

PRESS RELEASE

March 7, 2008

The Avon Education Foundation (AEF) announced its 2007-2008 grant recipients during its Prize Patrol presentations on Friday, March 7.

Avon High School (AHS) Journalism teacher Melissa Mirabello's application for \$11,040 to pilot a town-wide television station, "Avon TV," will be funded in part by the 2008 UNICO Grant. This is the largest award the AEF has made since its founding in 2003. The project will create a high quality television broadcast with students drawn from AHS journalism classes. Opportunities for wider community involvement are significant, and it is expected that high school sporting events, concerts and competitions as well as town meetings may eventually be broadcast via the community access channel.

AHS World Language teachers Peter O'Sullivan (Latin) and Claudine Rose (French) received \$10,000 to outfit a Mobile Language Lab. At present, the high school has no language lab and the only technology deployed to world language acquisition is cassette tape recorders. Under this project, students will use 80GB video iPods to watch and hear speakers in the target language as well as to record their own speech for evaluation by teachers. It is estimated that a mobile language lab can meet the needs of students for about 10% of the cost of a traditional stationary lab.

AHS science teachers Michael Marella, Janet Loynes, Mark Burgess, Scott Percival and Scott Tinker partnered to receive \$6,048 for "It's Time to Learn...Pass the Remote!" This project, also funded in part by the 2008 UNICO Grant, will pilot Technology-Enhanced Formative Assessment (TEFA) using a classroom response system (CRS). The science teachers attended a workshop and visited a lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to learn about this new technology and see it in action. Four earth science and chemistry classrooms will be outfitted with devices that will be used to foster classroom discussion and gain immediate feedback on student comprehension of the material being taught.

First grade teachers at Pine Grove School (PGS) and Roaring Brook School (RBS) collaborated to develop a new scientific inquiry program investigating the life cycle of frogs. RBS teachers Lisa Fenn and Laura McDonnell with PGS teacher Erin Dorsey were awarded the 2008 Avon Junior Women's Club Mini Grant for their project "Leaping into Learning." The Roaring Brook Nature Center will provide support to the program, too. The project will culminate in a "Swap and Hop Day" when all first graders in Avon will gather to share results and release their former tadpoles into the wild.

Laura McDonnell also received a Mini Grant of \$692 through the generosity of an anonymous donor wishing to honor Larry Sparks, now Assistant Principal at RBS. Her project, entitled "Fluency in Motion," will assess and encourage reading fluency in first graders through the use of Reader's Theatre audiobooks.

Altogether, the grants being awarded at this time total \$29,280. Since its inception, the AEF has awarded more than \$102,000 to 40 projects to create opportunities for inspired teachers and students. The Avon Education Foundation works with the Board of Education, the Avon Public Schools and the Town of Avon to support innovative programs that are beyond conventional academic funding from the Town and other public sources. The Foundation depends entirely on the generosity of its donors and volunteers to achieve its mission to improve the quality of public education for all residents of Avon. Join the AEF at the Avon High School 50th Anniversary Gala on Saturday, April 12 at Avon Old Farms Hotel which they are co-sponsoring with the high school Parent Teacher Organization. Learn more about the Avon Education Foundation and download the gala reservation form on its website, www.avonedfoundation.org.

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