



# NEF NEWS 2020-2021

NORTHAMPTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 44 · NORTHAMPTON, MA · 01060 · WWW.NORTHAMPTONEDUCATION.ORG

## NEF HIGHLIGHTS

### 2019 - 2020 School Year

- Our Annual Appeal and the Northampton Adult Spelling Bee raised \$35,000 for the 2019- 2020 school year. We awarded \$25,000 to fund 12 projects for Fall 2019. Because of sudden school closures and subsequent remote learning, we are extending the grants awarded for Spring 2020 for use in the 2020-2021 school year.
- The Support Our Schools Book Fund awarded \$21,716 to Northampton's schools to purchase books and educational materials. These funds will also be rolled over to the 2020-2021 school year.
- The NEF Endowment awarded \$50,075 for the 2019-2020 school year, with an additional \$5,800 for school years to follow. These funds will also be rolled over.

## President's message

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

A year ago, we wrote to you with the exciting news that the Northampton Education Foundation had raised 75% of our goal toward a million dollars for our Endowment Grants. We reached that goal before 2020 began and thank goodness for that. Our mission has always been to fund projects and programs that expand educational opportunities, foster creativity, and enhance academic experiences in Northampton's public schools. This year, we are setting off into uncharted territory, and this journey will call on our teachers, students, and community to work together creatively.

Several of our exciting grants planned for the Spring 2020 semester had to be revised or delayed due to the pandemic. The NEF assured grant recipients that their funds would be available when they were needed and worked quickly to fund new grants. The Endowment Fund underwrote eight weeks of Improv classes for grades 1-8. Held over Zoom, these fun interactive sessions were a summer lifeline for students who missed their friends and classmates. More detail about our Endowment Grants, classroom grants, and school library grants is found in this newsletter.

To meet the dynamic needs of this particular year, we have added a rolling deadline for Small Grant applications. New ideas and necessities are guaranteed to arise as the school year gets underway, and we need your wholehearted support to give us the ability to bolster our beloved school community when it counts the most. Nothing about this era is normal, but we are confident that with generous friends like you, the NEF and our schools will come out of this stronger and more innovative than ever. Thank you for helping us support our public schools on this voyage into the unknown.

*With warm wishes,  
Lisa Papademetriou and Francie Lin, Co-Presidents*



*Teachers with love and commitment sent out beautiful videos to students after school closures in the spring.*

“Nothing about this era is normal, but we are confident that with generous friends like you, the NEF and our schools will come out of this stronger and more innovative than ever.”

# Thank You NEF Annual Fund Donors!

*The following donors gave to the NEF Annual Fund from September 2019 through August 2020. Annual Fund dollars underwrite the Small Grants to Teachers program as well as our yearly administrative costs. Thanks for your generous support of NEF and our schools!*

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# The NEF Endowment Fund

## Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We are forever grateful for your incredible generosity in helping us exceed our \$1 million goal with \$1,064,597 gifted and pledged to the NEF Endowment Fund by the end of 2019. With this success, the NEF Endowment will fund larger multi-year grants to all Northampton schools forever, solely from the interest generated by the Endowment. Hopefully, you also received the Celebratory Endowment Newsletter we sent out in the Spring.

This campaign attracted widespread support from local banks, businesses, and institutions, as well as many families with children in the schools, alumni and individual community members who joined in recognizing the long-term value of a vibrant public education system. Since its inception in 2002, the Endowment, with its now seven Named Funds and Legacy Circle, has raised well over \$2 million and since 2007, has awarded over \$700,000, including \$65,000 this year, to the benefit of every public school student in the Northampton District schools.

Thanks to your support, the NEF Endowment is poised to expand its grantmaking and its commitment to Northampton's public school students and teachers. We are presently organizing the new and enhanced Distribution plan we envisioned, and that propelled the Campaign. Please stay tuned!

Given the conditions of the present Pandemic we are also in the process, and making every effort, to streamline the Endowment's ability to fulfill our mission in a timelier fashion with immediate requests now being considered.

With your continued generosity and vision the Endowment will continue to blossom and be the permanent private non-profit resource to support all Northampton District public school students.

**To learn more about the Endowment:**  
[northamptoneducation.org/endowment-grants](http://northamptoneducation.org/endowment-grants)

**To donate:**  
[northamptoneducation.org/donate-to-nef](http://northamptoneducation.org/donate-to-nef)  
and choose NEF Endowment Fund  
from the drop-down menu.

## NEF Endowment Awards for the 2020-2021 School Year Total \$64,150

*School closures in the spring of 2020 and remote learning in the fall  
have affected the application of these grants.*

**Grow Food Kids:** This ongoing project helps students develop positive relationships with food by teaching basic cooking skills, nutrition, and a deeper understanding of where food comes from. Grow Food offers hands-on experiences to students at each of the four Northampton elementary schools in the classroom and on field trips to Crimson & Clover Farm and our Community Garden and Giving Garden. This is the third year of a three-year grant.

**Live Steam:** Students in the performing arts programs at NHS will be exposed to and master the advanced technologies used in their disciplines and will be introduced to popular forms of expression which exist outside traditional instrumental, vocal and theatrical curricula. Two courses will be developed in this 3-year program. **Music Technology and Sound Recording** will teach students musical composition and recording. On the Theater and Film side, **Production Management** will provide guidance and training to sound engineers, lighting designers, stage managers and producers for live performances. This is the third year of funding for this grant.

**Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary:** Arcadia staff will work with teachers and students in all 4th and 5th grades to explore alternative energy, composting and other nature-based climate challenge solutions. The grant will also enable teachers in those grades to receive professional development. All students will have the opportunity to take field trips to Arcadia. This is the second year of a two-year grant.

**Creative Coding:** Holyoke Codes will work with elementary school staff from 2nd and 4th grades to provide innovative curriculum and teacher training in computational thinking and computer science using the coding program **SCRATCH** to build skills and concepts aligned with the new Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Standards.

**Visual Thinking Strategies:** Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is an innovative discussion-based art-looking practice that fosters collaborative, community-building dialogue. VTS focuses initially on visual art and employs carefully crafted questions and subtle techniques to guide conversations, offering a way to incorporate art into classroom curriculum seamlessly while also emphasizing deep listening and responsive teaching practice.

**Zoom Improv:** This program was created to extend improv programming to students during the pandemic. Programs of four weekly sessions were held in the spring and summer to students who enrolled. Efforts were made to partner with school adjustment counselors to reach out to all students. The program is continuing this fall without NEF funding. Every workshop includes warm-up exercises, scene work, and theater games that are geared for the specific age group.



# 12 SMALL GRANTS TO TEACHERS AWARDED

The Northampton Education Foundation approved funding of \$24,994 for the following projects for the 2019-2020 school year. Many will be carried over for the 2020-2021 academic year.

## The Wonders of Water, Year 2 \$3000

BSS

Nicole Bunnell, Mary Demerath, Laura Beltran

Second graders at Bridge Street connect with nature and science at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary by conducting environmental activities on aquatic ecology and water related topics. Students will participate in interactive learning of the water cycle, watersheds, and aquatic ecology.

## Establishing and Embedding Core Values \$1000

BSS

Jennifer Dieringer, Beth Choquette

This project supports school-wide community building and the social emotional curriculum with two interwoven components. First, Heidi Haas, a child therapist, teacher and NPS facilitator and consultant, will facilitate school-wide workshops with students to brainstorm and identify BSS social and civic core values. Second, the project will engage a local experienced graphic designer to weave the student-identified values into the fabric of school life by incorporating them into a new BSS logo.

## Special Needs Resource Room Enrichment \$1000

JSS

Kathie Bredin, Heidi Anderson

This project will enhance the upstairs resource room to make it an inviting and stigma-free environment that can better accommodate the learning experience of upper-elementary students, particularly those who have special needs in the areas of sensory processing, attention-deficit disorders, and socio-emotional and behavioral regulation challenges.

## Sensory Pathways for School Hallways \$1000

Leeds

Jo-Anne Inrator, Kate Burt, Sarah Haugen

By adhering pre-made sticker pathways to the hallway floors in the kindergarten-first grade, second grade, third grade and fourth-fifth grade wing, this project will create four spaces where students will have the opportunity to hop, step and jump their way to a "Brain Break" when needed.

## Meadowbrook Project \$2200

Leeds

Holly Taylor

Once a month speakers from the community will come to the Meadowbrook Community Room to talk to caregivers on issues such as ADHD, parenting tips, social media, community agencies, etc., and provide resources and support for the parents and caregivers of our students. While caregivers are meeting, teachers will provide students integrated literacy activities. Two lending libraries, one for each end of the apartment complex, will be built and stocked to provide an ongoing source of books for children.

## After School Partnership \$3000

RKF RR

Rachel Dworkin, Netanya Ortiz, Sarah Madden

Ryan Road teachers will work with the Northampton Housing Authority Resident Services Coordinator to offer a twice-a-week teacher hour after school at Florence Heights. A Ryan Road teacher or ESP will be in the community room with Ms. Ortiz to offer homework help or engage students in other extracurricular activities to support what they are learning in the classroom. Kits will be developed with literacy, math, and social/emotional learning activities.

## 1770s Northampton: Living History \$2969

All Elementary Schools 3rd Grades

Kim Gerould, Paula Clearly, Carol Ruyffelaert, Joan Cameron, Renée Bachman

Third grade students will take on a real person who lived in Northampton during the 1770s. Through their character's perspective, they will learn about the history of the era: daily life, growing tensions with England, the precursors to the American Revolution, and then the actual war with England. Students will keep a journal in their character's voice in response to the news of the time.

## Virtual Reality \$2400

JFK

Will Bangs, John Crescitelli, Laura St. Pierre, Anna Arabian

This grant funds virtual reality headsets in a new and innovative approach to teaching and learning that is meant to dramatically increase student engagement and learning. All sixth grade social studies teachers will use this in class to teach about culture, geography and history during units on Ancient Egypt, Latin America and Africa. Teachers will use professional development time to learn how to integrate the VR headsets into the current curriculum.

## Trout in the Classroom \$425

NHS

Jamie Anderson

Working with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife this project will raise awareness about conservation of resources and support for native species such as brook trout. Students will incubate trout eggs in a classroom fish tank, chart trout development and participate in a release into the Mill River in the spring.

## Coffee Cart \$2000

NHS

Kate Burt, Christina Kadzik, Kristen Zottali

This grant funds the creation of a small coffee cart business run by high school special education students for teachers and staff. The students will learn and execute all necessary skills needed to independently operate the coffee cart business at Northampton High School. The business is intended to become self-sustaining and expand to serve students as well.

## Adaptive Music Program for GOALS Students \$1500

NHS

Marianne Lockwood, Gino Roman

This grant funds an adaptive music program for GOALS students, to be taught by The Community Music School of Springfield's Adaptive Music Partnership (AMP). This unique enrichment opportunity will help students to build their social capital, increase their social/emotional and academic development and gain more confidence and skill so that they may access the high school and community offerings more readily.

## Creating the Good: Translating the History of Genocide into Civic Engagement \$4500

JFK/NHS

Kate Todhunter, Dinah Mack

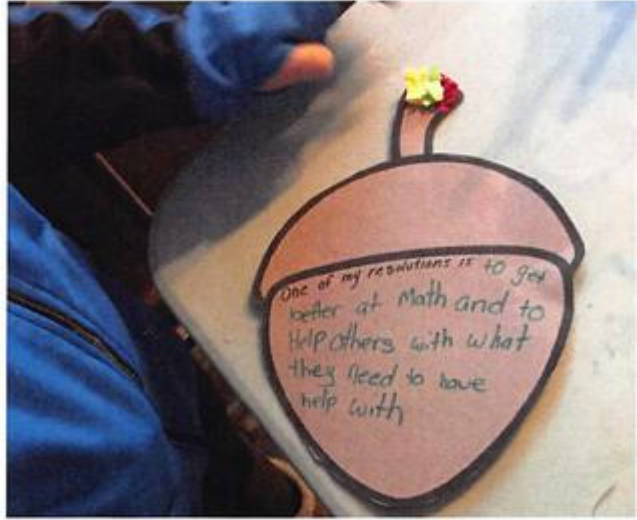
Building upon the previously NEF-funded "Looking for the Good in Rwanda", NHS and JFK students will continue to expand their content knowledge, and ultimately apply their learning to create and execute joint community projects, as well as build civic engagement and ongoing relationships with local and global organizations. This project will culminate in a multi-day event during April which will include individual seminars/workshops/class visits with experts, a school wide assembly, an evening event open to the community at large, and an exhibit of historical artifacts from various genocides set up in the NHS library



# SMALL GRANTS TO TEACHERS UPDATE

After cancelling the Small Grants to Teachers spring cycle in response to the abrupt move to online learning, we approached the Fall 2020 cycle with a desire to make it easier for teachers to ask for what they need to make this coming school year creative and engaging. In addition to our usual grant criteria, we encouraged proposals that responded to our current moment, addressing equity in educational content and access, and racial and social justice, or responding to the current learning situation, whether online or social distance learning in the classroom, or a hybrid of the two.

We moved to two rounds of grant applications, with two deadlines - September 8th and October 9th - and have just awarded our Round 1 grants. We are excited to fund anti-racist dialogue, learning and practice for all grades at Jackson Street School, Lindy Hop classes and a remote concert series at Northampton High School and publication of The Viking Runestone, a new arts magazine at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. We offered grantees from the 2019-2020 school year the option of finishing their grants or carrying the money over to this year. Many chose to carry over, so we will have several exciting NEF small grant-supported projects this school year. For more information about Small Grants to Teachers, contact Dale Melcher at daleannmelcher@gmail.com.



The Small Grants program funds the After School Partnership, which brings teachers into Florence Heights to engage students in activities supporting classroom learning.



# THE NEF ADULT SPELLING BEE

*Like many beloved local events, the 2020 NEF Spelling Bee was indefinitely postponed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. We'd like to thank the local organizations, businesses, and individuals who had already committed to sponsorship. We look forward to a time when we can all gather together again to crown Northampton's best and most humorous spellers!*

**Thank you to our sponsors:**

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# Comings and goings on the NEF Board

Francie Lin joined Lisa Papademetriou as Co-President. Thank you, Francie! We have four new board members- Emily Aker Quintana, Marissa Hoechstetter, Elizabeth Horn, and Amy Levine.



*Bridge St School students worked with a graphic designer and staff to collaborate on the creation of a school logo through a Small Grant.*

Emily Aker Quintana is an associate producer for the public television series Visionaries. Her oldest daughter graduated from Northampton High School in 2019 and her youngest daughter is a freshman at NHS this year. Marissa Hoechstetter is the director of alumnae and development communications and events at Smith College. She has twin fourth graders at JSS.

Elizabeth Horn (Liz) is the parent of two NPS students and serves on the PTO's of NHS and JFK. Liz most recently served as Coordinator of the NEF Endowment campaign through March 2020. Amy Levine had a long tenure as a high school English teacher in Amherst and recently has volunteered extensively at Leeds in classrooms and in the library. She has a son in first grade at Leeds and a daughter in sixth grade at JFK.

Thank you and goodbye to Danielle Carr Ramdath, who has taken a new job out of the area and resigned from the board. We also say goodbye to Christina Petersen. During her 10 years with NEF, she has run the SOS Book Fund and written and produced the newsletter. Thank you, Christina!

**Please check our website calendar for important COVID-19 updates on these important dates!**

**March 24, 2021**  
*Adult Spelling Bee*

**May 9, 2021**  
*Plant Sale*

**June 11, 2021**  
*Showcase*

## SOS PLANT SALE

We missed seeing all of your smiling faces under the striped tents at Smith Voke, and want to thank all the many volunteers, donors, and friends who have come together annually to make the sale such a joy and success. Like most events, the SOS Plant Sale was remote this year, and one of our generous community members donated some beautiful hostas and other shade plants that we sold online. Proceeds were obviously lower than past years, but we hope to return with a safe sale in 2021.



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- READ DESCRIPTIONS OF 20 YEARS OF SMALL GRANTS TO TEACHERS
- LEARN ABOUT NEF'S SOS BOOK FUND
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[www.northamptoneducation.org](http://www.northamptoneducation.org)

A Community Investment in Our Public Schools

Northampton Education Foundation funds and supports excellence, innovation, and intellectual creativity in Northampton Public Schools. We are an all volunteer organization that relies on the energy, creativity and support of the community to realize our mission of strengthening our schools by enriching students' educational experiences. We rely on your help through the donation of your time and ideas as well as financial resources

**A Community Investment in Our Public Schools**



Building Lego robots in the Community Outreach Program.



We all look forward to a safe return to a normal school year!



Community members, staff and NHS alumni prepare for their zoom improv class



Rowan and Ruthie Davison, twins and first graders at RK Finn Ryan Road School, got dressed up as a witch and an old woman before improv class.

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