

Perfect  Pitch  
**Communications**

**For Immediate Release  
January 10, 2008**

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**Learning “Grows” with Milton Foundation for Education Teacher Grants**

Jeff Stoodt, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher at Pierce Middle School, had a great idea. Since the new science curriculum for that grade includes an introduction to cells, bacteria, seeds and plants, he conceived a plan to build raised bed gardens that would allow current and future sixth-graders an opportunity to observe first hand the life cycle of annual plants. The only problem was that in a tight budget year, there was no funding available for the lumber, soil and seeds that he would need for his project. So Stoodt applied to the Milton Foundation for Education for a grant and was delighted to learn on December 21<sup>st</sup> that his request was approved.

The MFE recently awarded 19 grants totaling \$17, 233 to teachers throughout the Milton Public School system. A contingent of MFE board members surprised teachers in their classrooms on the last day before the holidays to present the grants. Pete Hoy, an MFE board member and chair of the grants committee, was very impressed with the grant requests he received this past fall. “We are extremely fortunate in our town to have teachers who are so creative and innovative in their approach to teaching,” Hoy said. “The MFE is grateful for this opportunity to recognize their efforts and enable them to expand their work to benefit more and more students.”

Twice a year, in the fall and spring, the Milton Foundation for Education reviews requests and awards grants to teachers and staff from every school in the public school system. While there is no minimum or maximum amount a teacher can request, the majority of the grants are in the \$200-\$2,000 range. This year, the grant amounts ranged from \$180 to \$2,600. The review committee includes MFE board members as well as teacher representatives from each of the six Milton public schools.

Jeff Stoodt knew the biggest benefit of his proposal was the rich and powerful learning experience that can take place outside of the classroom. “Research has shown that science scores go up when students are able to understand the real world applications of what they are studying in their textbooks,” Stoodt said. “By planting and growing vegetables, students not only gain a better appreciation for all that is involved in putting food on their plates, but they also learn communal responsibility and stewardship.”

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Other teacher grants awarded in December include: “Community Watershed Exploration” at local ponds (Mary Murphy, MHS); “Glover We are Family,” “ Tucker We are Family” literature collection (Lori Henry, Glover and Tucker); Math Equipment (Anne Murphy, Ann Saur, Susan McKay, Pierce); “Place Value Prescription” math supplies (Meaghan Medici, Collicot); “Publisher’s PENS” project for aspiring authors (Cathy Roach, Susan Donovan, Pierce/Glover); “Choose Your Words” literature collection (Caitlin Nichole Doering, Cunningham); Listening Literacy Centers (Mary Duggan, MHS); Costumes (Jeanne Roulleau, Pierce); “Brain Bank” non-fiction books (Laura McDermott, Collicot); Language Listening Centers (Anne-Marie Folino, Collicot); Literature Circles (Rina Chen, Collicot); “Global Connections” interactive globes and maps (Mary Downing-Tipping and Janet Finnegan-Kelly, Tucker); “Sensory Integration” resources (Anne-Marie Folino, Collicot); Listening Centers (Nahoko Vigneau, Tucker); Literacy Centers (Mary Rooney and Anne Marie Calnan, Cunningham); Software to Enhance Language Skills (Michelle Jensen, Collicot); and Cooperative Learning Centers (Tracy Attaya, Cunningham).

The Milton Foundation for Education is a private, non-profit organization established in 1996. Its mission is to enhance the quality of education provided to students in the Milton Public Schools. The Foundation generates and distributes financial resources for enrichment programs that would not otherwise be available through the regular school budget. Their goal is to supplement, not supplant the regular school budget. For more information on Milton Foundation for Education or on the recent teacher grants, please visit [www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org](http://www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org).

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