife have two children and one grandchild. They live in the Mattawan community. Dr. Bird is familiar with our community, as he served as our High School principal for two years, from 1997-1999. He is pleased to be back and recently shared these thoughts with MPEF for our newsletter.

Dr. Bird, what are the most obvious changes you have observed about our schools since you were here ten years ago?

“Probably two things are most apparent to me. First, the district has continued to grow. Enrollment is higher, there are additions to buildings, and the number of portable classrooms has increased. This will be a challenging issue as we move forward.

“Second, there has been significant improvement and growth in the use of technology for both operations and teaching and learning. This is very impressive and something we will have to continue to develop.”

What has stayed the same or is similar?

“Education is a top priority in the community. You can see it in terms of involvement and participation. For instance, I saw and met hundreds and hundreds of parents at the building open houses. It is also apparent through the active and supportive Parent Associations in each building, all the way through high school.

“The Mattawan Public Education Foundation (MPEF) is also a perfect example; active and supportive adults who are passionate about helping our schools be the best they can be.

“The community support alone was, and is, a reason to return to Mattawan. I share that passion regarding the education of youth. I see it as a calling or vocation, not a job. I see that same passion everyday in the staff and parents who make it all happen for kids here.”

So is that part of the answer to “Why Mattawan”?

“Definitely. Other superintendent positions have become available over the last ten years. The only one I was interested in was right here, in Mattawan. I was very comfortable and challenged in my previous position, so there had to be a compelling reason for me to leave.”

Have you worked with an education foundation before?

“Not directly. There was no foundation in my prior district. I am so pleased, however, to be able to work with MPEF. Their role has been carefully and clearly established, and it is obvious that they are a vital part of our school community. They have become an important facet of our schools.”

How so?

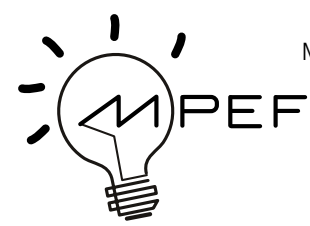
“Well, for one thing, what most people don’t realize is that when budget cuts are made at the state level, Mattawan loses a higher percentage of our operating revenue because we receive the lowest level of state funding. Most districts receive much more. That means our needs are greater and we have to rely on all the community support we can get.

“MPEF has a clear focus on the direct support of children, teaching, and learning. They also provide a very practical means for those who wish to support our children and our schools. Contributions are easily made and you know the money will be invested and spent wisely. Their mission is consistent with the mission of our schools. MPEF is part of what makes Mattawan a very special school community.”

Thank you, Dr. Bird, and welcome back to Mattawan!



Sheila Goetzinger, Human Resources Assistant for our schools and MPEF assistant secretary, welcomes Dr. Bird with an MPEF cap.



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mattawan public education foundation

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Upcoming Events Support MPEF

Popular Holiday Teacher Recognition Program is Back

Mattawan families may recognize their children’s teachers with a holiday donation to MPEF. These gifts go directly to support Creative Instruction Awards, so the teachers and students enjoy the benefits. It is truly the holiday gift that keeps on giving! Here’s how it works. Families donate to MPEF by December 9 through the Holiday Teacher Recognition Program, providing the names of the teachers whom they want to honor with the donation. MPEF notifies the teachers of the honor with a special note of thanks (no dollar amounts are ever mentioned). Watch for more details or ask at any school office.

High School Seniors! Apply Now for MPEF College Scholarships

With twelve college scholarships available to graduating Mattawan seniors, students are encouraged to review what’s available online through the school website or at www.mpef.org. Applications are due March 19.

Flu Shot Clinics at Medicine Tree Pharmacy

Thanks to everyone who has visited the Medicine Tree Pharmacy in Mattawan to receive a flu shot. The Pharmacy is donating 10% of the cost of any flu shot to MPEF, during a flu shot clinic or anytime you stop by.

MPEF Day at Mattawan Family Eye Care

Mark your calendars – on March 5, 2010, you can help MPEF with a vision exam/product purchase at Mattawan Family Eye Care. More details to come!

The Mattawan Public Education Foundation’s mission is to strengthen the community through funding unique educational opportunities.

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With thanks to our community



This season reminds me how thankful I am to live in Mattawan. The spirit and focus on helping kids is so evident in our schools and in our community.

In the past year, I can report that support for the foundation has remained solid and the number of donors has actually grown 16 percent! That’s pretty amazing in these tough economic times, and it

shows how our community values excellence in education.

Last spring we joined together and met a special fundraising challenge to honor our former school superintendent. We began an endowment fund that will contribute to the growth and education of Mattawan students for years to come through new programs in each of the four schools. Your donations to the James A. Weeldreyer Endowment for Building Positive Interpersonal Relationships made that possible—thank you!

Now, we are beginning our annual fund-raising drive to continue support for our existing programs: Creative Instruction Awards (CIAs), Professional Development Grants and the MPEF scholarships.

These programs continue to need your help! Without our annual fund-raising drive, the foundation cannot help our schools provide these valuable educational experiences. As we know, the state budget cuts are already affecting Mattawan Consolidated School.

Enclosed you will find a request for support (our annual fundraising letter and pre-addressed envelope). Please take a moment to consider a donation. Your contributions make the difference—you are the reason MPEF can support our schools.

Ron Kuhn, President, Board of Directors

MPEF is for kids!

Our Homecoming pre-game festivities at the MPEF table included welcoming 36 families new to Mattawan with free family football game passes. Each year we mail out invitations to all the new families (173 letters this year) and we partner with the school to provide free tickets to those who can attend. Free holiday greeting cards, designed by students and created by MPEF, were also distributed.



Mattawan spirit shines on the student faces representing MPEF during the homecoming parade! MPEF board members were happy to walk the route while tossing our signature “smartie” candies to the crowd.

Nicole and Cherrie Venema received “welcome” tickets for the football game from Roxine Kellogg, MPEF board member.

