



Great ideas from Helena public school educators

Helena Education Foundation awards 18 Great Ideas Grants and Spark Grants



GREAT IDEAS GRANTS

Bengals Bettering Montana

Educators: Missy Sampson, Christine Thennis, Tyler Hollow, Julie Ladd, Jamie O'Malley, and Jason Selong, Helena High School

HHS Biology II students will base out of Rich Ranch in Seeley for day trips around a region where all of the species that were known to exist when Meriwether Lewis made his return trip along the Blackfoot River in 1806 still exist. This doesn't happen by luck; it happens because community members work together. Students will see first-hand how people in a small Montana community make decisions that benefit the greater good. They will have face-to-face conversations that inspire them to leave our state better than we found it.

Sponsor: Bill and Judy Walters

Creativity Engagement Lab

Educator: Cindy Galbavy, Helena High School

New tools and materials will allow students to try out creative new projects like making bracelets out of old silverware with a new bracelet bender. Metal, leather, acrylics and wood are also inspiring new materials to use with a laser engraver or a ring bender, both purchased with a previous grant. Students will master industry requirements such as measurement and tool safety. Experience working with a variety of equipment and materials will give students a broad understanding of the technology applications and expand their options for career paths.

Sponsor: First Interstate BancSystem Foundation

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

Educator: Kasey Askin and Jake Spearson, Helena High School

This grant will fund the purchase of materials needed for Architecture Design students to transform the HHS Law & Justice classroom into a simulated courtroom, complete with a judge's bench, witness stand, and a jury box. Students will gain experience in listening to a customer's needs, developing a plan, collaborating with a team, applying knowledge of material dimensions, and other skills necessary in the real world of construction. This hands-on opportunity for a student-led design and build will also benefit the students in Law & Justice classes and Mock Trial club for years to come.

Sponsor: Morrison-Maierle

Inspiring Tomorrow's Journalists

Educator: Jill VanAlstyne, Helena High School

In today's era of misinformation, this grant will encourage budding journalists to help build informed communities. It provided funds for the HHS journalism class to travel to the University of Montana's "High School Journalism Day" where they and other journalism students from around the state participated in workshops taught by professors of the UM Journalism School. The grant also brought journalist Clay Scott, who formerly worked for Monitor News and ABC News, to work with students in class.

Sponsor: Pat Hunt In Memory of Chuck Johnson

Rocket Stove Welding Fabrications

Educator: Ted Riehl and Tom Kain, Capital High School

Having the funds to purchase metal for fabricating rocket stoves means a fun end of year project for CHS welding students, each of whom will take home a functional tool. A Rocket stove is an energy efficient wood burning stove that can be welded from common materials. Initially designed for use in third world countries, it is also a recommended survival tool because it produces high heat with a small amount of wood. In building their stoves, students will utilize multiple skills they have acquired through this year: measurement, drafting, metal prep, multiple welding processes and final finish methods.

Sponsor: Dick Anderson Construction

Escape from the Science Room

Educator: Justi Owens and Sara Grotho, Helena Middle School

Twenty Escape Room Kits and twenty Expansion Kits will facilitate creative and engaging science lessons in which the students will collaborate in groups using problem-solving skills to solve science-related clues and riddles. If you've ever done an escape room before, you are familiar with how fast an hour can fly and how your mind is engaged in critical thinking for every second of that hour. This aptly-titled project will provide ongoing opportunities for students to step outside their normal classroom activities and into a fun, student-centered, and engaging environment that allows them to "escape" the norm of day-to-day activities.

Sponsor: Allegiance Benefit Plan Management



Creating the Future with Robots

Educator: Jena Marshall, Warren Elementary School

OZOBOT robot and robot crawler kits will offer students an engaging robotics and coding program unlike anything they have now. Small groups will build robots to solve various exciting challenges. Students will learn that they can code using markers and paper or use the visual programming app with five skill levels. These robot and robot crawler kits will be enough for endless challenges for any age and add a new level of problem solving, collaborative learning, technological career readiness and critical thinking skills to our STEM curriculum.

Sponsor: DOWL

3 Dimensional Dreams: Fabricating Enrichment

Educator: Jake Warner and Christina Sieminski, Capital High School & PEAK

Teachers will use a new 3D-printer to create a collaborative environment between high school robotics and middle school students in the PEAK program. The printer will open a world of possibilities for students, allowing them to design and create their own 3D models, and providing them with hands-on tangible experiences in problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking. The program will spark interest in STEM fields, boost interest in high school robotics/computer science programs, and give students valuable college and career applicable skills and experience.

Sponsor: PacificSource

SPARK GRANTS

A Day With No Words

Educator: Miranda Parisi and Gabe Furshong, Central Elementary School

The grant purchased the children's book *A Day With No Words* for the Central School library as well as a classroom set of books for the Trailhead program to use and distribute. The book is a moving portrait of a boy with autism and the communication challenges he faces as he goes through a typical day. The book also reveals the subtle (and not-so-subtle) bias that people with autism encounter in their communities. The book, written by the mother of a child with autism, handles tough questions very carefully and is a great teaching story.

Sponsor: GardenWerks

Bruins Talk: Moments of Gratitude

Educator: Kathy Kidder, Capital High School

The grant helps to foster a positive school culture at Capital High School by purchasing seals with the Bruin Capital Code (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be a Graduate) for classrooms that currently lack them or that need replacements. These logos remind students to strive to live the code and be good ambassadors inside and outside the walls of Capital High School. The grant will also purchase cards for students to use in a school-wide effort to reflect and write thank-you notes to people who have positively impacted them.

Sponsor: Helena Sand and Gravel

Brushing Up On Drums

Educator: Sarah Dramstad, Four Georgians Elementary School

With two new varieties of drums (a large/bass tubano and hand drums of varying sizes) and two varieties of brushes (drum brushes and paint brushes), students will have opportunities to explore timbre, movement, rhythm, and tactile beat-keeping experiences, and to dip their toes into a bit of jazz history. The large tubano drum will allow older students to play multipart percussion music, and the paint brushes are a soft, tactile experience that especially engage kids who are sensory-seeking, allowing them to "paint" the beat on their hands, arms, or legs.

Sponsor: Tim Speyer

Creating Multi-Language Lifelong Learners

Educator: Timothy Belliveau, Helena High School

This grant will provide bilingual Spanish-English high interest chapter books to a range of students by building the print collection in the HHS library. Although the novels will connect with English Language high school newcomers, the books will also support advanced learners of Spanish in the district. This application seeks to foster biliteracy for students and to support the growing English proficiency of our English Language Learners by offering engaging, high interest, and culturally relevant reading materials in both Spanish and English in the school library.

Sponsor: Jack Stults and Daphne Crosbie

CC Lab Oasis

Educator: Matthieu Oppedahl, Helena High School
A classroom with no windows is a bit drab. A couch and some artificial trees create a cozy area for Special Education students to use as a refuge. Relaxing in the new oasis will be an incentive for students to catch up on work and do well academically.

Sponsor: Cory Wood

Dancing Lights

Educator: Jennifer Skogley, Smith Elementary School
A collection of new books about Norwegian culture will allow for a collaboration between music and library educators. These books will introduce students to Norwegian culture and the wonder of the Aurora Borealis through folk tales, classical music history, folk dancing, and science!

Sponsor: Chris Christensen, In Memory of Helen Christensen

Making Music Mobile

Educator: Caitlin Cantrell, Jefferson Elementary School
A bass instrument cart will provide mobility for the largest Orff instruments: bass xylophones and metallophones. Students enjoy these instruments because they add depth and warmth; however it is arduous to move them around the music room or from the music room to the auditorium. With a cart, it will be easier and more comfortable for students to play in a standing position, and to move them to the performance space easily. The cart will protect the instrument, enable students to play with the proper technique, and allow students to showcase their skills through performing.

Sponsor: Amy and Michael Strainer

Settle in for a Special Story

Educator: Jennifer Schaefer, Jim Darcy Elementary School

Each week, kindergartners at Jim Darcy welcome a Mystery Reader to the classroom to share a story with them. This grant will furnish an area that feels like home for students to settle down and be comfortable with the weekly guest. The special story area will help ensure that they think of reading as a warm and comforting experience and help develop lifelong readers.

Sponsor: Tempest Technologies

To date, the Helena Education Foundation has awarded

535 grants

totalling more than \$898,638

208 High School Grants

16 PAL Grants

81 Middle School Grants

240 Elementary Grants

The Helena Education Foundation Grants programs enhance the education and experiences of virtually all of Helena's nearly 8,000 students.



Stonetree Climbing

Educator: Brooke Kupcho, Project for Alternative Learning
Because PAL does not have a gymnasium, when winter comes, PAL gets creative and partners with local businesses to offer a wide range of physical activities to students. Stonetree Climbing Center is a great ally to PAL and works wonderfully with kids. This grant will enable a 3-week block taught at Stonetree Climbing Center and provide a Stonetree punch card for PAL students to use to make up PE credits. Getting these students in a community setting, doing healthy activities, is one of the greatest gifts we can provide them.

Sponsor: Intrepid Credit Union

Trips to the Past with Memories that Last

Educator: Katie Merritt, Warren Elementary School
Warren second graders will take a field trip, riding the Tour Train to visit our state Capitol, where students will take a tour and learn more about how and when the Capitol was built and about people important to Montana history. Then students will ride the Tour Train to continue with their history lessons around Helena. These experiences will allow students to learn more about where they live.

Sponsor: Aidan Myhre

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Jack Stults and Daphne Crosbie
Cory Wood
Chris Christensen, In Memory of Helen Christensen
Amy Strainer
Tempest Technologies
Intrepid Credit Union
Aidan Myhre

Great Ideas and Spark Grants empower educators to go beyond what's expected to create novel and foundational experiences for Helena students. All grants are named for major donors to the Helena Education Foundation; please contact HEF if you are interested in sponsoring a Great Ideas or Spark Grant.

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