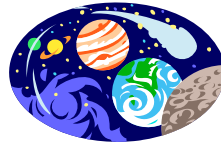


# Explore and Soar



## Rocky Hill Public Schools

### Explore and SOAR Mini-grants Round I Board of Education Report February 12, 2009

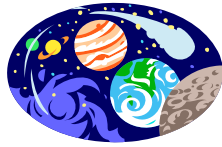
The Enrichment Committee will award nearly \$9,000 in grants during its second round of the 2008-2009 school years. Ten requests were submitted and five were approved. All of the funds granted aimed to strike a balance between schools, grades, disciplines and curriculum connections while working within the confines of the budget. Every effort was made to share ideas and programs across the district to establish equity among the schools.

#### Update on our Environmental Theme

Enrichment Coordinator, **Marguerite Alpert**, is working with Griswold Middle School principal, **Rick Watson**, to bring in Beth Byron-Piggush, Project Associate from the Clean Energy Task Force, along with Rebecca Meyer, a Program Administrator from Connecticut Light & Power for an April 21<sup>st</sup> Collaboration Day at Griswold Middle School. Plans are being made for two presentations focused on solar energy and hands-on science experiments to measure the effects of fuel spills in our environment. A visit by Channel 3 weatherman, Mark Dixon is also planned for the day. This program is available to our students at no cost to the district.

Wonderful environmentally-conscious art is going on at Stevens School! A creatively inspired art program called “**Penguins on Parade**” by art teacher, **Jilani Scherer**. They were inspired by the “Cows on Parade” in West Hartford. The penguins were made out of CoffeeMate containers, recycled egg cartons, cardboard and newspaper. These fabulous birds were showcased at the Cora J. Belden Library for two weeks. Opening night on January 28<sup>th</sup> was a huge success. Look for your January 30<sup>th</sup> Rocky Hill Post or the Rocky Hill Public Schools website for full article and photos.

Teacher, **Kristen Spain**, at Stevens School continues with her composting initiative. Her students (paired with a student from another fifth grade class) are responsible for emptying the fifth grade fruits and veggies into the composting bin. This program is in its beginning stage but promises to be a wonderful model for the school as well as the entire district.



### **District-wide programs**

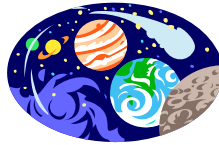
*These programs are coordinated by **Marguerite Alpert**,  
Enrichment Coordinator, K – 12.*

A **Target Field Trip grant** was received in early February to underwrite the transportation and supplies needed for the Third Grade Historical Community Walk in May. The historical sites that will be visited include: the Rocky Hill Ferry Landing, the Rocky Hill Volunteer Firefighters Museum, the Center Cemetery, Academy Hall, the Congregational Church and the Cora J. Belden Library. It is through the generous donation of time and effort on the part of volunteers at each of these locations that this field trip is possible. This program is available to our students at no cost to the district.

In April, Sharon Straka, Director of the Yale Center for the Teaching of French will visit French classrooms at Griswold Middle School and Rocky Hill High School. Ms. Straka will introduce our students to Aurélie Bessoles who is an intern visiting from France. Aurélie is serving as the assistant director at the center and will speak to our students about the schools and education in France, contemporary music, what social life is like for young people and what the organization of the school day is like in France. Teachers **Jacqueline Tower** and **Kathleen Lessard** will host the visitors from Yale. This program is available to our students at no cost to the district.

Also in April, author and adventurer, **Shelley Gill** will be visiting all elementary schools in the district. A self-described “whale detective, pony wrangler, dog musher and all-around fun hog”, Shelley Gill has authored many familiar children’s favorite books including: Kiana’s Iditarod, Alaska!, Mammoth Magic and Denali. She also has done the Iditarod – twice! Watch your newspaper for highlights on this very special author visit!

Explore and Soar funding joined with a federally funded inter-district grant linking Rawson School students from Hartford with students at Stevens School. (Our district was able to enjoy a substantial savings because we were able to schedule presentations for two schools in one day.) Young Audiences of Connecticut sent professional dancers from **Dance China, NY** to perform the Chinese Ribbon dance for all second graders in the district. This dance company takes audiences on a “tour” of the culture, customs and heritage of the People’s Republic of China. We would like to extend a special thank you to second grade teacher, **Marlene Grower**, for her many years of collaborating with Rawson School.



## **Explore and Soar granted requests for funding:**

### **Rocky Hill High School**

French teacher, **Kathleen Lessard**, was awarded funds to purchase a 24-pad Classroom Performance System (CPS) that will work with her classroom computer to track participation and accuracy of all of her students. The devices are referred to as handheld “clickers” that allow the teacher to immediately assess student’s progress. All student assessments are confidential as each student is assigned a keypad number that only the teacher has linking it to them. This CPS system increases classroom productivity and student engagement. This impressive technology can be used in many classrooms and also in large, conference type venues so its use can be extended far beyond this one classroom.

### **Steven’s School**

First grade teacher, **Patricia Saponare**, is bringing well-known weatherman Art Horn to speak about “The Wonders of Weather” for her students. This visit will bring to life the first grade science curriculum goals including concepts on the tools we use to measure the weather, meteorologists as scientists, weather as an ever-changing phenomenon and how weather affects our daily lives.