

Xtra-curricular

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Spring 2022

FROM THE HELM

Everyone can identify a teacher who made a difference in their life. Of the hundreds who graduated Bellport High School during the tenure of Art Cooley, many would name him as the one. He died this winter at the age of 87.

The South Country Education Foundation, Inc. is one of the many legacies he left to the local community where he served as a Bellport High School biology teacher for decades, from 1956 to 1989. He was one of four founders of this group and served as its second president. He borrowed the idea of an education foundation from a former student who was involved with a similar group in her post-high school town.



Across the nation, he is known as a founder of the Environmental Defense Fund, a group instrumental in banning DDT in the late 1960's believed to be the cause of waning populations of certain birds. EDF went on to be a force in courts around the country taking on county and state legislatures fighting not only for the preservation of bird species such as ospreys and bald eagles, but also for the health of the Mississippi Delta and many other preservation projects.

Environmental issues became a source of project based learning at Bellport High School where students would gather signatures for community petitions to challenge governments. An outgrowth of this activity was Students for Environmental Quality (SEQ) organized under his tutelage. The group worked successfully to have the Carmen's River designated a state preservation site and also introduce home composting in Bellport Village.

Art Cooley earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Cornell University. In addition to biology, he taught general science, ornithology, earth science, marine biology and a course on gardening and wild foods.

The Friends of Art Cooley, a new effort, is collecting funds for a scholarship in his honor for a worthy Bellport High School graduate. Donations can be made at the SCEF website, scefonline.com.

— Robin Young Roe



SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for July 9, 2022 for the SCEF Annual Cocktail Party and Auction. We will gather again at the bayside home of Chantal and Richard Berman, 40 Academy Lane. The event runs from 5:30 to 7pm and will include a silent auction as well as a festive live auction. Also included this year is local music talent Shannon Gibbons, a top performer on American Idol. Invitations will be in the mail shortly!



WANT TO DONATE?

We hope supporters will consider the SCEF as they plan their annual gifts. Donations may be sent to SCEF, PO Box 512, Bellport, NY 11713. Donations may also be processed at our website scefonline.org.

FALL 2021-2022 GRANT CYCLE AWARDS

Despite the continuation of Covid, the teachers continue to supplement their teaching with the following grant awards.

READING IS SWEET PARP PROGRAM

Jennifer Rosario for Kreamer Street PTA
Kreamer Street Elementary School • \$2,000.00

The program will provide 340 students in the Kreamer Street Elementary School with books, assemblies and rewards to encourage them to read, and to encourage them and their families to read together at home. For the six-week program, the school will encourage reading with posters and banners with the "Reading Sweet" theme and an assembly (if approved) with the theme. Duck Donuts will give a donut to all students who complete their logs. It will provide reading rooms for google classrooms. \$500 will pay for books from Scholastic Books, \$200 for posters, banners, rewards, supplies, \$1,000 for the assembly, and \$200 for Literacy Night for families and students.

EQUITY, SELF-EFFICACY AND APPLIED ROBOTICS

Colleen Oates-Robesch • Bellport High School • \$1,853.00

This is a cross-curricular problem-based unit that will be embedded in our Business Math course. It will expose students to robotics and coding in order to address issues of representation in STEM. It provides equitable access to robotics and coding education, helping the STEM self-efficacy of students, and increasing awareness of STEM careers. They will practice robotics and coding concepts using Wonder Workshop's Cue robot. They will create PSA's about careers to share with students in the Middle School. The funds will purchase 10 Lenovo Smart Tablets which will be used by the students to code the robots, conduct the interviews, and create the PSA's.

CHEMISTRY MANIPULATIVES

Deirdre Stickley, Christine Bellante, Joseph Hruby
Bellport High School • \$1,062.27

Chemistry Students will be able to create two types of manipulatives, one to model the formation of ionic and covalent compounds and valences of ions, and the other to show students the difference between elements, compounds, and mixtures in simple particle models. Students will use four metal and three nonmetal Lego bricks and the tools needed to cut and assemble them. It will benefit Regents and Honors Chemistry students, especially those with learning disabilities or limited English proficiency. The grant would also pay for dishwasher safe labels and mesh bags for the Lego manipulatives and the resin manipulatives so that the students can keep and use them without the danger of spreading viral and bacterial illnesses by fomite transmission.

SUPER HEROS IN A COVID WORLD

Kate Coppola • Brookhaven Elementary School • \$1,350.00

Grant proposal for an interactive virtual read along with guest speaker/presenter, Egypt Bush. The presenter Egypt Bush is a 6-year-old author who brings awareness to everyday superheroes in her community through her books written during the COVID pandemic. Egypt will present to all 2nd grade classes via an interactive Zoom presentation. Each student will receive a book. The presentation will provide Brookhaven students with a meaningful connection and an age-appropriate role model that embodies the core values at Brookhaven Elementary School.

THIRD GRADE SQUARE 1 TILE PROJECT

Kiara Braithwaite
Kreamer Street Elementary School • \$1,000.00

Grant proposal allows students at Kreamer Street Elementary School to leave their legacy on the walls of Kreamer Street through the creation of wall tiles to be permanently displayed in the building. The tiles are created as memorabilia for students and families to enjoy in the future. Students will create artwork for their tile to be sent away to be produced at Square 1 Art.

BELLPORT BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Justin White and John Bishop
Bellport High School • \$1,369.00

The grant proposal is for a collaborative project with the students in the 12.1.1 class and AP Capstone class at Bellport High School. Students will design, build, decorate, fill and deliver planter boxes to the buildings in the South Country School District providing the opportunity for students of diverse populations to interact and collaborate on this project. This grant allows for vital social and educational experiences outside of the students' educational classroom.

STEAMROLLING FOR SELF REGULATION

Krista Albrecht • Bellport High School • \$1,267.96

The purpose of this grant is to provide students at the high school in the 12:1:4 Life Skills Class a "Steam Roller", also known as an autism squeeze machine. The purpose of this apparatus is to help regulate students' work and behavior, by providing sensory input when the students become overwhelmed or anxious or need to calm themselves. As the population of these students (ages 16-21) have grown, their larger bodies require more pressure that weighted blankets, vests and weighted pads can no longer provide. Two steam rollers are requested with 4 additional sets of tension bands to anticipate wear and tear of the bands that will result with overuse.

FOSTERING A GROWTH MIND-SET USING PLAYAWAY BOOKS

Mary Pettit • Frank P. Long • \$775.38

This grant is for pre-loaded audiobooks to expand the audio book library for 5th graders. The applicant has used these types of materials received in past grants. In addition, the applicant has done extensive research and tracking of student progress in reading. Playaway audio books foster the love of reading, allows children to engage in higher level book discussions, and inspires students to develop a positive growth mindset. The applicant stated that the use of Playaways, most recently gave students a huge advantage by keeping them engaged during virtual learning. Most importantly, the use of Playaway audiobooks, have instilled a confidence in reluctant readers almost instantly.

WOODWORKERS PROGRAM

Peter Cisek • Frank P. Long • \$1,300.00

Hands-on projects and cooperative work experience are the goals of the Woodworkers Program at Frank P. Long Intermediate School. This program has attracted hundreds of students over the years. This year, approximately 80 students from 4th and 5th grade will participate in building bird houses, bird feeders, book holders, flower pot holders, and bat houses from kits prepared by retired teacher, Peter Cisek. Students will ultimately improve their motor skills, learn measurement, and follow detailed instructions while completing projects that they can take home and be proud of.

HEALTHY OUTDOOR EDUCATION

William F. Champlain IV • Bellport High School • \$1,892.10

This grant is for outdoor equipment that will directly affect students in the Health classes at the high school. The applicant has provided studies that support that outdoor learning can improve school performance with staying healthy and having fun. The aim is to strive to improve students' physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual and environmental well being while learning in an outdoor classroom. Funds are requested for 15 folding camp chairs, 3 pop-up canopies, adjustable sun shade, a 230 gallon deck box made of plastic resin for outdoor storage.

Thank you to our 2021 Donors

If you don't see your name here, we apologize. Please send info to robinyoungroe@aol.com

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2022 WINTER GRANT CYCLE AWARDS

#1 PLAYAWAY INSPIRATIONS

Elisa Merone, Chelsea Amato and Heather Szklarski
Frank P. Long Intermediate School • \$1,969.41

As in the past, grants have been funded for playaways, which have proven to be successful, especially with low level and reluctant readers. These grant applicants state that using playaways helps to group students based on interest level and not reading levels. Students are given the option to read using the physical book, while others may choose to listen and follow along.

Observations were made by these grant applicants by working closely with a classroom teacher last year who had much success in their classroom using playaways. Observations noted were that students contributed to conversations pertaining to characters and plot and students appeared to be more confident readers, especially those students that were reluctant readers in the past.

The grant applicants feel that the addition of playaways will serve as a valuable tool for their students, enabling them to immerse themselves in books all year long, in addition to also giving teachers more flexibility with grouping students and planning lessons.

#2 SEATING CHOICE FOR THE CLASSROOM

Lauren Kleban • Bellport Middle School • \$1,662.24

This grant is to fund 3 large stand up desks for students in the ELA and social studies classes who have difficulty sitting in one place for 3 consecutive periods of the school day. The stand up desks will allow students to get up out of their seats to stretch their legs, while not missing classroom instruction. The desks are also large enough to accommodate Chromebooks, materials and student notebooks that typical desks are often too small to fit everything these students need at one time.

#3 FLEXIBLE SEATING FOR THE CLASSROOM

Theresa Tietjen • Bellport Middle School • \$1,662.24

This is the same grant as #2, but for accommodating math and science classes for students that are required to be seated for 3 consecutive periods. The grant applicant states that the use of standing desks will enable students to stay more focused, while engaged in lessons, as well as making group work easier to facilitate and giving more space for Chromebooks and student materials for math and science classes that require manipulatives.

#4 CARDIO DRUMMING

Andrew Budris • Bellport High School • \$2,000

This grant would introduce 3rd grade students at the Verne Critz School to the joy of physical activity at an age where many students begin to diverge, some students turning to "screen time" and some to athletics. The fitness-based learning supported by this program is a fun, engaging, and rigorous learning activity; combined with dance education, it can open the doors for participation in athletic extracurricular activities, convincing the students that an active lifestyle is fun.

Elementary physical education teachers will select one (or, if funds are available, two) guest instructor(s) to provide a week-long series of fitness-based learning activities. Decisions regarding the selection, timing, and logistics surrounding the program will be made by physical education teachers and the school principal.

The program will be documented by photographs of the program in action (with permission secured from parents/guardians). Video recordings of Interviews of the students to gauge their enjoyment will be available on the SCEF website. A written record of feedback from teachers, students and their parents/guardians will be available as well. It will be evaluated by the physical education teachers and the Verne Critz Principal.

The project represents a convergence of two educational priorities for the South Country community. Students in 12th grade Government classes participated in a multi week Civics experience conducted at

Bellport High School by an organization called Generation Citizen.org which challenged the students to create systemic change by identifying needs in their community. The students felt that early intervention could create more equitable participation in athletics. While the grant itself was written by their teacher, Andrew Budris, the initiative was exclusively the result of action taken by the nineteen students of the Period 9 AP Government and Politics class and rejects the view that classrooms are the exclusive domain of learning. It emphasizes the connection between mind and body that is supported by research.

#5 SUMMER INSTRUMENT PETTING ZOO

Andrew Budris • Bellport High School • \$1,950

This program introduces young children, along with their parents, to the possibility of music education by providing them with an opportunity to physically interact with a variety of music instruments. The children touch, play, and inquire about the instruments that will be available for them to choose to study when they begin their classes at Frank P. Long School. (Currently, the students are given only 30 minutes to be introduced to the thirteen instrument options open to them.) Using two morning sessions, three hours each, a band specialist, an orchestra specialist and a music administrator will offer the opportunity for children to come with their parents/guardians to learn about these instruments in a more meaningful and engaging way. For parents without previous experience with music instruction, the program will provide valuable help in encouraging their children to join the excellent music program at South Country.

The program will be documented by photographs of the program in action (with permission secured from parents/guardians). Video recordings of Interviews of the students to gauge their enjoyment will be available on the SCEF website. A written record of feedback from teachers, students and their parents/guardians will be available as well.

The program will be evaluated by the three staff members, with suggestions for improvements if the program is offered again in the future. When the school year begins, music teachers at Frank P. Long will be interviewed to determine if there was an increase in interest in students signing up for the orchestra or band programs.

The project represents a convergence of two educational priorities for the South Country community. Students in 12th grade Government classes participated in a multi week Civics experience conducted at Bellport High School by a program called Generation Citizen.org. It challenged the students to create systemic change by identifying needs in their community. The students in Andrew Budris' 9th period AP Government and Politics identified the need to boost participation more equitably in music education. Their interest in this area came after research into the long-term benefits of involvement in extracurricular activities. (For a look at another example of an "Instrument Petting Zoo" see <https://www.stallercenter.com/outreach/InstrumentPettingZoo.php>)

#6 COLLABORATION STATION: A TECHNOLOGY-INFUSED FLEXIBLE ZONE IN THE LIBRARY

Shannon Kulick • skulick@southcountry.org

Frank P Long Intermediate School • \$1,886.44

Collaboration Station: A Technology-Infused, Flexible Zone in the Library will enhance the Frank P. Long Intermediate School library media center's Makerspace. A Makerspace serves as a platform for exploring, learning, collaborating, and sharing through a wide range of activities, tools, and materials. They are spaces where ideas are transformed into finished projects. A Makerspace helps foster must-have 21st century skills such as critical thinking, logical reasoning, creative thinking, and problem-solving. A dedicated Makerspace needs pieces that support collaboration, creation, and exploration. Adding Demco FLEXplore Gear Guard Makerspace STEM tables to the Frank P. Long Intermediate School library media center will allow students to design, create, and code both individually and collaboratively.

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EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

**SOUTH COUNTRY
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BELLPORT, NEW YORK 11713-1502**

*The foundation is a non-profit
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