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STEMspark Announces Recipients of 2013 Mini Grants

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. -- STEMspark is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's 11 teacher mini grants, totaling nearly $11,000. These grants enable teachers to enhance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics instruction in their classrooms. This year, the mini grants will be distributed across nine school systems in the STEMspark region, and will potentially affect more than 6,500 students K-12 students.

"We were overwhelmed by the positive response to this initiative from our regional school partners," Marilyn Roddy, director of STEMspark. "By pairing STEMspark Grant Writing 101 training with this funding opportunity, we hope to build teacher capacity and confidence around grant writing success."

STEMspark received 29 qualified grant submissions from 12 different school systems. In the application, teachers were given the opportunity to detail how the mini grants would improve STEM education in their classrooms. The winning applications included plans for improved technology, professional development for teachers, and group projects for the classroom.

"STEM thinking skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and problem solving are what will distinguish our students in the job market in the coming decades," Roddy said. "Projects such as these will prepare our students for success in higher education and the workforce."

<u>The recipients are as follows</u>:

Cary Busby - Episcopal School of Knoxville
Project: 8th Grade Robotics Engineering-Teaching eighth graders engineering and technology using the Lego EV3 that can be controlled by iPads.

Julia Cureton - Oak Ridge Schools-Linden Elementary
Project: I'm five years old and I can read, hear, and record math and science books- a science and math literacy station in which students have access to both print and audio math and science books, and can also record themselves reading.

Miri Moler - Blount County Schools - William Blount High School
Project: Eutrophication PBL-"How can a community solve the global problem of dead zones in the oceans due to the use of fertilizers?" This question will be tackled by students collecting and analyzing from data aquatic ecosystems.

Jeanne Natoli - Maryville City Schools - Sam Houston Elementary
Project: Exploring Solid Shapes with Polydrons - Using magnetic polydron kits, kindergarten students will learn and develop math skills in an hands on way.

Becky Pearman - Claiborne County Schools
Project: Minds on Science - 3rd through 12th grade science teachers will participate in a series of professional development sessions to bolster areas of content and knowledge for the science teachers. The sessions will be conducted by science professors from Lincoln Memorial University.

Jane Skinner - Knox County Schools - Farragut High School
Project: Probing for Answers with STEMazing Tools! -Using probeware and the appropriate technology students will be able to actually "do" science by collecting and analyzing water quality data.

Kevin Smith - Lenoir City Schools - Lenoir City High School
Project: Solar Powered T-Shirt Cannon Tank - Twelve seniors from the Pre-Engineering program will work together with their instructor to design, build, and modify a go-kart or scooters to be powered electrically and charged by photo-voltaic cells. The finished design will implement an air-powered cannon with a 5-shot magazine-loaded t-shirt launcher.

Linda Gale Stanley - Campbell County Schools
Project: Science/Engineering How to present a project - Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair will provide professional development to science teachers on how to guide students on science and engineering fair projects.

Jana Strader - Tate's School
Project: Teach Me to Teach Others - The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers workshop sessions on a wide variety of topics and strategies that will enhance my ability to integrate STEM experiences into my classroom.

Lori Wilson - Blount County Schools-Heritage Middle School
Project: Electricity, Magnetism, and Renewable Energy - reusable kits that allow students hands on learning will focus on how electricity, magnetism, and renewable energy are used.

Frank Wood - Oak Ridge Schools-Oak Ridge High School
Project: AP Physics One-to-One Computing - using sound waves and physics to solve a practical sound problem by developing ideas to dampen echoes and then testing and implementing the resulting panels.

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