



THE WREA FOUNDATION

The Charitable Arm of the
Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association

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PARK FALLS & GLIDDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS "MAKERSPACE MANIA" PROJECT

WINS WISCONSIN RETIRED EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION AWARD

Park Falls, WI – Park Falls & Glidden Elementary Schools and Elementary School Teacher Jessica Blue have been awarded \$2,000 by the Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association (WREA) Foundation. The award was given for the school's "Makerspace Mania" project.

The project was created in June 2017 for all pre-kindergarten through 5th grade students. The program allows students to explore a wide range of hands-on activities, experiment, create, team build, and problem-solve in a variety of ways not often found in a traditional classroom. One of the by-products of the failure without defeat philosophy has been the tendency of students to come forward to offer support and suggestions to others who are struggling or who have experienced failure.

Ms. Blue explained, "The Chequamegon School District is a small, rural district with a high percentage of students from low-income families. One of our goals is to expose students to activities that they would not likely experience outside of the Makerspace program. Through this exposure we encourage students to explore, discover, and grow their own interests and abilities. Another goal of the Makerspace program is to encourage students to have the courage to fail and the fortitude to continue trying."

She explained that some of the activities experienced by the younger students include building bridges and towers, exploring pumpkin guts, making marshmallow poppers, creating robots from recycled materials, and enjoying the freedom of exploratory play.

The funds will be used to purchase equipment for the Makerspace program. In the future, students will have more opportunities to utilize and expand their STEM skills. Some of the opportunities they hope to provide for the students include engineering and KEEVA Planks, creating circuits, coding robots, building musical instruments, designing and building marble runs, creating mosaic art with Rubik's Cubes, deconstructing electronics, and growing potatoes.

The financial award is part of an annual “Challenge Award” program sponsored by the WREA Foundation. It recognizes ten schools each year, in each of the five statewide regional districts that comprise WREA. From year to year, the awards are rotated from elementary schools, to middle schools, to high schools, every third year.

Park Falls & Glidden Elementary Schools is one of five innovative elementary school projects to be awarded \$2,000 this year, for a total of \$10,000 donated by the WREA Foundation. The other projects awarded were Algoma School District (Algoma), Oaklawn Elementary School (Menomonie), The School for Agriculture and Environmental Studies (Fox Lake), and Sandhill Elementary School (Stoughton).

In addition to the first-place winners, five second place winners were awarded \$250.00 each for their innovative projects. The schools include: Lakeview Elementary School (Neenah), Oostburg Elementary School (Oostburg), Whitehall Memorial Elementary School (Whitehall), Forest Ridge Elementary School (Oak Creek), and Rio Elementary School (Rio).

The WREA and the WREA Foundation are independent, non-profit organizations representing more than 10,000 retired educators across the state of Wisconsin. Their primary focus is to support and protect the retirement interests and needs of its members, and to advocate for public schools. Both organizations are located at 6405 Century Avenue, Suite 201, Middleton, WI 53562.

WREA, which was organized in 1951, is a statewide association of more than 10,000 members and 62 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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