

# Foundation grants fund array of programs

By Jonathan Allen

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FORT MILL TOWNSHIP — Third grade family math nights, a writing workshop, animal dissection and labeling trees along a nature trail near Nation Ford High School are among the projects being funded through this year's Foundation for Fort Mill Schools grants.

Seven grants for \$500 each were awarded to projects developed by teachers from schools across the Fort Mill District at the end of August during the school district's teachers meet-

ing.

"They're all great projects," Foundation Director Jill Lauber said. "They're all working on implementing them now, so we don't have any results yet."

The Foundation awards one \$500 grant per school each year. This year, the Foundation's third, it changed the timing of the grant awards so teachers will be able to implement the projects the year the money is awarded.

"We decided to announce them at the teachers meeting in August and the money is

there at the beginning of school," Lauber said.

Teachers from seven of the 11 schools in the district applied for the grants. Winning projects include "Third Grade Family Math Night" at Fort Mill Elementary, submitted by Wendy Hedge and Janeen Wilson.

The project brings students and parents together to learn math games that can be played at home to help students with math concepts.

Lee Harris, an Orchard Park Elementary teacher, came up with a program called "Extra! Extra! Read and Write all About It!" The project is a writing workshop for students with the goal of helping each student publish their own book.

Riverview Elementary School teacher Jesse Belue came up with "Pairing Fiction and Nonfiction" with the aim of pairing fiction and nonfiction books on the same topic to help students' engagement and comprehension of topics. The goal is to improve developmental reading assessment scores.

"Shared Reading: A Building Block for Successful Reading" is a program developed by Dorothy Myers and Sarah Soko at Springfield Elementary. The projects is designed to help students make connections in content area and the uses of good literature.

At Springfield Middle School, thanks to teacher Melissa Stevens, students will learn to compare and contrast verte-

brates and invertebrates through the "Comparative Animal Dissection" project.

Another reading based project is being funded at Fort Mill High School through the "Rewards for Readers" project created by Lynn Redmon.

Students at Nation Ford High School will get to take their biology classroom outside with Elizabeth Unsworth's "Trail and Tree" labeling project. The students will be putting their taxonomy lessons to the test by identifying and labeling the trees around campus and along a portion of the nearby Nation Ford Greenway.

The Nation Ford labeling project could touch every student who goes through the school because of a state regulation requiring all students to take biology, Lauber said.

"Each year, teachers will be able to expose their students to it," Lauber said.

Applications for the next round of Foundation grants will be made available sometime in May, Lauber said. The school district Web site, ([www.fort-mill.k12.sc.us](http://www.fort-mill.k12.sc.us)) will carry a link to the application forms at that time.

Next year, the Foundation will award up to 13 grants so teachers at the new Sugar Creek Elementary and Pleasant Knoll Elementary schools, both scheduled to open in 2009, will be eligible to participate.

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