GAME CHANGERS

Charlotte Hornets Teacher Innovation Grant Program

Grant Impact Report:

Fall 2015 & Spring 2016 Cycles

Prepared November 2016

cms® Foundation
Developing a Culture of Schoolanthropy

The CMS Foundation's Teacher Innovation Fund was established in 2014 through a $250,000 investment from the Charlotte Hornets Foundation, Lowe's and FOX Sports Southeast. Through grants awarded to teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), the Fund helps educators implement programs and strategies to prepare students for college and career success.

The Charlotte Hornets Teacher Innovation Grant Program is the first program launched through the Fund. Since its start in 2014, 450 grant applications have been submitted by CMS educators from all grade levels and representing a variety of subject areas. To date, a total of 55 grants have been awarded to 67 teachers, impacting 45 schools throughout Mecklenburg County.

This report highlights the impact of the 17 grant-funded projects selected during the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 grant cycles.

FALL 2015

FALL 2015

Cycle 3

During the Fall 2015 grant cycle, 10 innovation grants totaling $44,000 were awarded to:

Bryant Bailey | Reid Park Academy

Marygrace Blubaugh | Morehead STEM Academy

Judy Caudle | Trillium Springs Montessori

Whitney Godfrey | River Gate Elementary

Rebeckah Hauss | Metro School

Kathryn Heinen & Bernadette MacLeod | East Mecklenburg High

Eboné Lockett & Curtis Overton | West Mecklenburg High

Chandra McCloud | Northwest School of the Arts

Michael Realon | Olympic Community of Schools

Michael Schultz | East Mecklenburg High

Grants supported projects in the following categories:

Arts & Culture, Career Readiness, Character Education, Entrepreneurship, Health & Fitness, Literacy, STEM

Bryant Bailey | Reid Park Academy
$5,000 | Health & Fitness

How he changed the game: Developed a fitness lab for students in middle school health and physical education classes

Reid Park Academy was originally designed as an elementary school. As a result, age-appropriate fitness options were not readily available when the school expanded to house middle school students. Bryant's fitness lab (complete with new dumbbells, racks and a Smart Cart Training System) enhanced health and physical education classes for approximately 300 students in grades 6-8. Students developed their own fitness plans based on personal goals, and members of the school's DREAM Team taught elementary students how to use the new equipment, encouraging them to make health and fitness a life-long priority.

Judy Caudle | Trillium Springs Montessori
$3,000 | Literacy | STEM

How she changed the game: Developed a Makerspace in the school's media center to enhance reading, writing, coding and other digital literacies

By creating a space for students to tinker and create, Judy sought to teach her students a critical life lesson: It's ok to fail—the path to success is paved with failures and constant curiosity is crucial. Students in grades 3-5 have utilized the Makerspace and circulation of nonfiction books in the school's media center increased by 10% as students sought additional resources to help them with projects using materials in the new space. The school also held a technology symposium where students presented their work to school leaders and teachers. Judy plans to provide times for students in grades 1-2 to begin using the Makerspace during the 2017-2018 school year.

Bonus Points: The Makerspace is often used by the school's counselor during group and one-on-one support sessions with students, meeting social-emotional needs in addition to its original purpose.

Whitney Godfrey | River Gate Elementary
$5,000 | STEM

How she changed the game: Acquired 12 LEGO Robots, a 3D printer and additional supplies to support her all-girls STEM club, STEMPossible

Noticing an achievement gap between her male and female students in science, Whitney started STEMPossible to encourage female students to explore STEM topics and inspire them to take on engineering challenges. With the new equipment, nearly 60 girls have been introduced to robotics and have access to new STEM learning opportunities. The school is also starting a competitive robotics club.

Bonus Points: Students from the Olympic High School Honor Society joined the effort and helped build the robots for the elementary students to program.

Rebeckah Hauss | Metro School
$5,000 | Career Readiness | Character Education | Entrepreneurship

How she changed the game: Provided community experiences and hands-on, school-based activities to help her students build critical career and life skills

Metro School serves students with severe physical and/or cognitive needs. Focusing on approximately 80 students in the high school and transition levels (ages 14-22), Rebeckah took her students into the community to expose them to potential job opportunities. One experience included a trip to a Charlotte Knights baseball game, where students learned about jobs in different areas of stadium operations. Another introduced students to see jobs available in restaurant service. Rebeckah also helped students start small businesses within the school to practice skills such as budgeting and bookkeeping, and to earn and save money. Student operations include a school store and thrift shop and greeting card, jewelry making and paper shredding businesses.

Kathryn Heinen & Bernadette MacLeod | East Mecklenburg High School
$5,000 | Arts & Culture | Literacy

How they changed the game: Through a collaborative effort between the school's Arts and Technology departments, put on a student production of the musical *Footloose*

East Mecklenburg High School had not put on a musical in 24 years. That changed March 2016 when Kathryn and Bernadette's students put on a successful production of *Footloose.* The show, which came together with the help of more than 200 students in grades 9-12, sold out each of the three evenings it was presented. This project supported the school's larger efforts to engage the community surrounding the school. In addition to creating a more inclusive environment for students, it brought in new community members, alumni and families of current students. For some, this was their first experience with an event at East Mecklenburg High.

Eboné Lockett & Curtis Overton | West Mecklenburg High School
$5,000 | Arts & Culture | Literacy

How they changed the game: Launched the "Full STEAM Ahead" initiative, equipping West Mecklenburg High School with machinery to enhance theater production and integrate STEM learning into language and theater arts curricula

To sustain the momentum generated through a previous Hornets grant-funded project that helped revitalized the school's theater program, "Full STEAM Ahead" provided students with a 3D carving machine and materials to produce stage sets and props in-house. The project included school-based residencies with local artists and provided students access to various cultural experiences in the community. Students also addressed design challenges in their school and have started a school store to sell custom products.

Bonus Points: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is planning to build a curriculum based on this interdisciplinary project.

Science
Science
Science
Science

Thursday
Folders

Newton's 2nd Law
Newton's 1st Law
An object at rest
Stays at rest
An object in motion
Stays in motion with
a force is applied
Potential energy - Stored
Transpiration
Velocity - speed &
direction

Chandra McCloud | Northwest School of the Arts
$5,000 | Arts & Culture

How she changed the game: Expanded the NWSA Repertory Scholarship Program, an initiative started to help students secure dance-based scholarships and other development opportunities

The NWSA Repertory Scholarship Program brings professional choreographers to work with dance students through an intensive-style model and culminates in a student showcase at Charlotte Ballet. This grant supported the program's second year, which yielded scholarships and other opportunities for 35 students valuing over $180,000 (an increase of 10 students and $80,000 from the previous year). Students not only increased dance proficiency, but also developed resume-writing, networking, interviewing and marketing skills. The 2016 event secured a yearly student audition and scholarship for NWSA dance students from American Dance Festival, and increased dance scholarships from La Roche College and summer intensive opportunities hosted by Johnson C. Smith and Winthrop universities.

Michael Realon | Olympic Community of Schools
$5,000 | STEM | Career Readiness | Character Development

How he changed the game: Provided hands-on, project-based STEM learning through a Habitat for Humanity house build on the Olympic campus

At Olympic, a Habitat for Humanity home build is integrated into the curriculum for students in construction courses. For this build project, 155 students in grades 9-12 participated. Students gained real-world entrepreneurial and industry experience, raising funds for land and supplies and ensuring the house could pass inspection before being sold. The project also increased students' access to local employers and potential job opportunities as business and volunteers were engaged to help complete the project.

Michael Schultz | East Mecklenburg High School
$1,000 | Arts & Culture | Literacy

How he changed the game: Increased students' knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement and enhanced East Mecklenburg High School's collection of Civil Rights resources

Michael created a 3-part Civil Rights-focused project that included a letter-writing campaign, exhibit (secured with help from Levine Museum of the New South), and a guest lecture with Charles Person, one of the original Freedom Riders.

More than 800 students in grades 9-12 (nearly 60% of the school's students) directly interacted with the various elements of the Civil Rights project. Seventy-five students from 6 different classes participated in a letter-writing campaign that brought in new books and resources for the school's media center. Roughly 300 students attended the lecture by Charles Person, with an additional 500 visiting the Civil Rights exhibit and completing projects based on the experience.

SPRING 2016

SPRING 2016

Cycle 4

During the Spring 2016 grant cycle, 7 innovation grants totaling $33,000 were awarded to:

Charlotte Fletcher | Park Road Montessori

Brooke Fulton | University Park Creative Arts Schools

Toni Hall | Rocky River High

Cynthia Hira & Liliana Forero | Collinswood Language Academy

Wendy Neisler | Berryhill School

Barry Sherman | Bruns Academy

Elijah Watson | Ranson IB Middle

Grants supported projects in the following categories:

Arts & Culture, Character Education, Entrepreneurship, Literacy, STEM

Charlotte Fletcher | Park Road Montessori
$5,000 | STEM

How she changed the game: Restored the school's pond to provide a more user-friendly outdoor classroom and bring science lessons to life

More than 500 students in grades K-6 at Park Road Montessori have benefitted from this pond restoration project. The pond is now able to support new fish, plant, insect and bird populations for students to observe and study. Students have shown increased comprehension of classroom science lessons that are accompanied by hands-on experience in the outdoor classroom area; End-of-Grade proficiency rates in science increased from 73% in 2014-15 to 94% in 2015-16. Additionally, students are learning responsibility and ownership by taking part in the pond's ongoing maintenance (e.g., cleaning, pulling weeds, monitoring water levels and filters).

Brooke Fulton | University Park Creative Arts School
$5,000 | Arts & Culture

Game Plan: Brooke is planning to install a flexible outdoor stage and seating area in the school's courtyard, transforming a previously unused space into an outdoor classroom and performance venue to enhance arts education for the nearly 500 students students at her school. While stage materials have been purchased, the construction process has been delayed. Brooke is working with her school leader and CMS Facilities Services to address school infrastructure issues and ensure the stage can be properly installed.

Anticipated Completion: Spring 2018

Toni Hall | Rocky River High School
$5,000 | STEM

How she changed the game: Led a 4-week, after school IT boot camp to prepare students for careers in computer science

Twenty-four computer programming students in grades 9-12 participated in the IT boot camp, staying after school to complete 8 Microsoft IT Academy training sessions. Each student gained exposure to advanced programming and software development, learning and applying concepts beyond the scope of North Carolina's standard Honors Programming II curriculum. Students were also able to take the Microsoft Technology Associate certification exam at the end of the boot camp.

Bonus Points: Through this process, Toni received certification in Software Development Fundamentals through Microsoft and is now a Career & Technical Education coordinator for CMS.

Cynthia Hira & Liliana Forero | Collinswood Language Academy
$4,000 | Arts & Culture | Character Education | Literacy

How they changed the game: Engaged artist Edwin Gil, who worked with students and staff to create a mural as part of a multi-disciplinary program on anti-bullying and cultural proficiency

To celebrate the diversity of the Collinswood school community and promote a healthy, inclusive learning environment, Cynthia and Liliana brought in artist Edwin Gil to create a mural that included the fingerprints of every student and staff member at the school. More than 800 individual prints were used to create the mural, which features the faces of 3 student winners of a school-wide video essay contest. Essay development and diversity-themed projects were integrated in to the classroom curriculum to support the initiative. Students, staff, family and community members attended the unveiling ceremony of the mural, which was dedicated to a former Collinswood principal and permanently installed near the school's main entrance. This project became the spring board for the school's focus longer-term focus on increasing cultural proficiency.

Wendy Neisler | Berryhill School
$5,000 | Literacy

How she changed the game: Developed a family story time and toddler-focused lending library for families of Berryhill students

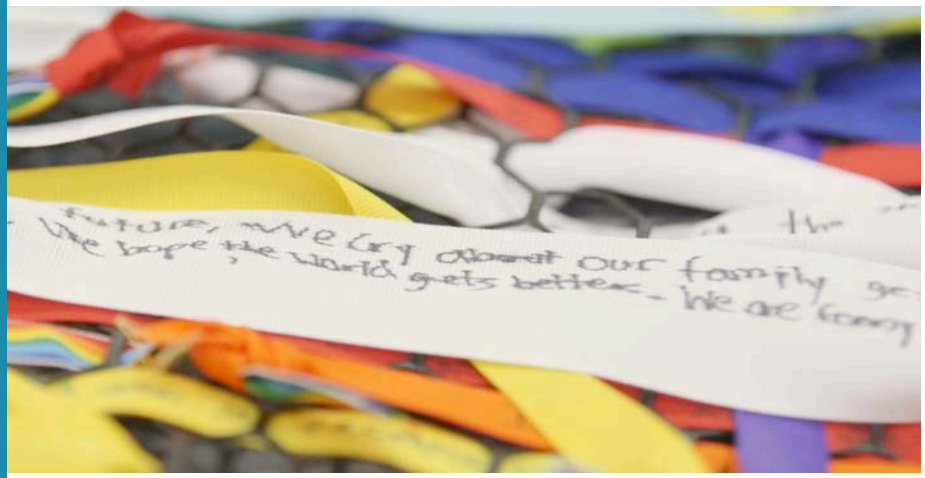
Wendy expanded her school's library to encourage early literacy and provide reading resources to parents with children ages 0-5. She added more than 500 new toddler-focused materials to the media center, inventorying and placing them in circulation to make them accessible to current K-8 Berryhill students and the surrounding community. Books from the new toddler library were checked out more than 500 times during the 2016-2017 school year. Wendy also partnered with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library and Read Charlotte to hold a 4-week long "Building Better Readers" workshop for parents.

Barry Sherman | Bruns Academy
$5,000 | Character Education | Arts & Culture

How he changed the game: Facilitated a unique public-private school partnership that brought together 8th grade students from Bruns Academy and Providence Day School to build bridges and understanding between the school communities

Barry teamed up with Miachel Magno, Providence Day School Middle School's dean of students, to help students from highly racially and socioeconomically segregated living and learning environments gain exposure to worlds previously unfamiliar to them. Students left their day-to-day "bubbles" to interact, learn and connect with a more diverse community. Twenty-five students from Bruns Academy and 40 students from Providence Day participated in the project, going through 7 theme-based learning and community-building sessions. The experience, which students described as life-changing, was documented through photos, videos and other visual art mediums.

Bonus Points: Based on the impact of this project, Barry and Michael have continued this initiative with a new cohort of students.



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Elijah Watson | Ranson IB Middle School
$5,000 | Entrepreneurship

How he changed the game: Using a "Shark Tank" style experience, taught students business startup and entrepreneurship fundamentals

Using a competition model, Elijah worked with 120 students in grades 6-8 to develop business plans and pitch their ideas for the opportunity to design and manage a new school store. Seventeen students were selected as winners of the Ranson "Shark Tank" competition and gained even deeper business skills through launching the new mobile school store.

Bonus Points: Ranson students have raised more than $10,000 through the mobile store to support school initiatives.

ABOUT US

About the CMS Foundation

The CMS Foundation raises money to support Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' highest strategic priorities. Harnessing the power of private investments in education, we seed innovative ideas and help expand programs to accelerate system-wide transformation.

The CMS Foundation plays a unique role in our community, serving as a trusted bridge that connects donors to the district's most critical work. In this position, we help ensure investments in our school system have a meaningful, sustainable impact on our students and educators.

A great community must have a great public school system. We believe that by working together, we can make Charlotte-Mecklenburg a national leader in public education, where teaching is an iconic profession and opportunity abounds for every child.

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