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Unity Foundation Announces Teacher Grant Recipients

MICHIGAN CITY, IN —Unity Foundation of La Porte County is pleased to announce the recipients for the 2020-2021 cycle of small grants for Michigan City educators. These grants aim to support teachers as they find innovative ways to make learning possible for students – particularly during the pandemic.

Since the mid-1990s, three grant programs, established by caring donors who believed in teachers as the critical factor for learning, have awarded grants to over 1,000 teachers for projects of their own design.

“Our area schools are full of exceptional teachers who go above and beyond for their students. We are honored to facilitate these grant programs that provide for additional learning opportunities for local students,” said Shannon Walker, Unity Foundation Vice President.

The **Michigan City Education Foundation (MCEF)** makes grants of up to \$350 for Michigan City public and parochial schools grades K-8. Teachers may use their grants for hands-on or virtual activities in any academic area or life skills. MCEF was founded in 1994 when the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce, Mary Lou Linnen and Bud and June Ruby came together to empower teachers. This year’s recipients are:

- Bruce Parker, Barker Middle School, Virtual Vision Viewing
- Angela Dydo, Coolspring Elementary School, On the Write Track
- Leanna Smith, Edgewood Elementary School, Covid Classroom Supplies
- Teresa Pavloff, Edgewood Elementary School, T is for Trees
- Sheri Tuesburg, Edgewood Elementary School, Astonishing Authors
- Jamie Mullenhour, Knapp Elementary School, Prep for the Step to 7th grade
- Erica Ackerson, Krueger Middle School, Project School Wellness
- Ryan Labis, Krueger Middle School, Healthy Minds
- Laura Charpentier, Lake Hills Elementary School, NASA Mission - Europa Encounter
- Susan Shell, Marsh Elementary School, Resilient Kinders at Work Here!
- Brigid McKee, Notre Dame Catholic School, STEM in preschool
- Kate Bobillo, Notre Dame Catholic School, Bounce Kick Catch and Play
- Christine Kiser, Pine Elementary School, B.I.O. (Be in Optimal) Regulation
- Laura Wassilak, Pine Elementary School, If You Can't Breathe, You Can't Function
- Lexa Allison, St. Paul Lutheran School, One Block at a Time
- Melissa Bushnell, St. Paul Lutheran School, Holding Science in My Hand with MERGE Cubes

The **Barbara A. Carmen Memorial Endowment Fund** is dedicated to the memory of Barbara A. Carmen, a former Michigan City kindergarten and first grade teacher in both the public and parochial schools. The Carmen fund makes grants up to \$400 for items that will enrich curriculum or enhance teacher's ability to meet student needs. This year's recipients are:

- Erin Colvin, Barker Middle School, Building a Diverse Library
- Sara Conn, Notre Dame Catholic School, Let's Get Writing!
- Sara Rathbun, Notre Dame Catholic School, Junior Scholastic
- Christine Kiser, Pine Elementary School, The Resilient Heart Trauma Sensitive HeartMath Certification
- Robin Krassow, Pine Elementary School, Move Mindfully and Zones of Regulation

The **Teacher Innovation Fund** is a small grant program for Michigan City High School and La Porte County Career and Technical Education/A.K. Smith Career Center teachers and professionals. It is designed to support educational professionals as they strive to reach their students – especially during COVID. MCAS Superintendent Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins and former Michigan City Mayor Chuck Oberlie provided the idea and the seed money from their own personal funds for this program. Grants can be used to purchase equipment, supplies, tools for special programs or for ideas to enrich curriculum and enhance each professional's ability to meet his/her students' needs. This year's recipients are:

- Laura Daly, Michigan City High School, Audio for Inclusion
- Cheri Whitler, Michigan City High School, A Bridge between Film and Digital
- Amy Wojasinski-Labis, Michigan City High School, Healthy Culture
- Adam Goebel, Michigan City High School, Backyard Stoichiometry: this award is supported by the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce in memory of AK Smith graduate and long time Horizon Bank employee, Joe Mellen.

The next round of small grants for Michigan City Teachers will open this fall. All La Porte County teachers are eligible to apply for Unity's Community "Power for Good" Grants. The application period will open in mid-May. For more information on Unity's grant programs or to make a donation, contact Shannon Walker at (219) 879-0327, email swalker@uflc.net or visit uflc.net.

Since 1992, Unity Foundation of La Porte County has served donors, nonprofits and local communities. As La Porte County's community foundation, it manages approximately \$35 million in assets, administers more than 325 charitable funds, and has distributed more than \$21 million through direct grants and scholarships. The Council on Foundations has deemed Unity Foundation in compliance with all Indiana and national ethical and operating standards for community foundations. Unity Foundation's mission is to strengthen La Porte County now and forever by building permanent endowments; providing leadership; offering philanthropic vehicles for everyone; and, being a catalyst for social and economic vitality. For more information, please visit www.uflc.net or call 219-879-0327.

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