



# NEF NEWS FALL 2021

## NORTHAMPTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 44 · NORTHAMPTON, MA · 01060 · [WWW.NORTHAMPTONEDUCATION.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHAMPTONEDUCATION.ORG)



Students at Jackson Street School have been working with anti-racist educator Tiffany Jewell, as part of the school's Empowering Youth: How to Be an Anti-Racist grant, funded by NEF.

In June, they displayed the work they created as part of an art/identity project associated with the grant.

## Presidents' message

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We wrote to you last year as we were entering our first pandemic winter and setting off into the great unknown. The NEF mission has always been to fund projects and programs that expand educational opportunities, foster creativity, and enhance academic experiences in Northampton's public schools, and it's more essential than ever that we continue to work together creatively for our students, teachers, and school staff.

Our priority last year was getting as much funding as possible out to our schools and educators to use under remote learning. Every single grant committee adjusted its processes to make that happen.

Small Grants crafted a rolling deadline so that teachers could apply the moment they had an idea that would work for their new learning circumstances. Existing projects (and grants) were adjusted to make them applicable to the remote learning format and—in cases where the project could not be completed remotely—funds were rolled from one year to the next.

Here are just a few of the innovative projects NEF funded: The Small Grants Committee funded two grants purchasing the title *This Book Is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell and paying for the local author to lead anti-racist classroom activities and dialogues. The NEF Book Fund released funds early to ensure access to online learning resources. And the Endowment Committee moved quickly to fund Art Post, which connected students in grades 7 and 8 at JFK with working artists through virtual studio visits and follow-up lessons.

We continue to be grateful for your generosity which gives us the ability to support our cherished school community as the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic continues. Nothing about this era is normal, but we are confident that with generous friends like you, NEF and our schools will come out of this as strong and innovative as ever.

We hope you'll consider a donation using the enclosed envelope. Thank you for helping us support our public schools.

Warmly,

*Lisa Papademetriou and Emily Acker Quintana,  
Co-Presidents*

In times where budgets are tight and things are cut in the schools, to be able to give money to teachers to do creative and innovative teaching and learning in their classrooms is a gift. It's the best thing I do.

*-Dale Melcher, Chair, NEF Small Grants Committee*



# Thank You NEF Annual Fund Donors!

*The following donors gave to the NEF Annual Fund from October 2020 through September 2021. Annual Fund dollars underwrite the Small Grants to Teachers program as well as our yearly administrative costs. Thank you for your generous support of NEF and our schools!*

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# Small Grants Awarded

## The following Small Grants to Teachers were awarded in 2020-2021

Due to Covid delays, some grant projects are still in process.

### Empowering Youth: How to Be an Anti-Racist

JSS • \$3000

*Sarah King, Kat Walmsley*

Students and educators in all grades will work with Tiffany Jewell, a Black biracial writer and anti-racist educator and consultant, to engage in anti-racist dialogue, learning, and practice.

### Lindy Hop Classes

NHS • \$3000

*Brandon Barker, Lori Vaillancourt,  
Mark Morrison*

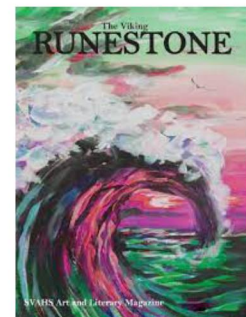
Brandon Barker will teach the dance technique Lindy Hop through the Phys Ed department. This dance form, created in the 1920s during the Harlem Renaissance, emphasized solo jazz and partner dancing. Students will explore its roots and social context, learn to dance the Lindy Hop, and examine its connection to current hip hop culture.

### Remote Concert Series

NHS • \$2220

*Paul Kinsman*

Local musicians from diverse musical genres will perform five live concerts over Zoom on Thursday evenings during the fall and spring semesters. Performers will include musicians who speak to the current questioning of racism and racial justice.



### The Viking Runestone

SVAHS • \$2100

*Tracey Burke, Kim Keogh*

This grant will support the printing of The Viking Runestone, a book of artwork and writing produced by the students, faculty, and staff at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.

### Critical Support to Preschool Remote Learning

all preschool students • \$2055

*Laura Frogameni, Rachel Matteis*

This project will create weekly packets of materials for each preschooler household in NPS Virtual Preschool. Packets of art supplies, blocks, play figures, and paper dolls will give concrete materials essential to sensory based learning and ensure that all families have the materials their children need to learn and grow.

### Walking Trail

RKFRR • \$1520

*Vanessa Keillor, Rebecca Minton*

This project encourages and rewards walking by students, staff and community members. Building on the existing recess walking program, the current walking trail will be clearly marked for distance and include information on animal speeds, what's seen from various points on the trail, and math equivalent lengths.

### Empowering Youth: Working to be Anti-Racist

BSS • \$2905

*Nora DeJasu*

Students and educators in all grades will work with Tiffany Jewell, a Black biracial writer and anti-racist educator and consultant, to engage in anti-racist dialogue, learning, and practice.

### Empowering Youth: How to Be Anti-Racist (Year 2)

JSS • \$3000

*Sarah King, Katharine Walmsley*

Students and educators in all grades will continue to work with Tiffany Jewell, a Black biracial writer and anti-racist educator and consultant, to engage in anti-racist dialogue, learning, and practice.

### Building Resilience in NPS: Onward Book Group

NPS • \$1000

*Michelle Eastman*

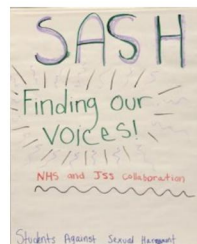
This book group, open to any NPS educator, will meet for 1.5 hours 1-2 times per month for 6 months starting Fall 2021. The group will use the book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* to discuss building resilience as educators and learn and practice mindfulness activities such as meditation, breath work, and/or yoga poses.

### Underpass and Kids Need Art

JFK/NHS • \$4975

*Michelle Mallory, Miriam Bourke*

In collaboration with JFK Art Teachers Michelle Mallory, Emma Mendoker, and NHS Art Teacher Louise Martindell, local artist Kim Carlino will conduct at least two workshops at each school for the teachers and any interested students to learn about the expression of identity through art and color and to design a public art project on a sidewalk wall located on the Bridge St. (Rt. 9) underpass below Rt. 91. The team of student artists, led by Kim Carlino, will then transfer and paint the design on the wall.



### SASH: Finding Our Voices (Year 3)

JFK/NHS • \$4782

*Jenni Manfredi*

SASH (Students Against Sexual Harassment) was created by NHS students, using the arts to inspire and connect students' voices on difficult issues facing all children and adolescents. This program provides a structure where high school and younger students can come together to learn from each other.

### Affinity Support Group

NPS • \$2970

*Ed Stone*

NPS as a district and a group of interested staff members are working to launch an affinity group program in our school system. Affinity groups can be a place for underrepresented and historically marginalized people in a community to come together to feel less isolated and more connected.

### STEM Exposure and Outreach Initiative

NPS • \$400

*Maggie Stewart-Smith, Meshia Begin*

The purpose of this project is to expose elementary and middle school students in the NPS district to STEM principles and ideas early in their schooling careers in a fun, inclusive way. This would be achieved in three ways; labs, projects, and forming connections and mentorships with STEM-interested students from NHS.



# NEF Endowment Grants

The following Endowment Grants were awarded in 2020-2021.

*Due to Covid delays, some grant projects are still in process.*

### Hitchcock Center: Take it Outside!

All elementary schools • \$36,640

The Take it Outside! program promotes greater use of the outdoors as a highly effective learning environment for nature-based STEM education in all four Northampton elementary schools.

### Grow Food Northampton

All grade levels • \$20,000

Supports Grow Food Northampton's education programming and Farm to School program.

### Resource Lending Library

NHS • \$5,000

NHS Student Union is coordinating a Resource Library, providing both school-related and basic-needs materials to any student who needs them in order to create a more just and unbiased learning environment.



### Collaboration between Self-Evident Media and the Northampton Public Schools

All grades • \$20,000

Educators at Self-Evident Media and NPS teachers will pair to provide access to multimedia tools and curriculum and provide professional development and coaching to guide students as they examine race and racism in American history.

### Collaboration between Music and Poetry Synchronized (MAPS) and Northampton High School

\$10,000

MAPS works to bring students together from diverse socio-economic, racial, cultural, gender and geographical backgrounds to write original poetry and music. In this program students from Hartford, CT will write poetry which will be put to music by students from Northampton High School.

### Art Post

JFK • \$5,200

Art Post aims to expose NPS students to the art and practice of contemporary artists via hands-on projects and virtual studio visits.



### Grow Food Kids

All elementary schools • \$15,000

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.

### Live Steam

NHS (deferred to 2021-2022) • \$8,400

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.

### Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary

All 4th and 5th graders • \$19,100

Arcadia staff will work with teachers and students to explore alternative energy, composting and other nature-based climate challenge solutions. The grant will also enable teachers in those grades to take part in professional development.

### Creative Coding

All 2nd and 4th graders • \$16,800

Holyoke Codes will work with staff at all the elementary schools to provide innovative curriculum and teacher training to teach computational thinking and computer science to NPS elementary grades.

## NEF UPDATES 2021 - 2022 School Year

### Daniel Goldstein Concert

Due to Covid, this will, sadly, be the second November in which we have not been able to hold the annual Daniel Goldstein concert at Northampton High School.

The Goldstein committee is working on possibilities to have a concert in Spring 2022 – stay tuned!

### Adult Spelling Bee

*Looking forward to coming together for the Adult Spelling Bee next year...*

As we prepare for next year's Bee (when it is safe to host it) – and cook up some fun surprises along the way – we want to thank all the outstanding businesses, organizations and individuals who have sponsored us over the years.

We truly appreciate their support and can't wait to come together again with our amazing community.

## Thank you to our endowment donors!

For more information on our Endowment and to see a list of recent donors, please visit our website: [northamptoneducation.org/endowment](https://northamptoneducation.org/endowment)

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



# NEF brings PTOs together to share ideas, challenges, foster collaboration

For more than a decade, on several evenings each year, something unique has been happening in the back section of A2Z Science and Learning Store. No, it is not the toys coming out to play after hours (that is confidential).

It is an hours-long meeting of representatives from NEF and all Northampton PTOs (often a representative from School Committee or REAL or another school-related group joins as well). Over a spread of snacks and drinks, everyone gets a rare chance to talk about what their school organization has been up to, share challenges, ask advice, and swap ideas. Attendees learn about what worked and what didn't at another school's silent auction, get advice on how to run a book fair, brainstorm about how to increase parent involvement, commiserate about the challenges of pandemic learning, laugh about the experience of building a Gaga pit at their school.

NEF not only hosts these meetings, but listens with an ear for where NEF (or other sources) might help alleviate some of the burden from the PTOs. NEF has been convening these meetings two or three times a year since today's college students were in preschool. The pandemic shifted the meetings to Zoom, and this month, to outdoors under a tent, but the focus remains the same: communication and collaboration.

In the fall of 2020, this reached a new level. All the PTOs recognized the unprecedented level of need at each of their schools and among families. Rather than individual fundraisers at each school, the PTOS and REAL came together for a joint, online fundraiser, WeAreCommunity. In just a few weeks, WeAreCommunity raised more than \$44,000, donated by families far and wide, staff and community members. The first 50% of money raised was distributed equally among the six NPS PTOs, with the other 50% distributed to the PTOs based on an average of school population and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Funds became available to each school to help staff, students and families with myriad needs related to Covid - masks, hand sanitizer, headphones and Wi-Fi hot spots for remote learning, classroom supplies, science and art kits to bring home, grocery and gas cards for strapped families, holiday gifts, winter clothing – the list goes on. Jenna Recuber, Treasurer of the Leeds PTO, who coordinated the creation of the fund, noted, "When the PTOs and REAL launched #WeAreCommunity, we recognized the importance of sharing resources among all of our schools, while also being deeply mindful of equity."

The WeAreCommunity fundraiser was a powerful example of what the PTOs can do together. By bringing stakeholders together throughout the school year, NEF provides a valuable space for the sharing of ideas that make our public schools stronger.



## April Vacation: School2School Fun Run/Walk/Ride

What do you do when a worldwide pandemic makes just about any event feel impossible? Get creative and head outside!

During April vacation week, April 17-25, 2021, students and families joined NEF's April Vacation School2School Fun Run/Walk/Ride to support the Northampton Public Schools.

In this family-friendly event, participants chose their distance (with a recommended run, walk, or ride between any two or more Northampton schools) and any time during April school vacation. A suggested donation of \$20 supported NEF Small Grants to Teachers.

Students, parents, staff and community members sent in photos of their journeys, which were shared on social media. By registering, participants were also eligible for a raffle of themed gift baskets. Winners received bountiful baskets with Art, Science, Mystery and Camping themes. This event provided a safe, flexible way to support NEF grants, exercise outside, raise school spirit and have fun.



# Thank you to our NEF Book Fund donors!

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# Plant Sale grows Book Fund

After a year-long hiatus, the 2021 NEF Plant Sale offered a welcome mix of safe, in-person activity and virtual options, and provided much-needed funds for the NEF Book Fund.

On May 8, on the lawn of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, the NEF Plant Sale sold plants, flowers, seeds, and its traditional raffle of a handmade quilt and a garden trellis bench crafted by Smith Voc. students. Patrons also had the option of ordering raffle tickets and some plants online with curbside pickup offered at the sale.”

The sale was a great success, raising more than \$12,000 for the NEF Book Fund. In consultation with librarians and principals at each of the Northampton Public Schools, the Book Fund will provide funding for books and media materials for each of the schools.

Mandy Gerry, NEF board member and Co-Coordinator of the Plant Sale with Amy Levine, noted, “We exceeded our fundraising goals, and it was so wonderful to host this annual spring event and see the community again. A huge thanks goes out to all the volunteers, plant donors and everyone who came out to buy plants and show their support for this worthy cause. We live in a generous community, with a lot of amazing folks who grow great plants!”

## NEF Book Fund

*Already gearing up for the 2022 Plant Sale...*



*This is the quilt that will be part of the raffle for NEXT year on May 7, 2022, created by longtime volunteer Lyn Heady, on right, pictured with Plant Sale volunteer coordinator Judy Fogg.*

With the generosity of our donors and those who shopped at our spring garden market, NEF is pleased to announce that we raised \$16,500, which will be allocated to Northampton schools this Fall for the purchase of classroom texts, library texts, instructional materials, or digital learning resources.

Last year, many schools used funds to address the challenges of remote learning. The high school purchased an interactive online physics program as well as a ceramic arts online magazine subscription for students to access from home. At JFK, librarian Gilana Chelimsky added many online databases for independent reading and research for middle schoolers. To prepare for students’ return, the new librarian at NHS, Rochelle Garfinkel, worked with teachers all spring to update library resources, as did librarian Leslie Skantz-Hodgson at Smith Vocational. The elementary schools all used the funds to add more diversity to their curriculum and independent reading choices as well as to purchase more resources for their youngest readers. Jackson Street School added a phonics program, Leeds added more leveled readers for this year’s first graders, and Bridge Street and Ryan Road schools purchased more early literacy texts from Pioneer Valley Books in Northampton.

To avoid confusion, NEF is now calling this fund simply the “NEF Book Fund.” We no longer use the SOS acronym, as a current Amherst group is using that for a different purpose. We continue the mission of the original Support our Schools group, though, to provide schools with both needed resources and academic enrichment.



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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

# Helping our youngest learners during remote school



Critical Support to Preschool Remote Learning was one of NEF’s 2020-2021 Small Grant programs, sending weekly packets to each household in the NPS Virtual Preschool. The packets included art supplies, blocks, play figures, and paper dolls that gave students concrete materials essential to sensory based learning and ensured that all families had the materials their children needed to learn and grow. The following are some comments NEF received from teachers and staff:

“To say this was an unusually challenging and unique year would be an understatement. The challenges posed by Covid-19 were tremendous. Your support made it possible to provide an engaging and equitable learning environment for all of our students.”

“There is only so much “screen time” a three-to-five-year-old student can handle, and so having tactile materials for remote learning meant students could take a break from screen time and engage in authentic, multi-sensory learning.”

“We serve students who come to school with vastly different home experiences. Conducting remote learning out of these students’ homes without an equal footing to start on can be difficult. However, with the materials provided through this NEF grant, we could go into remote learning with a bit

more ease of mind, knowing that every student had the physical materials at home that they needed to fully participate in a remote preschool experience.”

“As everyone knows, preschool age children need to have hands-on activities and work with materials to make sense of the world around them. The grant ensured that all of the activities and materials that we needed were available so we could “recreate” classrooms at home. Students loved to share their learning spaces with each other on our daily Zooms, and by the feedback that I got from families, they loved seeing what their peers were creating, making, exploring with the different learning kits they were given access to thanks to the NEF.”

“Students were so excited each week as they opened up their learning kits. Parents would send quotes of enthusiasm and pictures of students exploring the week’s new materials. This enthusiasm wouldn’t have been possible if families were left to collect or buy materials on their own. The NEF’s grant made sure that even my neediest students had access to the same materials as my most affluent students.”



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