

Great Ideas Grant Recipients

Spring 2004

The Great Ideas Grant Program is a cornerstone of The Helena Education Foundation's mission to enrich education in the Helena Public Schools. It is designed to put money directly into the hands of classroom teachers, helping educators take ideas for innovative teaching strategies and make them a reality. Specific goals include:

- Supporting teachers who want to infuse new elements of creativity into their classroom;
- Helping teachers extend student learning beyond the limitations of textbooks;
- Encouraging teachers to strengthen ties between the classroom, other teachers, parents, students and the larger community; and
- Providing funds for projects to enhance student learning that would otherwise not be possible within the District budget or with any other funding source.

The following seven Helena Public School projects were selected to receive Great Ideas grants totaling \$14,000 for Spring 2004. These grants involve 22 teachers and over 2100 students in the District. Grants are sponsored by businesses and organizations that have made significant donations to the Helena Education Foundation.

1. **PAL'S (\$1117):** Hawthorne Elementary School, Katie Wright, 40 students (Sponsored by American Federal Savings Bank)
PAL'S, or Personal Audience for Listening, helps second graders improve reading skills by allowing them to record and listen to themselves and each other reading aloud using an individual tape recorder called PAL. After a reviewing and editing process, the students will publish their recorded stories in a class listening library.
2. **Ring Around the Job Market (\$3000):** Helena Middle School, Jim Weber, 200 students (Sponsored GPD, Inc.)
Students in the Industrial Technology program will receive exciting training in 3-D Computer Aided Design and 3-D Computer Aided Machining by making their own rings. Students will create a ring design in the CAD program and use CAM software and computer controlled milling machines to make the ring. The grant funds will be used to purchase the specialized tooling and materials to make the rings.
3. **One Hot Project (\$2639):** Helena Middle School, Jim Weber, 2040 students (Sponsored by KTVH)
Students in the Industrial Technology program will receive exciting, red hot, hands-on training in the "Welding/Metal Fabrication" job market by gaining experience and skill in the use of plasma metal cutting technology to create their own metalworking projects. The funds will be used to purchase two "plasma arc" metal cutting torches to cut metal for student welding and metals fabrications projects.

4. **Alien Plants (\$458):** Helena Middle School, Cheryl Plettner, 50 students (Sponsored by DA Davidson)
Teachers will assemble equipment to conduct a hydroponics problem solving adventure!
5. **Bengal Bites (\$3000):** Helena High School, Stephanie Thennis, 1500 students (Sponsored by Sandy Mac's)
A school-based store would be an effective educational lab to prepare students for the transition from school to work or college. For some students, this will provide the first work experience; for others, it will be an opportunity to build management, supervision and leadership skills in an ideal learning environment.
6. **The Might Food Calorie (\$974):** Capital High School, John Miller, 130 students (Sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana)
The connection between student achievement and high quality nutrition is well established. This project, with the high quality measurement tools, will provide an opportunity for students to collect real-time calorie data and then relate the results to their own lifestyles.
7. **Ecological Integrity (\$3000):** Capital High School, Tom Pedersen, 50+ students (Sponsored by Allegiance Benefit Plan Management, Inc.)
Honors Biology II students will learn and actually experience forestry, water quality and stewardship during two full day field trips to the Stemple Pass Grady/FWP conservation easement. The month long collaboration between the schools, the Helena National Forest, Helena Forest Foundation and the Foundation includes expertise, support and equipment.

The Helena Education Foundation plans to fund up to \$20,000 for spring 2004 grants. For more information on the Great Ideas Grants program or the Foundation, please contact Executive Director, Cindy Lewis, at 443-2545 or hef@mt.net or at www.helena-edfoundation.org.