

**Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association Foundation**  
**Report from the Board of Trustees**  
**September 27, 2016**

The WREA Foundation has had a busy and successful year. Operating for the second year under our new constitution we have stayed true to our mission and have developed options to increase the reserves available to fund our activities. The Trustees have worked hard to see that the WREA Foundation is responsible with the funds entrusted to it and have been creative in promoting the ideals to which we are dedicated. The WREA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of WREA with a focus directed at teacher grants and outreach program advocacy.

The WREA Foundation Board of Trustees includes: Berland Meyer, President; Doug Chickering, Treasurer; Vic Bekkum, WREA Liaison; Bill Shirer, member; Mary Heisler, Vice President; Carol Lamp, member; Shirley Sweet, member; and Diane Wilcenski, Executive Director. As of October 1, 2016 the Board of Trustees will seat three members for a two-year term. Nominations for the three open Board of Trustee positions include Doug Chickering, Mary Heisler, and Berland Meyer.

This year the Foundation presented awards through its Challenge Award Grant program to a middle school program in each of WREA's five Districts. Over 85 schools submitted applications.

Each of the following schools received a check for \$2,000 to continue the development of their innovative program:

- District I - Lac Du Flambeau Public Schools - "Culturally Responsive Connections"
- District II - Parkview Middle School - Ashwaubenon - "Peer Mentor Club"
- District III - Edgar Public Schools - "The Power of Music"
- District IV - Riverside Middle School - Watertown - "Middle School Garden"
- District V - Blackhawk Middle School - Madison - "Rap for Change"

The WREA Foundation's new timeline, which moved the application schedule for the Challenge Awards to November 1<sup>st</sup>, encouraged more applicants. Our next Challenge Award Grants cycle will focus on high schools. We ask that WREA members encourage schools in their area to apply.

The WREA Foundation will present a "Teacher of the Year" Award at the 2016 WREA State Convention. We are pleased to announce that Roger King will receive this recognition at the Foundation luncheon at the WREA Convention. Mr. King is an agriscience high school teacher in the Holmen School District. A teacher for 31 years, Mr. King was recognized as the 2016 Wisconsin Teacher of the Year. We are proud of his achievement as he represents the many outstanding educators in the State of Wisconsin. He will receive a check for \$1,000 from the WREA Foundation. We recognize First Business Bank for graciously underwriting this annual award.

The Foundation Board of Trustees has offered \$100 to any WREA unit that implements an approved plan in coordination with the WREA Public Education Outreach Committee's current initiative to support public education. Approval of individual unit plans rests with the Public Education Outreach Committee. The WREA Foundation Board of Trustees is pleased with the success of this program and is happy to announce that the Board has voted to expand the program

to a fourth year of funding. Those units that participated in the initial years of funding are again eligible, along with all other WREA units, to receive an additional year of funding. We encourage you to get your local unit involved in this initiative.

For many years the WREA Foundation has given a scholarship to a graduating senior who is going on to pursue a career in education. Any local unit that gives a scholarship is eligible to have their recipient apply for the state scholarship. This year four students applied. Our \$1,000 scholarship for 2016 was awarded to Olivia Fry of the Reedsburg School District. We congratulate her and wish her well as she begins her work to become an elementary teacher.

Over time the WREA Foundation Board of Trustees has watched declining applications for our student scholarship. Despite efforts to increase participation only eight units submitted names to the WREA Foundation this year and only half of those nominated completed an application. As a result, the WREA Board of Trustees surveyed all WREA units to gain insight and information. Sixty-six percent of the units responded. The majority - nearly 75% - do not partake in this program. After careful consideration of the data collected, the WREA Board of Trustees voted to suspend the Student Scholarship Program effective August 1, 2016. In its place the WREA Board of Trustees is considering providing increased funding to classroom teachers and their innovative programs. We hope to have details about this effort available soon.

The WREA Board of Trustees has continued its initiative to honor the WREA Foundation's 20th year of existence. Our "\$20 for 20" campaign seeks to raise funds to build the WREA Foundation funds as we try to support more opportunities for philanthropic giving to local units and public education. So far our net collections are nearing \$13,000. Our goal is to raise in excess of \$20,000 - a thousand dollars for each year we have been in operation. We hope that you will help us reach this goal by making a donation.

The WREA Foundation Board of Trustees has moved funds into higher interest bearing accounts. The movement of these investments has proven to be worth the calculated minor increase in risk. Our fiscal position has been reviewed by our accountant and pronounced as solvent and responsible.

We expect to end the year with balanced assets and liabilities totaling \$526,283.13. The WREA Foundation's goal for 2016-17 is to increase the amount and the number of donations to the fund. We hope that all WREA members will make a donation to the WREA Foundation and possibly consider becoming a Legacy Fund Donor.

In summary, the WREA Foundation has had another successful year. We believe our efforts are an asset to the public education community and support the directions of WREA. We trust we can count on you as one of our supporters.

Submitted by: Berland Meyer, WREA Foundation President