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Unity Foundation Announces Michigan City Area Teacher Grant Recipients

MICHIGAN CITY, IN —Unity Foundation of La Porte County is pleased to announce the recipients for the 2021-2022 cycle of 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. This year's group of recipients is receiving more than \$10,000. Funding assistance for this year's grants was also provided by the Christian J. Nickels Family Fund.

"Our local schools are full of exceptional teachers who go above and beyond for their students. Unity is 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** provides grants for Michigan City public and parochial elementary and middle schools. 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, schools and project titles are:

- Erica Ackerson, Krueger Middle School, In a Pickle
- Kate Bobillo, Notre Dame Catholic School, Gather the Mud and Collect the Mulch, it's Time to Create!
- Barbara Brandon, Notre Dame Catholic School, Bucket Blast
- Ashlyn Combs, Edgewood Elementary, Bookflix: Yes We're Still Reading
- Angela Dydo, Coolspring Elementary, Solving Problems to Help Others
- Jill Grabowski, Krueger Middle School, World Citizens Unite
- Kathleen Gushrowski, Barker Middle School, No Time to Waste
- Katie Haughtington, Marsh Elementary, Poetry Café
- Meg Kearton, Notre Dame Catholic School, Art Supplies
- Kelli Kelly, Marsh Elementary, Let's Get Ready to Kinder!
- Ryan Panos, St. Paul Lutheran School, Hydroponic Tower Garden Growing
- Laurie Rockensuess, Edgewood Elementary, "Drums Alive" project

- Susan Shell, Marsh Elementary, We Like to Move It, Move It!
- Michelle Sickles, Sheri Tuesburg, Ashlynn Combs, Edgewood Elementary, Reading is LIT (Learning Ignites Thinking)
- Leanna Smith, Edgewood Elementary, Reading/ELA Independent Centers
- Kelly Tokoly-Rothermel, Barker Middle School, The Art of Chromebook Photography: from Selfies to Self-Portraits
- Mary Wellinski, Laura Lohse, Kathy Moskovich, Queen of All Saints Catholic School, Providing Xtra Math
- Mary Wellinski, Queen of All Saints Catholic School, Putting Books in Students' Hands

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 for items that will enrich curriculum or enhance a teacher's ability to meet student needs. This year's recipients, schools and project titles are:

- Kelly Benson, Edgewood Elementary, Calming Corner
- Kristal Chenault, Marsh Elementary, Poetry Café
- Sara Conn, Notre Dame Catholic School, Technology Plus Writing = YES!
- Jill Grabowski, Krueger Middle School, Taming the Trees
- Stephanie Jones, Pine Elementary, Emotion Regulation with Sensory Supports
- Kelly Tokoly-Rothermel, Krueger Middle School, Putting the "A" in SEL = SEAL: Social Emotional Art Learning

The **Teacher Innovation Fund for Michigan City Area Schools** is a 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, schools and project titles are:

- Beau Bruemmer, MCHS, History of Rock and Roll- A Flashback in Time
- Susan Cleveland, MCHS, Fiber Art: Weaving on the loom
- Crystal Freeman, La Porte Co. Career & Technical Education A.K. Smith Career Center, Garden of Herbs
- Kristen Freitag, MCHS, Keeping Students "Charged UP" for school: this award is supported by the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce in memory of A.K. Smith graduate and long time Horizon Bank employee, Joe Mellen.
- Adam Goebel, MCHS, Environment in a Jar
- Rachel Pauer, MCHS, Classroom Greenhouse
- Danielle Reed, MCHS, Counselor Corner
- Cheri Whitler, MCHS, DIY Tshirts
- Amy Wojasinski-Labis, MCHS, Comfy Learning

The next round of grants for Michigan City Teachers will open in summer 2022. All La Porte County teachers are eligible to apply for Unity's Community "Power for Good" Grants. That application period will open in late spring 2022. For more information on Unity's grant programs or to make a donation 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 over \$44 million in assets, administers more than 325 charitable funds, and has distributed more than \$22 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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