

From Epilogs to Ozbots

Cedarburg Education Foundation comes through with funds for all kinds of projects

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CEDARBURG – During the past 11 years, the Cedarburg Education Foundation has awarded more than a half-million dollars in grants throughout the Cedarburg School District.

While those funds have underwritten a variety of initiatives and programming, they've also funded things that are hard to put a price tag on: creative thinking, innovative thought, unique experiences and opportunities Cedarburg students may not have had otherwise.

"The CEF funds grants across the district," said CEF President Julie Cosich. "One of the things that excites me most about being a CEF volunteer is that we get to touch kids at all levels. Our efforts give them opportunities to explore and learn more about themselves."

Not to be confused with the Cedarburg Community Scholarship Fund (a common misconception, according to board members), the CEF provides a means for schools, individuals and businesses to work together to help students achieve their potential by providing financial support through private funding.

"The CEF really goes across the entire district," said CEF Secretary Stacy Tolomeo.

The variety of grants funded since 2006 has ranged from the Riveredge Scientist in Residence program to iPads used for music programming, an Epilog laser for the metals and woodworking classes and upgrades to Cedarburg High School's business classroom. CEF grant funds have also been used for the Westlawn MakersSpace program and the elementary school Ozbots, among other initiatives.

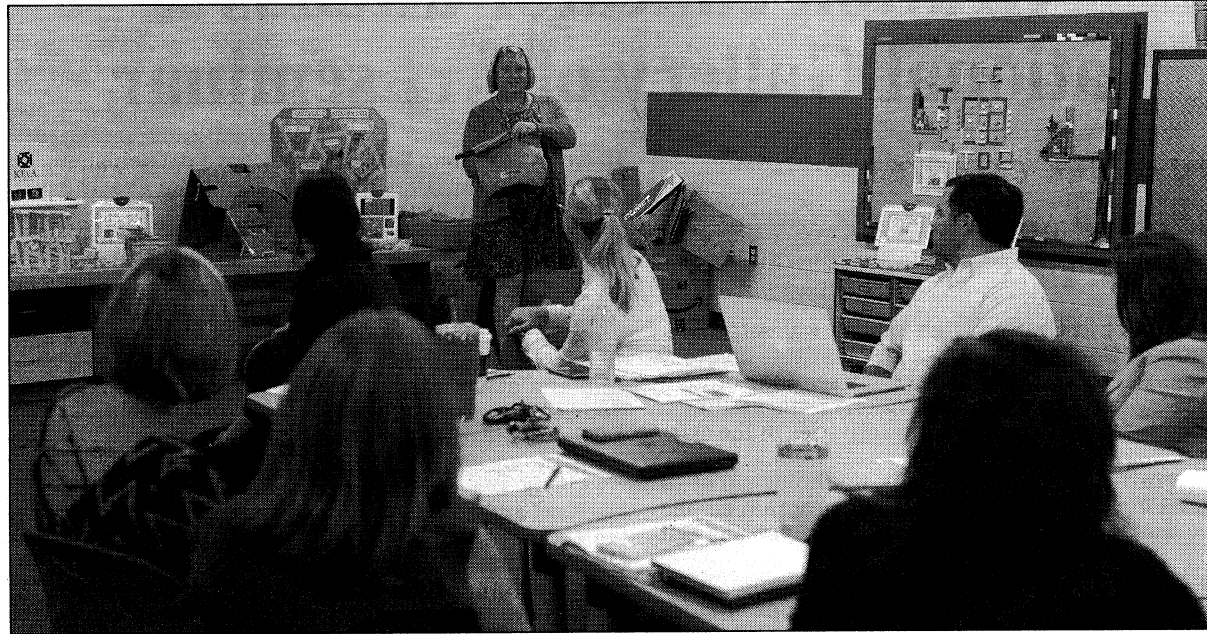


Photo by Mark Justesen

Westlawn Elementary School Principal Katie Ramos shows members of the Cedarburg Education Foundation some of the projects that were made in the MakersSpace, which was funded through a CEF grant.

In 2017, the CEF awarded \$22,500 for seven different initiatives throughout the district.

"We've always based our grants on teacher input," Cosich said. "More recently, we've started working with the school district to connect the grants to the long-range master plan. It's continually a work in progress; we don't want to stifle ideas, but we try keep moving the alignment with the district."

She said that teachers also express this sense of collaboration.

"Our grant applications aren't just for a single classroom anymore," she said. "It's interesting because the teachers are thinking beyond that, they're thinking beyond 'my classroom' and how it could benefit the entire grade or school."

"Our world is changing; the school district has an even better pulse on what educators need to go forward and what skills future jobs need," said Board Member Brooke Napiwocki.

Starting this year, the CEF is also working on a process for grant requests exceeding \$10,000, which includes developing a business plan, establishing a return-on-investment goal and having funding available for larger projects.

Additionally, the CEF is now collaborating with corporate and individual donors interested in not only providing contributions for these bigger-ticket grants, but being involved in the selection process.

"As of right now, we have at least eight potential donors like this,"

said Cosich.

That isn't to say the foundation doesn't rely on or welcome smaller contributions, which have been the backbone of its efforts since its inception. Each year, the CEF's major fundraiser is the annual fall bash, which is set for Nov. 10 at the Cedarburg Cultural Center.

"We hope to raise \$65,000 this year," she said.

Among the events that are being finalized is a reverse auction, which will help expand the number of robotics teams active in the district. The CEF is still seeking items for its silent and live auction as well.

The annual bash also holds an example of how the CEF works with the schools: it's an actual learning experience for CHS busi-

Save the date

The CEF Fall Bash set for Nov. 10 This year's Cedarburg Education Foundation Fall Bash will briefly turn Washington Avenue in Cedarburg into Manhattan's Madison Avenue with a Mad Men theme. Presented by Partnership Bank, this year's bash will be held at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. The event begins at 6 p.m. with dinner at 6:30 p.m., followed by silent and live auctions, raffles and dancing. Attendees are encouraged to dress in Mad Men-era attire, which was celebrated in the show about advertising executives at Sterling Cooper in the '60s. New this year is a streamlined process for purchasing event tickets, bidding in auctions via a cell phone (even if you can't attend the bash) and donating to CEF. Look for the Givesmart icon on www.cef4kids.org/2018-fall-bash/.

For more information or to get involved, email info@cef4kids.org.

ness students. Teacher Jenna Zieman and her students are creating a marketing plan around the 50/50 raffle.

Two students will also have a new opportunity this year to learn a little more about the CEF with the creation of the foundation's new junior ambassador program. The program will give the students the opportunity to see how the foundation works, but also the ability to promote it more among high school students.

More information about the CEF can be found at <http://www.cef4kids.org/>.