



Happy Holidays from the Education Foundation!

THANK YOU for your Support!

What an amazing year for our students, schools, and community! The Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools wants to thank our donors for continuing to invest in our programs and events that directly benefit student learning and teaching. This year the Education Foundation for BPS funded 119 grants to benefit more than 6,000 students in our schools through Classroom Grants, gave away 2,200 books during the summer months to children at Reading Rocks, connected over 500 volunteers to our schools through Partners in Education, and hosted Saturday Live, the largest school carnival in our region. In addition, through individual gifts, student and educator scholarships were awarded to support student achievement. The Education Foundation supported 21st Century Learning by investing in teacher training and technology to directly impact student learning and prepare them for future careers and opportunities. The investments made in our students' learning could not have happened without the loyal support of our donors, businesses, and community.

We are fortunate to live in a community that believes in our youth and supports our future by providing a solid public education system. Thank you for your generosity as the Education Foundation continues to provide opportunities and resources to support excellence, innovation, and achievement for all students in our schools.

Educator for a Day

On November 21st, the Education Foundation hosted Educator for a Day. Over 100 community leaders walked the halls of our 30 public schools and learned firsthand what it takes to operate a school in the 21st century. The guest educators toured buildings with principals and students, observed excellence in teaching, and interacted with students of all ages. Based on the comments shared at the luncheon, it was an impressive morning for all. Many guests shared their wonderment at the professionalism of staff and the engagement of students. We hope that the participants will translate their one day experience into long-term relationships that enhance the learning environments of our community's schools and support student achievement. Thank you to our sponsors for making this event possible – Stockman Bank, Dr. Steven and Christine Klepps, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Billings Gazette, and Billings Public Schools.

2014 Classroom Grants Now Open!!

Visit www.efbps.org to learn how to support Classroom Grants or to apply. Classroom Grants directly support teaching and student learning.



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Give the Gift of Education



This holiday season, consider adding “honor gifts” to your list of giving ideas. Honor gifts are donations you make in recognition of a friend, co-worker, or family member. Make your gift giving easy this year by giving a gift in honor of a friend or family member to the Education Foundation. By making an honor gift

in a friend or family member’s name, you’ll know you are giving a gift that is always appreciated, carries significant meaning, and supports public education in our community.

Making an honor gift to the Education Foundation is easy! You can give on-line through the Foundation’s website or by mail. Once you’ve chosen the option that works best for you, simply let us know your gift is an honor gift. We’ll issue you a tax receipt for your contribution and we will send a card announcing your gift to the honoree.



Welcome New Foundation Board Members

The Education Foundation announces new officers and board members for 2014: **Eric Nord**, Crist, Krogh & Nord, Past President; **Pam Hofferber**, KTVQ-2, President; **Todd Vralsted**, UBS Financial Services, Vice President; **Heidi Knudson**, Altana Federal Credit Union, Secretary; **Greg Peterson**, Northwest Pipe Fittings, Treasurer. The Foundation welcomes new board members **Kristy Bouck**, Education Advocate; **Chuck Barthuly**, Better Billings Foundation and **Jim Coleman**, Hancock Enterprises.

Year-end Tax Planning?

Year-end tax planning is just around the corner! The Montana Endowment Tax Credit (METC) is a great tool to have as part of your tax planning. The METC allows donors to pay less in Montana state income taxes when they give a qualifying planned gift to a qualified Montana charitable endowment. The incentive is 40% of the gift’s federal charitable deduction, up to a maximum \$10,000 tax credit per year, per individual, and a credit of 20% of a direct gift by a qualified business, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year.

The Education Foundation is able to assist donors interested in establishing planned gifts. Also, the Foundation has several endowment funds to benefit students and classrooms currently set-up for donors to make planned gifts to.

If you would like more information regarding planned giving or the METC, please contact the Education Foundation at 245-4133.

Classroom Grants Corner

Julie Blakeslee, elementary music teacher, was awarded \$1,000 in April 2013 for her grant, “Big Recorders, Big Learning, Big Fun!” The purpose of the grant is to purchase alto, tenor, and bass recorders for students in 4th-6th grade at Boulder and Meadowlark Elementary schools, as well as have available for other other music teachers in the district. By having alto, tenor, and bass recorders, students will be given an opportunity to play and hear melody and harmony on an instrument. Different voices of recorders help to differentiate learning, as well. Students who need a challenge can play a countermelody on the alto, or transpose a known soprano melody to the alto. For students in General Music, this is a great opportunity to provide musical understanding through performance on an instrument. Also, students who are uncomfortable with their voices can transfer a part to a recorder, and still be valued by their peers as an active participant in the group without sacrificing their comfort level. Most importantly, having more access to “special” instruments increases confidence and the feeling of importance to students.

