

# Foundation grants awarded for special education initiatives totals more than \$52,500

Twice a year (May and December), the Foundation seeks applications from faculty and staff for educational initiatives and opportunities that will enhance the student experience or their own professional development. These opportunities are not usually a part of the District budget so external funding is sought to make these initiatives happen. Capital projects come about through discussions with the Board of Education and the Administration. These are the programs that recently received funding support from the Foundation.

## **STUDENT FOCUSED**

### **Educational Life Skills Yoga—(2016) - \$5,000**

Adaptive, goal centered yoga has shown promising results with the low incidence population at New Trier. Students with significant cognitive impairments are taught skills for coping and independence. Unlike in a large studio, a student's medical history and educational needs are researched, and specific goals are designed. This new classroom yoga program will be designed to see if structured, weekly practice with breathing and movement will help address the physical, emotional and behavioral concerns of the students. This is continuation of a program started at Northfield in 14-15. If the two years of data collected during this project supports the theory of improved behavior and coping skills, then the Department Chair will support the project being funded under the IDEA grant.

### **Vocational Training – A Classroom Business—(2012) - \$3,863.90**

Established two-years ago, the NT Transition Program is designed to provide students with disabilities a community based, functional, real-world curriculum. The focus of the program is to enhance students' life and vocational skills to prepare them for their post high school opportunities. This grant was requested to establish an attainable classroom business (t-shirt printing) where students with disabilities who struggle in a community work setting or who are unable to work for an extended period of time in the community will have the opportunity to practice the vocational skills needed that are vital to future employment. Funds will be used to purchase the necessary start-up equipment. Marketing of this printing service will be across the high school and available to the many student organizations, advisories, teams, programs, and departments that annually print t-shirts.

### **Guided Assistance Program (GAP) Textbooks—(2012) - \$1,000**

GAP is a program where qualified students receive academic assistance developing organizational and study strategy skills. Many teaching disciplines recommend that textbooks because of their size and weight should be left at home and referenced for homework rather than in classroom. Textbooks from biology, chemistry, algebra II, geometry, calculus, and geo science are all recommended to remain at home. So, for the GAP students and those teachers helping these students, to have textbooks located on campus is a valuable resource.

### **Life Skills Program - United States History and Government: An Experiential Learning Project for Students with Significant Disabilities—(2009) - \$5,000**

With the success of the two previous programs and coupled with an increased interest in history among U.S. History course for students with significant disabilities at New Trier was created. Throughout '08-'09 year, focus on the U.S. national government as well as its basic structure will be the focus. The project will culminate in a trip to Washington, DC to tour important sights and to witness the make-up of our government first hand.

### **Life Skills Program – Accessing Our Political Representatives: An Experiential Learning Project for Students with Significant Disabilities— (2008) - \$2,325**

Students in the New Trier Life Skills program continue their studies of basic Illinois history and government begun in 2007. The next step is to focus on the act of participating in government. Appointments to meet with our state representatives to see and in some small way experience the inner workings of government. In addition, students will prepare for these meetings so that they will be able to use this time with their representatives wisely.

### **Life Skills Program - 12 Special Education Youth traveled to Springfield, IL—(2007) - \$2,960**

The New Trier Life Skills program exists to help individuals with significant disabilities become productive members of society. Given that many of these students will require continued support as adults, it is important that they learn to advocate for themselves. NT students served by this special trip to the State Capitol were grades 10-12, have significant disabilities.

### **Bridges Program (2007, 2010) - \$7,000**

Bridges is a program designed to provide academic and emotional support for students experiencing acute emotional difficulties. The Bridges team works closely with various outside agencies: Haven, local hospitals (in-patient as well as out-patient), residential settings, and private therapists and medical professionals. Additionally, parental involvement was sought and integrated in the individual student's goals. During the 2006-2007 school year 44 students from the Winnetka campus were successfully reintegrated back into their classes, some with schedule changes and some with added services such as social work.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Special Education Instructional Assistants Professional Development—(2016) - \$4,750**

The Special Education Department is the largest academic department at New Trier supporting over 500 students. There are more than 40 teachers with an additional 60+ Instructional Assistants (IAs) who partner together to support the students. 2015-2016 was the first year where a professional development initiative was implemented exclusively for the IAs to expand their knowledge and skills. While successful, the efforts were hindered by associated costs with meetings, seminars and guest speakers. These funds will fund the professional, skill development and team building for Special Education IAs in 2016-2017.

### **On-Site PROMPT Training—(2016) - \$960**

Students who benefitted from the speech-language pathologists PROMPT Training in 2013 have progressed. Sounds that they were stabilizing no longer require PROMPTing and the speech-language pathologists are ready to take on new targets. With this grant, Gail Scher, one of the few local PROMPT instructors will train these pathologists on-site on more advanced skills. She will spend a half day at Winnetka and a half day at Northfield working with the pathologists and students. Each speech-language pathologists would learn to PROMPT at least three new sounds for each targeted student.

### **Expanding the Impact of Social Language Work through Social Thinking Clinical Training (2015) - \$5,900**

Clinical training through Social Thinking Clinical Training program is considered highly valuable, and serves as a mark of excellence and expertise. This new funding request involves 7 members of the social language team, attending the STCT program in spring 2015. To date, the Foundation has funded \$17,400 to provide specialized training for these staff members.

### **Social Thinking: Developing a Curriculum—(2013) - \$8,000**

As follow-up to the 2011 Social Thinking conference the Foundation will help support this grant to cover the costs for a two-day, on campus professional curriculum development workshop for all social workers, speech therapists and the school psychologist to participate with mentors from Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Thinking Conference Network. Instructional curriculum ideas will be developed during these two days for students with high functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

### **Introduction to PROMPT Training—(2013) - \$2,250**

PROMPT is the acronym for Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets. Students in this program are severely challenged and in their own classroom. Currently, a student's success in private speech therapy with a PROMPT trained therapist cannot be replicated in his/her school based therapy at NT. With this type of training, NT Speech Language Pathologists will be able to reinforce the oral motor skills of these students so as to work hand in hand with their outside therapies. This grant is for three New Trier speech therapists to attend a local PROMPT training workshop. Funding is not available through their budget for this year to do so.

### **Training in the Social Thinking of Model of working with students with high functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome (2012) - \$3,500**

The Social Work department has identified 19 students from the class of 2015 who are either diagnosed or exhibit significant traits of high functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome. Eight faculty and staff from the department of social work, speech pathologists and psychologists (from both campuses) working with these students will attend a conference with Michelle Garcia Winner who is doing ground breaking work with these high functioning students. Following this conference opportunity the objectives will be to develop a versatile curriculum; develop a common vocabulary for interacting with these students that can be taught to teachers to name a few. This effort will impact 75-80 New Trier students over the next several years. The pilot work will be with freshmen and will create an opportunity for continuity for these students when they move to the Winnetka campus.

To read about other programs the Foundation has supported over the years, visit [www.newtrierfoundation.org](http://www.newtrierfoundation.org) and click on the button Impact. If you would like to help the Foundation continue to support programs such as these, please consider making a gift or if you'd like to get involved as a volunteer, contact Marianne Breen, Executive Director at 847-784-2346 or [breenm@newtrier.k12.il.us](mailto:breenm@newtrier.k12.il.us).

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