

Fall 2025 Foundation Grant Descriptions

A Night at the Opera (BR)

“A Night at the Opera” is an interdisciplinary, multi-week project that will have 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students learn the historical and musical background of opera. The project will culminate in an assembly given by Braeside parent, Edward Parks (<https://edwardparksbaritone.com/>). Students will study opera, its historical background, and its unique vocal requirements during Music classes. Students will then specifically focus on five operas: Barber of Seville, Carmen, Hansel and Gretel, The Magic Flute, and one to be decided.

Growing our Scientific Knowledge and Growth Mindset...(BR)

The grant, Growing our Scientific Knowledge and Growth Mindset Together with our Plant Pals: Sprouting Curiosity One Leaf at a Time!, submitted by the third-grade team at Braeside, seeks to start a STEAM project during teaching time using plant pals to teach science and nurturing skills to the students. Additional art projects will be done in coordination with the core plant pal project through leaf pressing and pot decorating activities. This is a new project that has not been previously proposed.

Running Club (BR)

Submitted by Jill Baranowski, the Braeside Running Club is a co-ed club of about 15 students. Utilizing an online runners app, kids will be tracked according to their performance using a program called Mileage Club Program. There are incentives called Tracker Toes to keep elementary school-age kids motivated. The goal is to teach kids about exercise, proper stretching and running techniques, and the importance of taking care of their bodies. This is a new grant proposal.

Extreme Science Assembly (BR)

Extreme Science is a request for a Science Assembly for all 250 students at Braeside School. This will coincide with STEAM Day at Braeside. The performers will do exciting experiments involving energy, air pressure, and force. Also on STEAM Day, the 5th graders at Braeside will also do a science fair, which will coincide with the assembly.

Nature Club (BR)

The Braeside Nature Club is a K-2 program involving 30 students to foster a connection with nature and promote sustainability through gardening. The project aims to teach students about plant growth, healthy eating habits, and environmental interaction, using a tower garden for year-round learning. Evaluation will be based on plant growth comparison to previous years and student data sheets, to inspire other schools and promote healthy food choices.

Citizenship Through Percussive Arts (EW)

The program, brings in Chicago percussionist Tom Benko and The Rhythm Messengers, they will use percussion to explore themes like courage, respect, and self-expression. Four percussionists will lead workshops with Edgewood’s band, orchestra, and chorus students, connecting musicianship with citizenship and teamwork. Students will also prepare performances for the February Solo & Ensemble Festival and a May concert featuring select music pieces recommended by Tom. To note, Tom is the co-founder of Rhythm Messengers percussion group and also is HP High School Director of Percussion, brings strong credentials—including 11 years with Blue Man Group. His involvement strengthens the bridge between middle school and high school music programs.

French Cafe (EW/NW)

The French Cafe is a repeat grant submitted by Sara Simons and Noelle Young (Northwood and Edgewood). This will impact 46 students from Northwood, 93 students from Edgewood, 70 students from Wayne Thomas (5th graders). 8th grade students create the cafe ambiance, food, act as servers, hosts, provide entertainment, etc. 6th and 7th grade students in the French Program act as clients and customers to promote the French Program. 5th Graders from Wayne Thomas also attend to promote the French Program. This aligns with the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language, specifically communication standards. The cost of this grant is \$930.30 for replacement equipment.

Broadway Masterclass at Northwood (NW)

The goal of this workshop is to improve the overall performance quality of the Northwood musical production, introduce an experience to middle school students that would otherwise be unattainable (working with a real Broadway actor), and to enhance both listening and speaking common core standards. It improves the experience for the audience as well. Masters of Broadway is, "an educational arts organization that matches schools and theater groups across the country with Broadway artists for exciting and meaningful musical theater experiences". Students will perform and receive individual feedback from a Broadway star. Student also engage in a Q&A with the Broadway artist, answering industry and audition-related questions.

Roots Fest (NW)

Roots Festival is a day to learn about multiple different cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds, and celebrate our similarities and differences and unique histories. Roots Festival serves as a day to embrace different cultures around us while learning about them through fine arts. Roots Festival is a school-wide event that all students and staff take part in to discover and recognize the many diverse cultures that are represented at Northwood, in our community, and in the world. Throughout the day-long festival, students learn cultural dances, music, art, instruments, storytelling, games, and more.

Building Community Through Music (OT EC)

This project is intended to serve both OT's monolingual and bilingual communities. OT will host two family music events during the 25-26 school year. Families will have the opportunity to enjoy performances by Jim Gill, an award-winning musician focused on early language development, and Alina & Mi Amigo Hamlet, a bilingual English/Spanish duo. These experiences not only support multilingualism and biliteracy for our students, but they also reinforce classroom learning, inclusion, strong foundations for communication, and cultural identity for all students.

Performances will be promoted in classrooms and through newsletters - staff can teach lessons that incorporate music all year round. Songs by the performers can be used in class as they have music featuring early concepts and vocabulary within the EC curriculum. Music is already used in classrooms to reinforce new vocabulary. Musicians will interact with families to foster an interactive musical experience, building community in a fun, safe environment. Families will be encouraged to continue with the music at home to reinforce the language concepts learned.

Celebrating Positive Behavior (OT)

This is a request for a grant at Oak Terrace to encourage positive student behavior. Students earn "Super 3s" during the year, and once the 'bucket' is filled with Super 3s, there is a school-

wide celebration. This is done 4 times per year. The grant is requesting funds for two of these events: A Fire and Ice Science Assembly for all students (two shows) for a total of \$1,088. And inflatables rental for “Inflatable Day” for \$600. The grant committee approved the assembly portion, but not the cost of the inflatables (\$600), because it felt too much like funding a party and didn’t align with the requirements for the grant approval.

Monarch Butterfly Garden (OT)

This grant program at gives 250 Pre-K students hands-on learning opportunities to explore Monarch conservation, native plants, and the life cycle of butterflies. The butterfly garden will serve as both a teaching tool and a living lab—students will plant, observe, and care for native species like milkweed, which supports Monarch larvae. It ties directly to the April “Bugs and Butterflies” curriculum theme, helping students apply classroom learning to real-life experiences. There is mention that traditionally the school provides the Monarch larvae, students will be able to release butterflies into their own garden, reinforcing lessons in ecology and responsibility. This grant will provide Oak Terrace Pre-K students with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences centered on Monarch Butterfly conservation—a theme that connects directly to the school’s mascot, the Monarchs. It is an extension of a previous grant program to establish the initial garden space.

Griffin’s Tales (OT/RO/SW)

Griffin’s Tales is a repeat grant. This project is open to all students in Kindergarten through 5th grade from Oak Terrace, Red Oak, and Sherwood. Students can write stories in either English or Spanish. The writing is differentiated to their grade level, for the expectations for writing include linking it directly to writing standards by grade level. In May, the Griffin’s Tales presenters (from Northwestern University) will come to perform some of the stories that were submitted at each school site. Griffin’s Tales is a philanthropic group; the cost is \$200 per school (\$600 total for the three schools) to cover the travel costs of performers.

Board Game Club: Expansion and Stock Replacement (RO)

The grant, Red Oak Board Games Club: Expansion and Stock Replacement, is a renewal grant for the growth and renewal of the well-established board games club at Red Oak. The grant asks for \$535 to replace worn-out board games and for new board games tailored for 1st and 2nd graders. Previously, the club was open to 3rd-5th graders, and with the new games, the club can expand to younger students at Red Oak. The committee recommended full funding of this grant.

Sherwood Adult-Kid Book Club (SW)

All students in 5th grade will be invited to partake in an evening Adult/Child Book Club. We will be reading 3 different books throughout the school year and will meet to discuss them and engage in fun activities related to the books. The grant request included \$60 for snacks; the committee did not approve this portion of the request as per the grant guidelines (no food).

Engineering Club (SW)

The Engineering Club is open to students in grades 3-5 at Sherwood. The estimate is that 30 students will be in the club, and they will be building vehicles, bridges, robots, and buildings using the LEGO Technic kits. The total request is for LEGO parts, motors, remotes, and gears.

Readers Theater (WT)

The grant for a readers’ theatre project at Wayne Thomas School seeks funding to purchase props and materials for 3rd-grade students to read and act in plays during lunch and recess.

The project aims to improve literacy, foster a love of reading, and build student confidence in reading and speaking.

Wayne Thomas MagLev Regata (WT)

The Maglev Races project provides an engaging, hands-on STEM experience for 150 students in May. Students design, build, and race their own magnet-levitation cars on a 24-foot track using simple materials and creativity. The activity integrates engineering design principles—students test their racers, record times, and make adjustments to improve performance. The focus is on learning through experimentation: students are encouraged to make mistakes, analyze results, and redesign, reinforcing the mindset that not always getting it right is part of progress. It uses existing classroom materials like fans for propulsion, making it cost-effective and easily repeatable. The project takes place over the last few weeks of school during science periods, giving students a fun, authentic way to apply what they've learned in STEM throughout the year.