

# Foundation funds academic projects created by teachers

By Jonathan Allen  
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FORT MILL TOWNSHIP — Nine teachers in the Fort Mill School District received \$500 grants through the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools to fund education programs they created.

"I'm always shocked how much \$500 can buy," Foundation Executive Director Jill Lauber said. "We're really excited about funding this stuff."

Since 2003, the Foundation has been awarding grants for projects developed by teachers from across the district, usually one per school. The grants don't cover the entire cost of any one program, and teachers are required to find other funding sources for the projects in addition to the Foundation grants, Lauber said.

But the grants do cover much of the costs.

"These teachers will find funding anywhere," she said.

The Foundation does not fund things the school district is already doing, so teachers have to be creative. It gets funding from several donors each year, and also coordinates a scholarship program with other groups. Major Foundation donors include Founders Federal Credit Union, South Carolina Bank and Trust, Fort Mill Rotary Club, Allen Tate Realtors and Springs Global. ESP Associates will be a major donor as well in the coming year, Lauber added.

This year, grants went to every school

except Nation Ford High School and Fort Mill Academy. The projects to be funded include a Summer Challenge program at Fort Mill Elementary to provide workbooks of math, reading and writing lessons for children on the Free and Reduced Lunch program to combat the "summer slide effect."

At Gold Hill Elementary, more Orff Instruments, used for hands-on learning, will be purchased. Orchard Park will use its grant to buy more voice amplifiers for the music-related arts program. Riverview's grant is going to science fair help sessions that will give students after school help with science projects. Springfield Elementary's grant will go to reading texts for kindergartners to help the school meet Adequate Yearly Progress standards.

Fort Mill Elementary plans to use its grant to set up the Busy Bee Needle Craft Club for students. At Gold Hill Middle, the money will be used with a digital storytelling program that combines story telling with newer computer-based technologies. Springfield Middle will use its funds for a theater arts showcase.

At the high school level, Fort Mill High will use its grant to buy Playaway Digital Books to improve students' reading

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**Jill Lauber**

Executive Director, Foundation for Fort Mill Schools

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skills, and hopefully get them to read more for pleasure. The goal is increase standardized test scores.

The Foundation also coordinated distribution of 10 scholarship funds — seven based on academics, three for athletics. The scholarships are funded through different organizations, not through the Foundation. Most are named after area residents. The scholarship recipients will be announced at the Fort Mill High Awards Banquet Thursday.