

**Maranacook Education Foundation
2020-21 Grant Awards**

Jada Clark, school nurse at the elementary level who is collaborating with Deb Elwell and Kerry Welch, has been awarded a grant entitled, “**Physical Play for Pre-K.**” Readfield Elementary School has a Pre-k program that serves Readfield and Wayne 4yr old students. The playground equipment is not age appropriate for this group. They currently use the perimeter of the playground (lawn/gazebo) and have access to a sandbox and a few scooters/balance bikes. CDC guidelines state children should be provided with opportunities to participate in physical activities that are age appropriate, enjoyable, and that offer variety. The benefits of physical activity are well documented and include: enhanced development of motor skills, enhanced bone and muscle development, increased cognitive and social skills, increased self confidence, reduction of anxiety, and improved mood and behaviors. Grant money will be used to purchase a variety of age appropriate items to increase physical activities.

Kelly Jewel, a teacher at Maranacook Community Middle School, was awarded a grant entitled, “**Support our Community’s Social Emotional Learning (SEL).**” This year, due to the restrictions from COVID and the CDC, we are unable to run our School Store or to do traditional means of fundraising for Student Government sponsored activities. Student Government, therefore, is seeking the support of an MEF Grant to fund materials for community-building activities and prizes to increase our immediate community's SEL in these trying times.

Kristin McLaren, french teacher at Maranacook Community High School, has been awarded a grant entitled, “**Global Francophone Library for Free Voluntary Reading.**” When asked about their goals for French learning this year, many students indicated that they want to read books in French. This project would support the purchase of a classroom library of diverse short books from across the francophone world, written for adolescent French learners. Students who choose their own books and identify with the characters report increased confidence in their language abilities and demonstrate increased engagement. A Global Francophone Library would provide access to a wide variety of comprehensible readers, promoting continued practice in the language and increased awareness of diverse francophone cultures, even when we can't be in class together during off quarters and in the summer.

Dr. Dwayne Conway, and **Dr. Kristen Levesque**, principals of the high school and middle school, have been awarded a grant entitled, “**Equity Awareness Book Study.**” The equity awareness book study is a collaboration with the middle and high school. It will allow for staff and students from both schools to participate in a structured book study to create greater awareness about equity in our community and beyond. The book study meetings will be facilitated through Zoom, promoting virtual discussion and activity, which is important during these times. Along with building awareness with equity issues, this book study will help to build and deepen relationships across the 6-12 Maranacook campus, for staff and students.

Jean Roesner, teacher at the Maranacook Middle School, who is collaborating with her colleagues Dan Holman, Kelli Corrigan and Melissa Small, has been awarded a grant entitled, **“Community Conversations about Racism & Equality.”** With MEF grant funds they will purchase the book entitled *Stamped: Racism, Anti Racism, and You*, written by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi, offers young people a glimpse into the history and current state of racism in America. Our students and community are impacted by racism in subtle and not so subtle ways each and every day. This book study offers students and community members the opportunity to collaboratively talk about this sensitive subject in a structured and meaningful way.

Jeanette Jacobs, District Literacy Coach, who is collaborating with colleagues Katie Reed, Janet Delmar and Rachel Boucher, has been awarded a grant entitled, **“Storywalk.”** Storywalks are interactive reading experiences. Each walk is created from deconstructed books, where pages are laminated and set along a path or trail. As readers walk the path, they are able to read the story. Our walk will include activities associated with the text that readers can participate in before, during, and after reading. We’ll celebrate the storywalk with a grand opening community event. Our walk will begin with a Little Free Library, where each family will receive one picture book. After students have had an opportunity to enjoy the first storywalk, they will be encouraged to create their own.

Sarah Tackett-Nelson, a special education teacher who is collaborating with her colleagues Kristen Davis, Rachele Fitzsimmons, and Monica Smith, has been awarded a grant entitled, **“Building Social Skills.”** All students can benefit from the explicit instruction of social skills. The when, where and how this instruction takes place can be different for each learner. With that said, acquiring social skills is fundamental to mental/social/and emotional health. By providing direct social skills instruction we can help individuals overcome the many challenges that accompany a lack of these skills. Educators have long recognized how critical social and behavioral skills are to success in a classroom environment. Some of the basic social skills needed for educational success are: cooperation, self-control, reciprocal conversation, social awareness, manners, and following basic social norms. The Building Social Skills Project will serve any student in Maranacook Area Schools that receive social skills by direct instruction or any student that is a part of Maranacook’s specialized programs.

Stephanie Connors, a 4th grade teacher in the district has been awarded a grant entitled, **“PearDeck for Learning.”** She will be working with the other 4th grade teachers in the district to purchase a PearDeck for Google slides add-on upgrade. PearDeck is a creative, engaging tool that can be used to create interactive, flipped classroom lessons that support the RSU #38 curriculum. The goal of this project is to use the PearDeck Google slides add-on to create interactive slide decks for either in-person or remote instruction. It is a useful tool for “flipping” classroom instruction.

Heather Chalmers, elementary school librarian, has been awarded funds for her grant, **“Seating for Reading Areas for Elementary School Libraries.”** A school library has always been the heart of a school. Our elementary libraries needed to be updated to encourage students’ reading and love of books. We have worked hard to weed and organize our libraries,

bought new curtains and decorations, and some libraries have been painted to brighten up the space. We have received compliments on how welcoming the libraries are. We are continuing to improve them each year.

The issue for us now is creating cozy reading areas. The libraries were set up for adults and did not have child size furniture in them. We changed the layouts of the library so that we could add reading areas for students. We have exchanged what we could with furniture that was not being used in the schools. We are limited with what we can have for furniture due to health and safety guidelines and must have furniture that can be wiped down. The old furniture that we had was not in good shape structurally and was covered in upholstery that had seen better days. We need to replace the furniture with good quality, cleanable pieces which are not currently affordable for us.

The excitement we have seen in the children since we have made changes has encouraged us to keep working on this overwhelming task with four libraries. This year has been hard on the students because our libraries are being used by other staff who needed space that met the guidelines for Covid to see students. We would like to create the reading areas so that they are ready for the fall with hopes that students will be able to return to the libraries instead of having library instruction in their classrooms.

Paul Sveum, Director of the Kennebec Valley YMCA's Camp KV in Readfield, has been awarded a grant entitled, "**Environmental Sustainability at Camp KV.**" This popular summer camp, which has provided opportunities for hundreds of Maranacook Area Schools youngsters through the years, will be using the funds provided for with this grant to focus on improving our environmental sustainability through waste reduction, food composting and establishing staff and camper run organic agriculture.

Kerry Welch, Pre-K teacher at Readfield Elementary School, will receive funding for her grant entitled, "**RES Kids' Activity Trail improvement grant.**" The Kids' Activity Trail Improvement project's purpose is to update the signs and benches of the nature trail at Readfield Elementary School. The wooded trail features bridges, streams, vernal pools, ponds, stonewalls and stone foundations. The grant would cover the purchase of custom trail signs, a sign for the 1800s foundation (which has no marker), sign posts and hardware, trail marker signs and benches. The benches would sit in a clearing along the trail to provide an outdoor learning space. The half mile trail can be used for exercise, hands-on science and history lessons for teachers, students and community members.

The Maranacook Education Foundation is pleased to announce that there will be a second round of grant applications this year that will be open in late February. Please stay tuned for announcements at that time.