

***For Immediate Release***

## **MATH, MUSIC, AND TECH SCORE SCHOOL GRANTS Total WSVEF/Partner Funding Nears \$350,000**

Math, music, and technology oriented programs are getting a boost in the local schools. The White Salmon Valley Education Foundation (WSVEF) recently awarded six programs a total of \$20,000 during its Winter Granting Cycle, bringing total Foundation funding to nearly \$350,000 in five years.

“This was one of our hardest application rounds yet,” said Peggy Durkee-Neuman, Chair of the WSVEF’s Grant Committee. “We had seven applications totaling more than \$34,000. With only \$20,000 to give, the Grant Committee had some tough decisions to make.” In the end, six programs received some, or all of what they requested.

The largest grant, \$5,795, went to the Electric Car program at Columbia High School. This highly successful course allows participants to design, build, and race electric cars in the Electrathon American Racing Series. Instructors say the program experience in developing alternative energy products not only stimulates students’ interest in learning, but prepares them for well-paying jobs in engineering and technical trades.

The next largest grant went to the math program at Whitson Elementary School. “Math Behind the Math” received \$5,275. The program targets highly capable 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics students. They will conduct project-based

exploration of how math works in the real world, then present the projects to their peers at the end of the school year. The program will also be used as an observation and training ground for other teachers.

Columbia High School will receive \$2,750 to purchase interactive white boards for Special Needs Instruction. Educators have found that interactive whiteboards affect learning in several ways, including raising the level of student engagement in a classroom, motivating students, and promoting enthusiasm for learning. They also support many different learning styles and intelligences. While many classrooms in the district now have the interactive boards, this grant will provide the first for Special Needs students at CHS.

Henkle Middle School received the largest amount of funding, with grants for three programs. HMS's Highly Capable Program (HCP) will combine \$3,250 from the WSVEF, with state funds to provide 80 minutes of instruction per week for HCP for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders approximately 30 weeks per school year. Students will participate in enrichment opportunities that focus upon STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) curriculum activities. Projects include a National Mathematics Olympiad competition, and Project Invent Team activities. They are aimed at challenging students beyond regular curriculum, building teamwork, and fostering creative thinking.

An additional \$1,950 goes to HMS for Technology for Art Instruction. Technology equipment in the HMS art room will be updated with an interactive projector and standard whiteboard. The goal of the project is to increase student

learning and engagement by providing superior visual aids and tools for presenting works of art for discussion, critique, and instruction.

Henkle Middle School will also receive \$1000 to cover the cost of musical instrument repairs and maintenance. The school owns 35 band instruments, which were purchased through a previous WSVEF grant, for low-income students to use during the school year, allowing the inclusion in band of children who otherwise would not be able to participate.

In addition to these grants, the WSVEF is pleased to announce new funding provided by community partners, which the Foundation was able to help facilitate. Insitu Inc./Boeing has donated \$7,850 to help support the highly successful Electric Car program at Columbia High School, as well as \$3,850 to support Robotics at Henkle Middle and Whitson Elementary Schools. And ICE recently donated a lathe and mill to Columbia High School, with a value of approximately \$11,000. Students will use the lathe and mill to learn machining skills that are invaluable in most industrial and agricultural occupations.

The WSVEF has also been successful in securing additional funding for the Mariachi Band at Columbia High School. With generous support from the Lee and Karen Fairchild Fund of the Gorge Community Foundation (\$1,600), and the Joan Burchell Fund of the Gorge Community Foundation (\$1,000), additional instruments will be purchased allowing for greater student participation.

With the recent round of grant awards, the WSVEF will have provided over \$260,000 in funding through its regular granting process to schools and students in the White Salmon Valley School District, plus an additional \$85,000 in external grants and pass through or encumbered donation of cash and equipment, for a grand total of \$348,000.

“For a community of this size, that is an amazing number,” said WSVEF Board President Sue Davis. “We are so fortunate to be part of a community that puts such a high priority on education. And we are proud to be able to contribute to the future success of all of our children.”

The WSVEF is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing the quality of public education within our community by creating a stable source of supplemental funding for curriculum enhancement and investment in our teachers. At least 25% of every donation goes to the WSVEF’s endowment fund, which will allow for continued grant funding into the future. For more information, or to make a donation, visit [www.wsvef.org](http://www.wsvef.org) or call (509)493-1175.

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