

## Gripp Grants Enhance Our Schools

Funds raised throughout the year are used to award Gripp grants and to support D39 programs. In the 2022-2023 school year, the Foundation awarded four grants totaling \$16,730.

Grants are requested by teachers and administrators who envision a new program or resource, research the details and submit a grant proposal with the expectation that they will manage the grant should it be awarded.

### Sensory Boards

A grant award last fall for sensory boards supported the learning behavior specialists and occupational therapists at each of our D39 elementary schools. Sensory boards are large stationary boards which have tactile, functional and visual objects which are attached to the board for students to touch and explore. They support fine and gross motor skills, language development, cognitive growth, problem solving skills and social interaction for our early learners. Students in the comprehensive needs program, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and early learners benefit from using these boards. These boards bring calmness and organization to sensory rooms giving students a more structured opportunity to explore and learn. The Foundation thanks and recognizes the District staff working with our comprehensive needs students and IEP students who submitted this grant proposal: Cori Piper - LBS McKenzie, Rochelle Hanawalt - OT McKenzie, Melissa Hansen - LBS Central, Mary Frandsen - LBS Central, Hallie Saperstein - LBS Romona, Andy Parker - LBS Romona, Michelle Mermelstein - OT Romona, Linnea Bader - OT Romona, Justyna Lostumbo - LBS Romona Early Childhood, Katherine Llanes-Smith - LBS Romona Early Childhood, Barri Werth - LBS Romona Early Childhood, Rebecca Bennett - OT Harper, and Kristin Spalo - PT District 39.

### HMS Podcasting Equipment

Another grant this fall was awarded to Highcrest Middle School for the purchase of podcasting equipment. Podcasting has



become a robust platform for sharing information. Students in the newly formed Learning Commons Club are exploring the equipment first by creating book review podcasts. Students have the opportunity to construct scripts, interview one another, and record, edit, and publish their podcasts. Once the pilot in the LC is successful, the podcasting equipment will be expanded for use to other clubs and classrooms. Congratulations and thanks to Matt Aho - Library Information Specialist HMS, who submitted this grant proposal.

### HMS Living Wall

Our final fall grant also went to Highcrest Middle School, this time for a Living Wall for the outdoor classroom. A Living Wall is a vertical garden created from a tiered module system that provides space for different plants in containers. The Living Wall is student-led and student-designed and will provide project-based learning opportunities in various classes (science, art, global studies, social studies, etc.) across the curriculum. Through their work and engagement in the design, maintenance, and engagement with the Living Wall, students will be inspired as they develop essential skills in leadership, creativity, and collaboration, all of which are central to D39's Portrait of a Learner. Congratulations to Kelly Jackson, HMS principal, and the collaboration team of Matt Aho, Brenda Raccuglia, Katie Fox, Allison Eakley, and Kelsey Treon!

### Building Thinking Classrooms

This spring the Foundation awarded a Gripp Grant to Highcrest Middle School math teachers. The grant funded the purchase of 16 double-sided porcelain magnetic mobile white boards to be used in the math classrooms to implement an innovative teaching strategy, Building Thinking Classrooms. Peter Liljedahl, author of the book on which the teaching methodology is based, posits that students working in random groups at a vertical, non-permanent surface (i.e., white board) yielded the highest number of minutes of student engagement. By asking students to stand and work, it allows teachers to see how far each group has progressed on the problem. Students feel less pressure to be perfect in their work as they can easily erase their work on the white board and try a new strategy. It also allows teachers to gather formative assessment data and provide immediate feedback to the students.

By implementing this teaching strategy, the HMS math teachers create classrooms of students working together in small random groups on vertical, non-permanent surfaces which transform learning spaces into active thinking spaces - a win for our D39 students! Congratulations to Becky Bartsch and Anne Jacobs, HMS math teachers.

### Gripp Grant Deadlines

Fall Deadline – Monday, October 23, 2023.  
Spring Deadline – Monday, March 4th, 2024

## A letter from our Chairwoman

As we finish up the 2022/23 school year, I look back with gratitude (and a little relief) on the year that felt like a step on the path to pre-pandemic life. “In-person” became our norm again, and the D39 Educational Foundation took full advantage by hosting fundraisers, community events, and in-school programs once again. It was nice to be able to walk back onto campuses and into schools to meet with staff and to award Gripp Grants to inspiring teachers! It’s the little things that we may have taken for granted before 2020 that became so much more meaningful over the last few years.

With the return to normal activity, the D39 Educational Foundation brought back beloved fundraisers that had been paused over the last few years, starting with Trivia Night in the fall of 2022. Our community was obviously ready for its return as tables sold out in under two hours! We followed *Trivia Night* with our *Paddle Classic event*, *Bingo Night*, *Family Movie Night*, and *Cheers & Beers party* - collectively netting more than \$26,000. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the many local businesses who donate their goods, venues and services for our events, a list of whom you will find later in this report.

These fundraising efforts make it possible for us to fund Gripp Grants, and this year we awarded nearly \$17,000 to four recipients. We continued to be inspired by the passion for bringing new and innovative ideas to our schools and our students. The Foundation also gave \$8,000 at the end of the school year to fund StoryWalks at each of the elementary schools. The StoryWalks, installed over the summer on each of the elementary school grounds, display a rotating array of stories that focus on SEL and support the district’s strategic plan.

We also partnered with District 39 to bring back some popular in-school programs this year. Through the Foundation’s Sam Mikaelian Fine Arts Fund, we sponsored a WJHS event to fund a visiting artist, Jay Ryan, to speak to 8th grade students on the art of screen printing. Students were curious and engaged, and it was awesome to see them respond so positively.

Lastly, the Foundation brought back our *Math in the Real World program*, rebranded as *STEM in the Real World*. We invited community members to present to WJHS students on how they use STEM in their jobs and careers. All four of our presenters made compelling cases for the many ways to apply science, technology, engineering, and math to our everyday lives. And it most definitely inspired a student or two to study a little harder!

We’d like to give a special thank you to Sam Mikaelian, who has been an ardent and generous supporter of the Foundation always, but especially during the pandemic. His unwavering support of the fine arts in the district has made many of our programs possible. And to you – our loyal supporters – thank you for also sticking with us through the last challenging years and for showing up when we opened our doors again for in-person events. And finally, thank you to my fellow trustees for all your hard-work and dedication. I’m extremely proud to be a part of this wonderful community!

Sincerely,

Karen Fischer  
2022-2023 Board Chairwoman

## A Full Year of In Person Events

The Foundation hosts a variety of events throughout the year, with a two-fold purpose: To raise charitable funds to support our Gripp Grants and other programs and to create social opportunities for our community. This year, the Foundation resumed holding these events in person, and it was clear that our community was ready to gather. Here is a roundup of this past year’s events:

### Trivia Night

The Foundation’s 10th annual Trivia Night raised more than \$12,000. Held on December 6, twenty-two teams competed in trivia and in recognition for the most creative theme and costume. The top trivia team of the night was “The Monopolizers,” a team dressed as Monopoly figures, while “Last But Not The Least (aka The Last Supper)” was crowned Best in Show based on the theme and overall presentation. The event also included a raffle with prizes donated by local businesses.



### Paddle Night

College Paddle Night featured some friendly competition despite a cold and slushy night. On January 28, fifty players competed in a round-robin style tournament where all skill levels could shine. Donning attire from one’s alma mater, the participants were provided demo paddles from Moonshot  
(cont.)

Paddle, and StretchLab Wilmette offered mini stretch sessions onsite. Prizes were provided by other local businesses and donors. More than \$4,000 was raised.



## Family Bingo Night

On February 10, Highcrest Middle School was the setting for Family Bingo Night. More than 220 game enthusiasts of all ages enjoyed the masterful calling of our emcee and D39 parent, Dave Lundy. Thanks to generous donations from local businesses and participants, lots of lucky winners enjoyed choosing from a bountiful prize table. The event raised more than \$4,000.

## Movie Night

The Foundation teamed up with the Wilmette Theatre to host two sold out shows of the Super Mario Bros. Movie. On April 14, parents relived their childhood video game memories while sharing the nostalgia with a new generation of fans. More than \$3,800 was raised. Raffle winner Liz Pasquinnelli generously donated the prize money back to the D39 Educational Foundation to fund future Gripp Grants.

## Cheers & Beers

April 28 saw the return of the Cheers & Beers event to the Double Clutch Brewing Company in Evanston. Sponsored by North Shore Community Bank, this event featured live music, dancing, drinks and hors d'oeuvres, as well as a raffle and silent and live auctions to raise money for the Foundation's Gripp Grants program. Local bands Antler Chandelier and A.M. Slingers entertained the crowd and more than \$4,000 was raised.



### Public Support and Revenues

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

	Unrestricted	Restricted	TOTAL
PTA/PTO Contributions	\$1,800		\$1,800
Sponsorship Income	\$1,000		\$1,000
Appreciation Certificates	\$3,226		\$3,226
Ray of Light Fund	--	--	--
SAM Fine Arts Fund	--	\$10,000	\$10,000

#### FUNDRAISING

Annual Appeal	\$12,992		\$12,992
Trivia Night Event	\$16,601		\$16,601
Paddle Night Event	\$4,815		\$4,815
Bingo Night Event	\$5,662		\$5,662
Movie Night Event	\$3,805		\$3,805
Cheers/Beers Event	\$13,265		\$13,265

#### INTEREST AND OTHER INCOME

	\$669		\$669
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#### TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE

**\$63,835      \$10,000      \$73,835**

#### EXPENDITURES

Administrative	\$13,838		\$13,838
Marketing*	\$4,360		\$4,360

#### Fundraising

Annual Appeal	--		--
Trivia Night Event	\$4,192		\$4,192
Paddle Party Event	\$650		\$650
Bingo Night Event	\$1,614		\$1,614
Movie Night Event	\$2,500		\$2,500
Cheers/Beers Event	\$8,987		\$8,987

#### MAKING AN IMPACT

Fine Arts	--	\$2,000	\$2,000
Special Gifts**	\$25,821		\$25,821
Gripp Grants	\$15,430		\$15,430

#### TOTAL EXPENDITURES

**\$77,392      \$2,000      \$79,392**

Change in Net Assets	\$(13,557)	\$8,000	\$(5,557)
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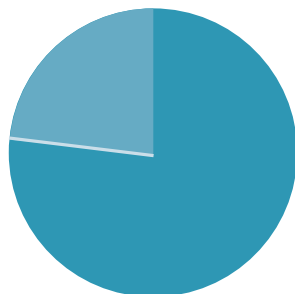
Net Assets End of FY 2022	<b>\$118,622</b>	<b>\$14,576</b>	<b>\$133,198</b>
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<b>NET ASSETS END OF FY 2023</b>	<b>\$105,065</b>	<b>\$22,576</b>	<b>\$127,641</b>
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\*Includes one-time \$2,500 website design project

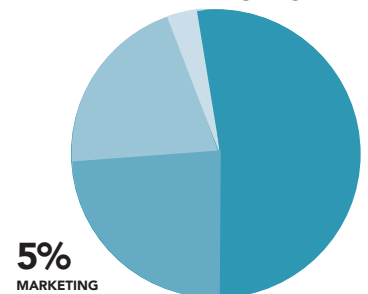
\*\* Highcrest and WJHS Innovative Classroom special gifts (\$9k each) plus Story Walk special gift (\$8k) to D39

#### REVENUE SOURCES:



**1%      22%      77%**  
INTEREST      CONTRIBUTIONS      FUNDRAISING

#### EXPENDITURES:



**5%**  
MARKETING

**17%      23%      54%**  
ADMINISTRATIVE      FUNDRAISING      MAKING AN IMPACT

## Special Projects Offer New Perspectives:

The Foundation is delighted to support programming across the District. This year, we supported two special programs, one time events designed to introduce new topics to our students.

### Artist in Residence Teaches 8th Graders How to Screenprint:

On March 9th, the 8th grade Wilmette Junior High School students were visited by a guest lecturer, professional artist Jay Ryan. Jay provided an overview of screen printing and inspired the students with examples of his well known artwork. Weeks later, Jay visited each of the 8th grade art classes to allow students the hands-on experience making their own screen prints. This program was organized in partnership with the WJHS Art teachers and the D39 Educational Foundation Board and was funded through the Sam Mikaelian Fine Arts Fund, a restricted fund of the Foundation.

## D39 Parents Bring S.T.E.M. in the Real World to WJHS:

The D39 special projects committee organized a panel of speakers to inspire WJHS students on April 25th. The students learned about STEM topics, such as the impact of disposable water bottles on our environment, the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious disease, engineering required to remodel a 100+ year old ballpark built on Lake Michigan sand, and how food science influenced the invention of a popular candy bar. Thank you to these D39 parents that donated their time to speak about how they apply STEM fields in their careers. A special thank you to:

#### Iqbal Brainch

*VP, Marketing and Digital, Culligan International*

#### Dr. Katie Weedon

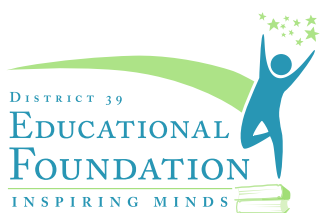
*Specialist in Pediatric Infectious Disease, Advocate Health*

#### Alex Sugarman

*SVP of Strategy & Ballpark Operations for the Chicago Cubs Care*

#### Jim Murray

*CEO and Co-Founder, Feastables*



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