PPL Foundation grants empower STEM teachers and their students

Fifty educators receive funds to further science, technology and engineering projects

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — Agritechnology, hands-on robotics and coding, renewable energy development and digital literacy are just a few of the projects that will be made possible, in part, thanks to the PPL Foundation's Empowering Educators grants to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities.

Fifty teachers throughout eastern and central Pennsylvania were selected as recipients of 2021 Empowering Educators grants from the PPL Foundation. Each teacher receives a grant of $1,000 to spend on equipment and materials for projects.

"The PPL Foundation is proud to support the efforts and creativity of teachers who are helping their students experience the real-world value of science, technology, engineering and math through hands-on learning opportunities," said Lissette Santana, chief operating officer of the PPL Foundation. "This class of Empowering Educators grant recipients really highlights the innovation sparking to life in classrooms throughout our communities."

Since the grant program's inception in 2003, PPL, and now The PPL Foundation, have awarded more than $300,000 to 265 teachers.

For a complete list of 2021 grant recipients, please visit pplempoweringeducators.com.

Examples of the winning projects include:

- Amber Stewart, **Boiling Springs High School, Boiling Springs**, for a year-round agribusiness project in which students will develop and maintain hydroponic planting systems to grow fresh produce to be used in the school cafeteria.
- Samantha Masco, **Carbondale Area Jr./Sr. High School, Carbondale**, for the development of a tiny home that will teach students about research, design, architecture, energy use and resource consumption.
- Stephanie Beadle, **C.E. McCall Middle School, Montoursville**, for a renewable energy awareness project that will provide students opportunities for hands-on learning about ecology and sustainability. Projects include assembling wind turbines, witnessing the conversion of ethanol to electrical energy and generating electricity by combining hot and cold waters.
- Joe Williams, **Donegan Elementary School, Bethlehem**, for STEM kits that will allow teachers to integrate STEM concepts into various subjects, allowing students of different learning styles and levels to explore, create and discover at their own pace.
- Victoria Kozlek, **Hazleton Elementary/Middle School, Hazleton**, for a collaborative project in which students will animate scenes from literature, learning problem solving, coding, computational thinking and design skills.
- Jamiel Smoker, **Pequea Valley Intermediate School, Kinzers**, for a cross-curricular project that integrates woodshop with science and math lessons to allow students to explore creativity and engineering applications.
- Meagan Wentz, **Packer Ridge Academy, Lehighton**, for equipment needed to engage students in digital learning projects, such as creating a stop-motion animation video, virtual frog dissection and learning about space with the NASA Visualization Explorer.

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About the PPL Foundation
Through strategic partnerships, the PPL Foundation supports nonprofit organizations that are engaged in innovative and groundbreaking work to create vibrant, sustainable communities; advance diversity, equity and inclusion; and support children's success from cradle to career. The PPL Foundation contributes more than $3 million annually to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations in eastern and central Pennsylvania. To learn more, visit pplcares.com.

Editor's Note: For more information on the grant program, please visit pplempoweringeducators.com.

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