Teachers win big for STEM education

PPL Foundation awards 25 grants to empower educators who spark their students' imaginations

Allentown, PA (Nov. 21, 2017) – Roller coasters, robots and rockets may not be the traditional three R's of education, but for some innovative teachers these are just a few of the tools they are using to get students excited about learning. The PPL Foundation is helping them fuel that excitement through its Empowering Educators grants – announced today.

Teachers in 25 schools in eastern and central Pennsylvania were selected to receive $1,000 each as recipients of 2017 Empowering Educators grants from PPL Foundation.

The PPL Foundation Empowering Educators program is designed to help K-12 teachers provide hands-on learning opportunities to enhance the classroom experience and spark students' interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"Whether they are designing roller coasters to learn about aerodynamics, developing code through toy robots or using engineering skills to fly rockets, these experiences help bring school lessons to life in fun, interactive and innovative ways," said Lissette Santana, manager of corporate relations for PPL. "By fostering innovation in the classroom through the PPL Foundation's Empowering Educators Grants, we hope to give teachers the tools they need to inspire their students."

This year, PPL Foundation awarded $25,000 in Empowering Educators grants. Since the program's inception in 2003, PPL Foundation has awarded more than $205,000 to more than 140 teachers in schools in eastern and central Pennsylvania.

The following teachers are grant recipients:
- Jessica Mauro, Alburtis Elementary School, Alburtis, Pa., for supplies to develop inquiry-based projects that create future problem solvers.
- Kimberly Jacovelli, B.F. Morey Elementary, Stroudsburg, Pa., for materials for the school's MakerSpace, which is used by K-4 students.
- Lori Cirucci, Broughal Middle School, Bethlehem, Pa., for supplies needed for students to design and build roller coasters, lessons that incorporate science concepts, technology, engineering and math.
- Lindsay Garrett, Columbia High School, Columbia, Pa., for mBot robots that will introduce students to robotics and programming.
- Kathleen Alford, Crossroads Middle School, Lewisberry, Pa., for STEM Discovery Boxes to get students excited about science and give them a starting point to continue to research on their own.
- Jeanne Ladner, Danville Middle School, Danville, Pa., for a 3D printer that will teach students about AutoCad and the engineering design process.
- Cathy Tombasco, Drums Elementary Middle School, Drums, Pa., for robotics education kits to introduce students to coding.
- Lynette Miller, Fermanagh-Mifflintown Elementary, Mifflintown, Pa., for "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall; STEM Education is Fun for All!," which introduces first graders to STEM subjects through the familiar stories in fairy tales.
- Mark Shellaway, Freemansburg Elementary, Bethlehem, Pa., to expand the school's MakerSpace and create an after-school STEM program.
- Sara Eastman, Governor Mifflin Intermediate School, Shillington, Pa., for a student-lead project to transform the school's patio into an outdoor classroom using the engineering design process.
- Cait Clark and Yvonne Lessard, Hershey Early Childhood Center, Hershey, Pa., to create STEM Bins that can be used as teacher directed lessons or self-directed exploration.
- Janelle Bingaman, Highland Elementary School, Camp Hill, Pa., for Dash and Dot coding robots that teach students computer programming skills.
- Kayla Hack, Honesdale High School, Honesdale, Pa., for "What came first, the chicken or the egg?," a cross-curricular and cross-grade level life cycle science program.
- Ken Ehrmann, M.M. Seylar Elementary School, Perkasie, Pa., for a 3D printer and Sphero robot that will teach students communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.
- Christine Harman, Marticville Middle School, Pequea, Pa., for building sets that provide hands-on, engaging opportunities for students in designing and building machines to aide in understanding of topics such as force,

energy and simple machines.
- Colleen Beavers, NativityMiguel School of Scranton, Scranton, Pa., for "Exploring Local Fresh Water Ecosystems," in which students will use the scientific method to study the health of local fresh water ecosystems and engage in a STEM design project intended to improve the quality of a local fresh water habitat.
- Shane Corrigan, Our Lady of Lourdes Regional, Coal Township, Pa., for the Rocketry Club, which introduces students to the design and construction of original model rockets.
- Sean Flueso, Parkland High School, Allentown, Pa., for an interactive project that teaches students about electrical engineering.
- Heather Aulisio, Pocono Mountain East High School, Swiftwater, Pa., for a school-wide STEM fair for high school students.
- Matthew Wagoner, Red Land High School, Lewisberry, Pa., to create a STEM lab where students can apply classroom theory to practical use.
- Samantha McKenna, Saint Columba School, Bloomsburg, Pa., to set up a mobile STEM station with activity kits, math tools and materials for use by all students.
- Brent Kelchner, Southern Columbia Area Middle School, Catawissa, Pa., for "Sustainable (Net-Zero Energy) Building Design Project" that will engage students in a real-world scenario where they work as a design team to design sustainable buildings.
- Jeff Bonsall, Strayer Middle School, Quakertown, Pa., for the "Strayer Makers," a design and engineering club for 7th and 8th grade students.
- Susan Strada, Wallenpaupack Area South Elementary, Hawley, Pa., to launch a MakerSpace with a variety of STEM activities and materials for students in grades 3-5.
- Theresa Bartholomew, Warrior Run High School, Turbotville, Pa., to bring computer science opportunities to our students through discovery and exploration.

The teams will celebrate their completed projects during a reception in June 2018.

About the PPL Foundation
Through strategic partnerships, the PPL Foundation supports organizations that are doing innovative and groundbreaking work to create vital, sustainable communities and empowering each citizen to fulfill her or his potential. The PPL Foundation contributes more than $2 million annually to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations in eastern and central Pennsylvania.

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