

OEA Educational Foundation announces grants available to OEA members



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

At the 2016 Spring RA, delegates approved a New Business Item to reconstitute the work of the OEA Educational Foundation, a charitable foundation created to support causes related to advancing and supporting education professionals and public-school students in Ohio.

The New Business Item called for the OEA President and Executive Director to appoint a joint governance-staff work group to study the potential creation or reconstitution of an OEA charitable foundation to support causes related to advancing the education professions, supporting education professionals, and supporting public school students in Ohio. The proposal also called for the designated work group to investigate options for legal, organizational and fundraising structures for a foundation consistent with the OEA's mission, vision, and core values and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors and Representative Assembly for any necessary further action by December 2016.

OEA President Becky Higgins and Executive Director Sheryl Mathis appointed a joint governance and management committee led by then Secretary-Treasurer Tim Myers that reviewed the new business item, historical information regarding the establishment of the foundation, and foundation's work to date. The mission statement was updated to focus the foundation work toward actions currently supported by OEA and in alignment with the OEA's three strategic priorities.

The mission of the OEA Foundation is to design, develop, promote, and implement public education programs and materials intended to educate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education professionals in the State of Ohio.

The mission encompasses ideas discussed as potential foundation work including funding educator initiatives to enhance student learning, student achievement, and wellbeing, and promoting social justice in public education.

The workgroup discussed community outreach, how to strategically align work with the Commission on Student Success (COSS) report findings and other programs that support advancement in learning for education professionals, funding, and the Board structure of the Foundation.

In 2017, Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were adopted and an election was held for the Foundation directorships.

Over the past year, members of the OEA Educational Foundation Board of Directors—**Cassandra Daniels, Matthew DeMatteis, Angel Dyer-Sanchez, Dan Greenberg, Melanie Hameed, Becky Higgins, Lori Michalec, Patty Nyquist, Cheryl Williams, Scott DiMauro** (ex-officio), **Mark Hill** (ex-officio), **Sheryl Mathis** (ex-officio) and **Kristy Spires** (staff liaison)—have led the development of four grants that are now available to OEA members:

1. Diversity Grant

The Foundation will offer grants to develop and pursue instructional programs or curriculum that promote an appreciation for diversity, equity, and respect for humankind within the classroom and educational environment. Three grants will be awarded this year at up to \$3,000 each. Submission deadline will be February 1, 2019. Grants will be awarded by March 1, 2019 and grant funds must be spent by May 31, 2020.

2. Whisper Fund

The Whisper Fund offers direct assistance to an individual student with educational or personal needs when a hardship is identified. Grants are issued to a requesting education staff member to purchase items or improve an individual's school learning or academic performance or to assist with basic needs

such as eyeglasses, personal hygiene items, repairs to broken wheelchair, etc. Each grant is a maximum of \$200 up to a total annual funding of \$5,000. This is a rolling grant with applications reviewed each month.

3. Innovation Grant

As an organization, the OEA seeks to encourage conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish in classrooms and believes that well rounded learning experiences that meet the needs of the whole child and allow students to explore their interests and passions are key ingredients to success. Innovation Grants will be offered to those who are in pursuit of innovative and creative practices where learning is being enriched by experiences or projects. Two grants will be awarded this year at up to \$5,000 each. Submission deadline will be February 1, 2019. Grants will be awarded by March 1, 2019 and grant funds must be spent by May 31, 2020.

4. Make-A-Wish

Adopt-A-Wish pairs a local child who is eligible for a wish with a local organization that has committed to raising \$8,000, the average cost of a wish, to make a child's wish come true. The OEA Foundation is granting the first 10 locals that commit to the Adopt- A-Wish \$500 each. Make-A-Wish works with local media to highlight Adopt-A-Wish partners so the community understands how local organizations are giving back.

For additional information and application forms, visit the OEA website at www.ohea.org.

The Foundation will host an event on May 10, 2019, to raise awareness and funding for grants. The event will be held at the Marriott Columbus University Area, 3100 Olentangy River Rd in Columbus. All contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible.