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RELEASE IMMEDIATELY

**Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association Foundation Awards Grants  
For Innovation to Five Wisconsin High Schools**

Five Wisconsin high school innovative programs have been recognized by the Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association (WREA) Foundation, as part of the organization's annual "Challenge Award Program."

Each of the five schools received a \$2,000 check to support their program. The awards are given annually and are rotated each year from elementary schools, to middle schools, to high schools. The program is designed to recognize and encourage innovation at all levels of public schools.

This year's recipients were recognized for the following programs:

- Birchwood Schools (Birchwood) and High School Math Teacher Kevin Freitag, for the "Get Out There/Greening Your Math" program. The project was created in the summer of 2016 as a way to get students out of the classroom and into the outdoors for educational purposes. The summer classroom involves using tools the students have made for measuring trees and exposing them to careers in forestry. This course covers the concepts of tree geometry, surveying area, and basic trigonometry.
- Fond du Lac High School (Fond du Lac) and School Health and Safety Coordinator Marian Sheridan, for the "STAAND Parent/Teen Driving Contract" program. Students Taking Action Against Negative Decisions (STAAND) was started during the 2015-2016 school year. This program targeted issues of teen substance use and safe driving. The program partnered with the Sheriff's Department, Graphic Design Department at Fond du Lac High School, and the Driver's Educational Program. The Teen/Parent Driving Contract goes beyond the scope of the high school by working with a local business driving school.

- DC Everest Senior High School (Weston) and Director of Secondary Education Steve Pophal for “Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)” program. Beginning 2015-2016, twelve students went through the program. This a unique workforce and economic development that guides students through the process of creating and launching their own REAL business over the course of a school year. In eight months, graduates of YEA! go from being regular students to CEOs of their own companies.
- Brown Deer Middle/High School (Brown Deer) and Teacher-Library Media Specialist Stephanie Snyder for the “(Th)inkwell Online Literary and Visual Arts Journal” project. This program was conceived and implemented as an outlet for creative students. It is an authentic voice and audience for students to express original creative work, thoughts and opinions; a place to be seen and heard through art, publication, and speech. (Th)inkwell is a new, but growing artistic community who thrives not only by creating art but by being together and sharing their art.
- Deerfield High School (Deerfield) and Teacher – ACP Team Stacy Gloede “Deerfield Mentor Program” project. This program focuses on building relationships among students and staff with an emphasis on self-awareness. The program was developed in the 2015-2016 school year by three teachers who felt there was need to connect more with the students.

WREA Foundation President, Berland Meyer from Wausau, personally contacted each of the Challenge Award winners and spoke highly of all 72 applicants who competed for the five honors. “Every one of them was surprised and excited, and several shed more than a few tears! It sure gives us a good feeling to know how much our small grants are appreciated,” he said.

WREA, which organized in 1951, is a statewide association of more than 10,000 members and 60 local units. It is recognized for protecting the public pension fund, promoting public education, and providing member benefits. With a central office in Middleton, WREA maintains a strong lobbying presence to represent the views of the retired educational community.

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