



NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT FOUNDATION

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ph. 503-614-1401
5825 NE Ray Circle, Hillsboro OR 97124
Toll-free in Oregon: 1-888-990-7500
www.nwresdfoundation.org

PRESS RELEASE

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Hillsboro-based Special Education Foundation awards 17 grants benefitting 3,500 students in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and Washington County

The Northwest Regional Education Service District Foundation, under the direction of President Dr. Joseph Christy, awarded \$29,726 in grants to educators November 7. The grants will support teaching and learning for over 3,500 children with disabilities and those who are at-risk, birth to age 21, in the Northwest corner of Oregon (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and Washington counties).

Since 2006, the Foundation has awarded 430 grants totaling \$377,400, making a difference in the lives of 50,600 young children, students, and their families.

Grants are awarded based on their impact in one of four areas:

1. Birth to 5 Special Education
2. Early Learning/Kindergarten Readiness
3. School-age Special including alternative, at-risk, and behavioral programs through age 21
4. English Language Learners and Migrant Education

FULL LIST OF AWARD

Increasing cultural competencies for preschoolers with communication disorders	\$599
Washington County - NWRESD - Hillsboro Early Childhood Special Education Center	Jennifer Coffey & Jill Rulis

This grant will be used to purchase Spanish-language versions of books and other material used in the program's monthly curriculum. Of the 108 children age 3 to 5 identified with a communication disorder who attend a speech and language group at the Hillsboro center, 38 percent are bilingual/English Language Learners, with 33 percent speaking Spanish as their first language. The grant funds will help the program reflect the diversity of the students served and allow the children to interact with lessons via visual aids in both Spanish and English.

Inclusive theater production by students with and without disabilities	\$1,980
Washington County - Forest Grove School District - Forest Grove High School Unified Theater	Jill Hertel

Forest Grove High School's Unified Theater program combines students with and without disabilities who practice and perform a play together; providing teens with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the arts and fostering inclusion at the school and in the community. This grant will fund royalties for the scripts (the biggest cost of putting on the production) allowing the program to put on six performances in schools and the community.

Improving access to education for young children with vision impairments **\$2,621**

Washington County - NWRES D Vision Department

Kimberly Medlin

This grant will provide adaptive book-making materials to help children, birth to age 5, diagnosed with cortical visual impairment (CVI) process visual information. CVI occurs when there is trauma or damage to the visual pathways in the brain; their eyes may look typical, but the brain cannot process what the eyes are seeing. Children with CVI may appear to function as being blind, but can be taught to see when provided access to specialized materials, and supported with strategies that are coordinated between teaching staff and caregivers. Currently 88 percent of the applicant's caseload of children birth to age 5 have a diagnosis of CVI. [*Typical children's books are visually complex and need to be simplified using three-dimensional textured objects placed on black backgrounds.]*

Supporting learning for children with autism **\$464**

Washington County – NWRES D's Beaverton Early Childhood Special Education Center

Joy Lamb

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects the development of social, communication and play skills, limiting a child's development of sharing, imagining, and responding to others. This grant will allow the Beaverton Early Childhood Special Education Center to purchase cause-and-effect and 'pretend' materials and supplies to teach children severely impacted by autism. The materials and toys often have a sensory component, such as lights, sounds, or movement to keep the child engaged.

Calming corners for five kindergarten classrooms in the Hillsboro School District **\$1,878**

Washington County – Hillsboro School District classrooms supported by NWRES D Motor Team staff

Jan Cuciti

Many students with autism seek specific sensory input to regulate their emotional and behavioral responses to sensory stimulation. 'Proprioceptive' inputs involve the muscles and joints to provide a sense of body awareness. Funds will purchase material to support proprioceptive activities to enhance student's learning by helping them achieve a calm and alert state; improving emotional wellbeing and the ability to engage and learn. Examples of items to be purchased are weighted lap and neck pads, gel floor tiles, and weighted floor puzzles.

Sensory room where students can take a break and learn self-regulation skills **\$2,000**

Clatsop County - Astoria School District - Lewis and Clark Elementary

Korie Blacker

This grant will support Lewis and Clark Elementary School in developing a safe space for students who require additional emotional support. The sensory room will provide services to students while letting them continue to be part of their classroom community by addressing their sensory needs in the least restrictive environment. The room will be used proactively by identifying students with patterns of disruptive behavior and having them practice calming skills, which will help all students to have longer periods of in-class seat time. Trained staff will work with students and give them the tools and skills they need for self-regulating.

Flexible seating option for high school learning resource center **\$812**

Clatsop County - Astoria School District - Astoria High School Learning Resource Center

Kathleen Kelly

This grant will be used to purchase a variety of flexible seating options to provide students using the Learning Resource Center with the supports they need to engage, participate, and stay involved in their learning experience for as long as possible.

Calming corners for Hilda Lahti Elementary School **\$2,400**

Clatsop County - Knappa School District - Hilda Lahti Elementary Special Education Department

Leila Collier

Calming Corners are safe places for students to go to calm themselves using pre-taught strategies for a short period of time. They are a positive place where they can go to keep their emotions in check, using strategies to calm themselves, and allowing learning to continue. This grant will fund the purchase a variety of material including partition shields to allow students privacy while in the Calming Corners, calming strategies posters, and bean bags seating.

Intensive reading intervention for elementary school students with learning disabilities	\$2,572
Columbia County - Scappoose School District	Whitney Hessong
<i>This grant will allow the school district to purchase intensive-level reading interventions and professional development to support elementary school students with learning disabilities and those who need intensive reading instruction to make academic growth. Funds will purchase research-based reading fluency and phonics intervention curriculum and provide professional development to deliver the highest quality instruction to students and support school staff to implement the programs with fidelity.</i>	
Improving opportunities for non-verbal and emerging readers in Tillamook	\$2,094
Tillamook County - Tillamook School District - Tillamook High School Life Skills Program	Cynthia Tuel
<i>This grant will support non-verbal and emerging readers with varying degrees of disabilities in the Tillamook High Life Skills program. Students will receive phonics-based instruction with the 'Talkies' curriculum in conjunction with 'GoTalk Pocket' augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) aids that will help them learn to communicate and interact with their peers, families, and staff.</i>	
Facilitating communications for students with disabilities	\$2,514
Tillamook County - Nestucca Valley School District - Nestucca Valley Elementary Life Skills Program	Russ Sanders
<i>This grant will be used to purchase six iPads customized with apps to best fit the communication and educational needs of K-6 students receiving special education services in the school's life skills program. Individualized language arts and mathematics curriculum will be selected according to their unique needs and strengths. The iPads will facilitate each student's communication with peers, parents and school staff, increasing their self-confidence and support the development of independent living and problem-solving skills.</i>	
Resources to support early writing for preschool special education learners	\$2,158
Washington County - NWRESD - Hillsboro Earl Childhood Special Education Center	Carlene Smith
<i>This grant will help provide a sound foundation for early handwriting for pre-school special education learners, reducing frustration and the need for error correction in later schooling years. Hanen 'Handwriting without Tears' curriculum teaches the basic principles of how to hold a writing implement, where to start letters and how to make letters in a developmentally appropriate way.</i>	
Supporting connections to math for kindergarten students with disabilities	\$749
Washington County - Sherwood School District - Middleton Elementary	Jenny Marietta
<i>This grant will enhance learning for K- 6 students with varying degrees of disabilities who struggle to understand math and number concepts. Funds will be used to purchase 'Touch Math', a multi-sensory program designed to engage and produce results for all learning styles. The students will be able to see, say, hear, touch, and learn math in ways that are not just paper, pencil, and traditional methods.</i>	
Technology to support speech-to-text writing for 3rd-6th grade students with special needs	\$1,235
Washington County - Hillsboro School District - Patterson Elementary Resource Ed Center	Betsy Bowman
<i>This grant will be used to purchase a set of five Chromebooks and headsets with microphones for the Educational Resource Center (ERC) to support students with various disabilities—including Specific Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Emotional Disturbance. Students will be able to work on writing assignments during their time in the ERC where they can receive one-on-one support. Using speech-to-text technology, students will be able to compose multi-paragraph narratives, opinion essays, and informational/research essays.</i>	

LYNN WILLIAMS GRANTS

2018-19

The following grants have been awarded specifically through donations received in memory of long-time ESD employee, Lynn Williams. Lynn passed away unexpectedly January 10, 2018, but her memory lives on through the awarding of grants in her honor every year.

STEM field trip and journals for students who are Deaf Hard of Hearing **\$250**
Washington County – NWRESD’s K-8 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program at Groner Elementary **Karlyn Weaver**

Students in grades K-6 in the Deaf Hard of Hearing program at Groner Elementary will have the opportunity to investigate a unit of science-based inquiry that ties their strong visual abilities to the subject they are learning by visiting the ‘Science of Dreams’ exhibit at the Portland Children’s Museum. Students will explore the ‘why’ behind dreams and keep a journal to help them express what they are learning in writing and drawings.

Training series for parents of children experiencing delays in their communication skills **\$3,000**
Washington County – NWRESD’s Beaverton and Tualatin Early Childhood Special Education Centers **Peggy Freund**

The ‘It Takes Two to Talk’ training series will be offered to eight families with children 2 to 3 years of age who are experiencing communication delays at both the Beaverton and Tualatin Early Childhood Special Education Centers. It is proven that when parents are more responsive and fine-tune how they talk with their children, children’s communication development is accelerated. In a comfortable group setting, parents learn how they can build their child’s language skills naturally during every day routines and activities.

The ‘More Than Words’ training series will be offered to eight families, with children 2 to 3 years of age with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or social communication difficulties at the Hillsboro Early Childhood Special Education Center. The series provides parents with practical strategies for addressing their child’s specific needs and building communication and social skills in daily routines and play.

Training series: Social communication skills for children with autism **\$2,400**
Washington County – Hillsboro Early Childhood Center (and one other location in a different county TBD) **Brenda Hancock**

Through this grant, 80+ parents, grandparents, or other caregivers will receive evidence-based training to increase social communication skills for children with autism and related disabilities.

The training, ‘Teaching Social Communication to Children With Autism (and related disabilities) or Project IMPACT (Improving Parents as Communication Teachers)’ is unique because it includes the key research-based component of individualized coaching sessions. During coaching sessions, parents or caregivers practice intervention strategies with their child in one-on-one sessions with trainers who provide individualized coaching and feedback, resulting in significant learning and skill growth.