

## **SCEF APPROVES MORE THAN \$70,000 IN GRANTS**

We were able to award over \$70,000 towards Fall 2025 grants. The South Country Education Foundation has agreed that, for the Fall 2025 Grant Cycle only, it will cover the cost of substitutes, class coverages and/or nurses as requested in specific grant applications to support approved projects. This decision is intended as a one-time only exception to ensure the successful implementation of this cycle's grants and shall not be considered a precedent for future funding cycles. Grant monies for this cycle have already been awarded, and additional funding requests will not be considered at this time.

### **FALL 2025 GRANTS**

#### **3RD GRADE END OF YEAR PICNIC**

*Lori Marra*

*Brookhaven Elementary School PTA*

\$1,200.00

The Third Grade Picnic is an end of year celebratory event for students moving up to fourth grade at Frank P. Long Elementary. The event is sponsored by the Brookhaven Elementary PTA. While we continue to fundraise throughout the year and will also be requesting donations from parents and community members, the donated items will be less than the overall costs of the event. The costs include a DJ, food and activities. This grant would allow the total cost of the PTA to be lower, allowing the PTA the ability to utilize funds to go towards the activities for the students.

#### **CAFE CASTELLO FIELD TRIP**

*Julia Hoey*

*Kreamer Street Elementary School*

\$380.00

Special education students will visit Café Castello Pizza Parlor to engage in a hands-on learning experience. During the trip, students will practice essential life skills such as interactions in a public place and cooking their very own pizzas. This trip will also target fine motor skills by preparing and assembling pizza ingredients. Additionally, the activity provides opportunities to work on sequencing of events as students follow step-by-step directions in making their own pizzas. This real-world setting helps reinforce classroom learning while fostering independence and confidence.

## **SUFFOLK COUNTY FARM FIELD TRIP**

*Julia Hoey*

*Kreamer Street Elementary School*

\$2,028.00

The Elementary Special Education department will visit the Suffolk County Farm for a hands-on learning experience that brings classroom lessons to life. During the trip, students will interact with and feed a variety of farm animals, explore the sensory garden filled with outdoor instruments, and enjoy time on the playground equipment. They will also share lunch together at the farm's picnic tables, promoting social interaction and independence. This enriching experience supports life skills, sensory development, and social-emotional growth in a fun, inclusive community setting. Includes cost for nurse, \$284.

## **CADET CORE'S 1ST ANNUAL FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE**

*Joseph Scioli*

*Bellport High School*

\$1,736.00

Cadet Core is looking to secure a grant for military games and equipment for the program's first annual Field Training Exercise & Internal Graduation. Cadet Core is looking to promote and enhance the educational experience of students in South Country CSD. The real goal of this project is to allow students to showcase their skills they've worked so hard to gain all year, and have an unforgettable experience while doing it.

## **DRUMS ALIVE: ENERGIZING MINDS AND BODIES IN MUSIC CLASS**

*Branden Andrade*

*Verne W. Critz Elementary School*

\$1,667.95

The Drums Alive Drumtastic 2.0 25-Participant set will provide K-3 students at Verne W. Critz Elementary with a unique hands-on approach to music and movement. Drums Alive is an innovative program that combines rhythm, physical fitness, and creative expression to support the whole child. By engaging students in coordinated drumming and movement activities, the program enhances motor skills, focus, self-regulation, and teamwork. The project aligns with the mission of the South Country Education Foundation by enriching the music curriculum with an innovative program not funded by the regular school budget, fostering creativity, inclusion, and active learning.

## **EXPLORING NATURE AND AGRICULTURE: KINDERGARTEN, FIELD TRIP TO THE SUFFOLK COUNTRY FARM**

*Meghann Hasemann*

*Brookhaven Elementary School*

\$2,970.00

This project is a Kindergarten field trip to a local farm where students will learn about the life cycles of plants and animals, sustainable farming practices, and the importance of agriculture in our daily lives. The trip aligns with the South Country Education Foundation's mission to provide hands-on, experiential learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom.

## **BHS GUIDANCE CAREER FIELD TRIP**

*Stephanie Merry*

*Bellport High School*

\$710.00

This grant would support a career exploration field trip to Riverhead Building Supply Corporation. This opportunity will allow students to gain firsthand insight into the construction supply industry, explore a range of career pathways, from logistics and sales to manufacturing and management, and engage with professionals in a real-world setting. The experience aims to bridge classroom learning with career readiness by fostering an understanding of the skills, education, and work ethic required in this vital sector. Funding will be used for transportation to and from the job site.

## **DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS!**

*Jacqueline Ward*

*Verne W. Critz Elementary School, Kindergarten*

\$2,800.00

The kindergarten students at Verne W. Critz will attend the play, "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!" at Theater Three. They will participate in an innovative mix of Music, while flapping their wings and helping stop the pigeon from driving the bus! This opportunity will enhance learning and the love of literature and performing arts.

## **ICE CREAM SCIENCE**

*Jacqueline Ward*

*Verne W. Critz Elementary School, Kindergarten*

\$1,984.00

In a lab setting, at Long Island Science Center, participants perform hands-on experiments that explore the molecular nature of matter. Experimentation culminates in the production of a particularly tasty, crystalized concoction, known as ice cream.

## **THIRD GRADE LEGACY TILE PROJECT**

*Kiara Braithwaite*

*Kreamer Street Elementary School*

\$730.00

Kreamer Street elementary school will be providing all graduating 3rd grade students with the opportunity to leave their artistic Legacy on the wall of the building. The students will be presented with a ceramic tile that will be illustrated with a favorite memory, hobby, or physical activity. The tiles are utilized to create a long-term artistic stamp on their school to be viewed for years to come.

## **DOROTHY'S ADVENTURE TO OZ**

*Deirdre Wittmann*

*Kreamer Street Elementary School, Kindergarten*

\$2,212.00

The purpose of visiting Theatre Three in Port Jefferson is to give the Kindergarten students a trip they will never forget. They will take a trip down the yellow brick road to the magical land of oz. They will meet many characters and experience the sights and sounds of live musical theatre. The children will reflect on their friendships and believe in themselves. This trip will help with a discussion that aligns with the district's social emotional curriculum. This trip will make a difference in the students' education and create lifelong memories. Includes cost of nurse, \$284.

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTION: HOW TO MAKE A PIZZA**

*Deirdre Wittmann*

*Kreamer Street Elementary School, Kindergarten*

\$500.00

The purpose of visiting Café Castello is to provide a hands-on learning experience that sparks excitement for learning and enhances classroom instruction. Café Castello is a family-owned Italian pizzeria located in Bellport Village. During the visit, kindergarten students will participate in interactive, hands-on activities focused on the step-by-step process of making a personal pizza. Each class will work with an adult chef, Mr. Nick, who will guide them through the pizza-making steps. Students will have the opportunity to smell a variety of spices and taste each ingredient as they follow the directions. This engaging experience not only supports the district's writing curriculum, particularly the "How-To" unit, but also creates meaningful, real-world connections that will make a lasting impact on students' education and help them to build lifelong memories.

## **BRINGING HIP HOP TO BHS**

*Bridget Roche*

*Bellport High School*

\$3,000.00

This project brings a professional hip hop artist into the high school for a two-week residency, providing approx 250 students with the opportunity to explore a dynamic and culturally significant art form. Through daily workshops, students will study movement, rhythm, choreography, and freestyle expression, while also learning about the history and social impact of hip hop. The program aligns with the mission of the South Country Education Foundation by enriching students' educational experience, fostering creativity, and promoting cultural literacy. By engaging students in an art form that resonates with contemporary youth culture, the residency will strengthen connections between the arts and students' lived experiences, encouraging self-expression, teamwork, and confidence.

## **NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONVENTION**

*Ellen Hoffman*

*Bellport High School*

\$3,000.00

LEAD is a national conference with a series of workshops and seminars led by student leaders and advisors from around the country. These meetings provide opportunities for peer learning, skill development, community service, networking and teaching students how to use their voice for positive change in their communities. The goal of the Student Council at BHS is to be the liaison between the student body and the administration. This conference will help to enhance and promote growth among the students involved in leadership positions to achieve this goal. Funding will be used alongside fundraising monies. Includes cost for substitute coverage, \$300 for two subs.

## **BEYOND SCREENS: BOOKS, BONDS AND BEING BETTER HUMANS**

*Stephanie Factor*

*Bellport High School*

\$1,920.00

Beyond Screens: Books, Bonds, and Being Better Humans will create opportunities for students at Bellport High School to strengthen literacy, build community, and develop responsibility in engaging and creative ways. ENL students will participate in student-led book clubs supported by a shared bookshelf of diverse texts, giving them the chance to practice reading and discussion skills while connecting with one another. The ENL classroom will also receive chair pockets to improve organization and provide students with easy access to materials, creating a more supportive learning environment. All students will benefit from resources that support social and creative growth, including UNO and other board games for playful, low-stress interaction and relationship building, and art kits that encourage exploration of identity and creativity through hands-on projects. These items will be made available in the library and cafeterias.

## **ANNUAL AUTHORS UNLIMITED FIELD TRIP**

*Lisa Dooley, Nicolette Schiavone, Brianna Torre*

*Bellport High School/Bellport Middle School*

\$1,994.00

Authors Unlimited is an annual literacy festival celebrating reading and writing by connecting teens and authors. The event is held at St. Joseph's University and is geared toward 5th-12th graders. Students are afforded the opportunity to meet dynamic authors of young adult literature. As teachers of young writers, we recognized the value of this program. We quickly established a relationship with the coordinator of this event, Derek Ivie. Derek, the Youth Services Coordinator for the Suffolk Cooperative Library System, is a great supporter of our efforts in getting students to attend each year. With Derek's support, we have successfully guided students to explore their interest in the literary world.

Authors Unlimited is a multifaceted program that offers insight into not only the writing process, but also a deeper understanding of the experience of becoming a published author. Students listen to authors speak in a panel discussion during which they are invited to ask questions of the authors. This is followed by a series of breakout sessions offering a more intimate feel for the writing process from brainstorming to publication. In addition, the authors share past titles while highlighting their latest novels. This event is designed for aspiring writers and illustrators, as well as book lovers.

## **SLOTHS AND RAINFOREST FRIENDS**

*Alicia Ulberg*

*Frank P Long Intermediate School, 4th grade*

\$2,450.00

Kids love sloths, those cute critters hanging from rainforest trees. But did you know that prehistoric sloths grew as large as elephants, roamed up to Alaska, and swam in the ocean like sea lions? . In this action-packed assembly, award-winning author Elizabeth Shreeve will present the writing, research, and design process for her nonfiction book, *The Upside-Down Book of Sloths* (Norton Young Readers, September 10, 2023). CEED science educators will share LIVE animals and artifacts, demonstrating the amazing biodiversity of rainforest environments. The assemblies will include a multi-media presentation, 75 signed books plus bonus copies for school libraries, teacher guide emphasizing science/language arts connections and demonstration with animals from CEED's nature center.

## **ARMIDILLOS AND THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ANIMAL ADAPTATIONS**

*Keri Paolillo*

*Frank P. Long Intermediate School, 5th grade*

\$2,450.00

Children's scientific picture book author and South Country School District alumni, Elizabeth Shreeve will visit in-person for assemblies for the entire fifth grade, sharing her new book, *The Oddball Book of Armadillos*, in conjunction with her card game: *The Adaptation Game*. During these assemblies, children will learn about how armadillos have evolved and adapted to survive in addition to learning about the ecosystems ideal for an armadillo and the variety of animals that live there. CEED's science education team will participate and share some of their animals from the southern United States, Central and South American regions.

In this action-packed assembly award-winning author Elizabeth Shreeve will present the writing, research, and design process for *The Oddball Book of Armadillos*, CEED science educators will share LIVE animals and artifacts, demonstrating the remarkable scope of animal adaptations to rainforest and other ecosystems. Two assemblies will include a multi-media presentation, 75 signed books plus bonus copies for school libraries, classroom activities including the *Adaptation Game*, and demonstration with animals from CEED nature center.

## **TELLING OUR STORIES: STUDENT FILMMAKING WITH 4K**

*Sophia Black*

*Bellport High School*

\$2,894.00

South Country High School's Video Production program will expand creative opportunities for students by adding six new Zoom Q8n-4K video cameras. With access to professional-quality equipment, approximately 20 students each year will learn the full filmmaking process—from shooting and recording audio to editing and showcasing original films. This project ensures that all students can participate fully in hands-on, collaborative storytelling while building technical skills, confidence, and creative expression.

Our high school Video Production program empowers students to become creative storytellers, critical thinkers, and skilled collaborators. Through hands-on practice with industry-relevant tools, students learn the fundamentals of filmmaking—camera operation, lighting, audio recording, editing, and visual storytelling. These skills not only prepare them for potential careers in media and the arts, but also strengthen essential life skills such as communication, problem solving, and teamwork.

## **EXPANDING CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES**

*Brandon Payne/Barbara Gallagher*

*Bellport High School*

\$2,821.25

This grant will fund the purchase of a large format printer for the Bellport High School Art Department. The printer will serve Media, Graphic Design, Photography, Architecture, and Advanced Placement Art classes, giving students the ability to produce professional-quality, large-scale prints for classroom projects, exhibitions, and college portfolios.

The Bellport High School Art Department is requesting funding to purchase a large format printer that will significantly expand the creative opportunities for students. Currently, students are limited to standard-size printing, which restricts the scale, presentation, and professional quality of their work. A large format printer will provide students with industry-standard technology used in graphic design firms, photography studios, architectural design, and higher education art programs.

## **SUFFOLK COUNTY FARM AND EXPLORATION IN KINDERGARTEN**

*Deidre Whittman*

*Kreamer St. Elementary School, Kindergarten*

\$1,652.00

The Suffolk County Farm trip provides students with an engaging, hands-on learning experience that enhances classroom instruction and supports New York State standards. Through guided tours, interactive activities, and opportunities to feed and care for animals, students gain a deeper understanding of farming concepts, animal responsibility, and local history. This enriching experience not only strengthens curriculum connections but also creates meaningful and lasting memories for students. Includes cost for nurse, \$284.

## **FIRST GRADE ART FIELD TRIP**

*Gianna Maccarino*

*Brookhaven Elementary School*

\$2,181.20

Students in the first grade will take a field trip to Mama Farm located in Bellport. Students will be introduced to nature-based local Bellport artist Jay Sylvester and learn about his artistic process. Students will create their own found object collages inspired by Sylvester's unique style by gathering found materials and assembling them onto a canvas. This grant supports the mission of the South Country Education Foundation by providing funding to help first-grade students at Brookhaven Elementary School deepen their understanding of art through meaningful and engaging experiences.

## **FORENSICS CLASS SITE VISIT**

*Kelly Gerolami and Cailey Williams*

*Bellport High School*

\$1,487.60

Students in the Forensics Science class at Bellport HS will be visiting the Riverhead Jail. Students will get to see the judicial process following a person's arrest. Students will be able to speak to inmates about their crime and the forensic evidence used against them. Includes cost for substitute coverage for four teachers, \$777.60.

## **THE ABC'S OF BULLYING**

*Kimberly Gosselin*

*Brookhaven Elementary School, Kreamer St, Verne W Critz and Frank P. Long Intermediate School*

\$3,000.00

South Country students in grades 2nd through 5th grade will partake in a meaningful and impactful anti-bullying assembly, titled "The ABCs of Bullying: Awareness, Boundaries, and Communication." This program is designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment while supporting the academic and social development of every student.

The assembly will be led by Sensei Jerry Figgiani, a 9th Dan Black Belt, President and Founder of Shorin Ryu Karate-Do International, and owner of East Coast Black Belt Academy, Budokan Dojo. With a strong background in martial arts and character development, Sensei Figgiani brings decades of experience teaching youth the values of respect, confidence, and self-discipline.

## **DISCOVERY THROUGH PLAY: GROWING THINKERS IN GRADES K-3**

*Kimberly Gosselin*

*Brookhaven Elementary School*

\$3,000.00

This project will promote play-based discovery learning for students in grades K–3, encouraging curiosity, exploration, and knowledge building through hands-on experiences. Each grade level will engage in themed activities that connect to their developmental stage and expand their understanding of the world around them.

Kindergarten students will explore their community and weather, engaging in dramatic play, building models, and experimenting with weather tools to better understand the people, places, and natural patterns that shape their daily lives.

First Grade students will investigate the fascinating worlds of bees and ocean animals, using role-play, observation, and interactive games to build knowledge of ecosystems, interdependence, and the importance of these creatures in our environment.

Second graders are diving into a hands-on, play-based exploration of bugs and insects! Through discovery learning experiences, students will observe, classify, and investigate the fascinating world of tiny creatures around us. As part of this unit, students will take part in a “Bugs as Pets” assembly sponsored by CEED, where they’ll learn to identify backyard bugs by their legs and body sections. During this exciting program, students will explore the world of insects, arachnids, and myriapods—and even have the chance to see some up close and touch a few of these amazing animals!

Third graders are embarking on an exciting, hands-on study of animal adaptations through discovery-based, play-centered learning. Using exploratory centers, interactive play, students will investigate how animals survive and thrive in diverse habitats around the world. As part of this experience, students will attend CEED’s popular “Animal Adaptations” assembly, where they’ll meet live animal ambassadors and act as scientists to uncover the amazing physical, behavioral, and social traits that help these creatures survive in their environments.

## **BOOK NOOK**

*Stephanie Pirozzi*

*Bellport High School*

\$600.00

This project will include low-level but high-interest texts for my struggling students. Many of my students enter high school on elementary levels, but do not want to read this level of material due to age appropriateness of the story lines. This grant also includes a bookshelf to house these books. Whiteboards will give them a more engaging way to practice needed word attack skills. Overall, it will help create an inviting classroom that promotes literacy.

## **LONG ISLAND AQUARIUM FIELD TRIP**

*Sarah Dern*

*Verne Critz Elementary School*

\$1,451.96

Special Education Students at Verne W. Critz will attend a field trip at the Long Island Aquarium and Exhibition Center to explore marine life and ocean ecosystems in an interactive, inclusive setting. The trip is designed to enrich academic learning, support social-emotional growth, and foster a deeper connection to the natural world.

## **LET'S GROW KNOWLEDGE - SPEAKING, READING, THINKING AND BEYOND**

*Vicki Williams*

*Kreamer St Elementary School*

\$2,320.00

Our K–3 classrooms will be buzzing with curiosity as we explore updated Reading content units. These units will be enhanced with this project because it will allow immersion through growing knowledge around the key concepts. Funding from SCEF will allow us to bring in Assembles and to add to our Community Play lab for hands-on exploration and imaginative play, children will build knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Second graders will explore insects, and third graders will investigate animal adaptations. This project will provide assemblies from CEED to cultivate creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking—helping students learn by doing and building background knowledge around key concepts.

## **CHAPTERS AHEAD: UNLOCKING READING POTENTIAL**

*Melissa Masullo*

*Kreamer St Elementary School*

\$855.00

Kreamer Street Reading Department will start a Reading incentive project. This project will help second and third grade students to have access to chapter books within the Guided Reading Levels of G-K. A fun interactive bulletin board will visually represent their "journey" and showcase the students progress. Students will also track their reading through the creation of a reading response from a menu of choices.

## **THIRD GRADE LITERACY LEADERS**

*Vicki Williams, Kimberly Gosselin*

*Brookhaven Elementary School, Kreamer St Elementary School, Verne W. Critz School*

\$1,752.00

Third Grade Clipper Literacy Leaders is an enrichment program that will provide third graders from all three elementary schools the ability to choose, plan and engage in a student-led read aloud to preschoolers at our UPK program at the Southaven School. Selected Third Graders from Brookhaven Elementary School, Kreamer Street Elementary School and Verne W. Critz will be chosen as part of an enrichment program to experience "being a teacher for the day," and plan out reading their younger peers. The Literacy Coordinators in each building will meet weekly with these groups of third graders to plan out interactive and engaging read aloud that promote oral language, literacy, and leadership. At the end of the six-week enrichment program, the grant will help fund transportation and materials needed to prepare the read aloud as a culminating activity for the third-grade students

## **COMMUNITY/DAILY LIVING ACTIVITY GRANT**

*Jane Quatralo*

*Bellport High School*

\$2,019.00

This grant will be for the students with disabilities enrolled in the 12:1:2 Life Skills and 12:1:4 Autism programs at Bellport High School. Potential funds will be used to introduce our students to a variety of opportunities, via Field Trips within a Community setting. These trips will allow the students to develop educationally, socially, and professionally outside of their normal classroom environment. The funds granted will provide transportation and program fees to maximize the educational experience for our students. Trip to Sayville theater and bowling.

## **VOICES IN NATURE: BUILDING COMMUNICATION THROUGH COMMUNITY EXPLORATION**

*Kathleen Wozniak*

*Bellport High School*

\$1,791.00

This project will fund two inclusive field trips for high school students with multiple disabilities, led by the speech-language pathologist and supported by staff. At Sweetbriar Nature Center, students will participate in a hands-on workshop that promotes vocabulary development, expressive language, and peer interaction. At Southaven Park, students will plan and enjoy a picnic while learning vocabulary related to nature, animals, and environmental science. The students will work on requesting and conversational skills. Both outings support IEP goals and provide meaningful opportunities for communication, social-emotional growth, and academic reinforcement in real-world settings. The project reflects the Foundation's mission by enhancing education, fostering inclusion, and building lifelong skills through community engagement.

## **LIFE SKILLS FIELD TRIPS**

*Courtney Cerrone*

*Bellport High School*

\$1,619.00

South Country High School Life Skills students will participate in three community-based field trips: Smith Haven Mall/Five Below, and Bayport Flower House. These trips give students the chance to practice real-world skills including budgeting, communication, following directions, and appropriate social interactions.

The Life Skills Program prepares students for independence by extending learning beyond the classroom. At the mall and Five Below, students will practice budgeting and shopping within a set amount. At Bayport Flower House, students will strengthen listening and following directions during a tour and flower arrangement activity, then write a note to accompany their creation.

## **INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION FOR LIFE SKILLS STUDENTS: EXPLORING MARINE LIFE & PERFORMING ARTS**

*Loreen Ribaudo*

*Bellport High School*

\$2,816.00

This project will fund two inclusive field trips for our high school life skills class, serving 25 students with multiple disabilities. With support from 15 staff members, students will visit the Long Island Aquarium and Theater Three in Port Jefferson to extend classroom learning into the community. These outings reinforce curriculum goals in science and the arts while promoting communication, independence, and social interaction aligned with each student's IEP. By providing hands-on, sensory-friendly experiences, the project supports the South Country Education Foundation's mission to enhance educational opportunities, foster inclusion, and build meaningful community connections.

## **SWEETBRIAR NATURE CENTER**

*Corinne Figueroa*

*Kreamer St. Elementary School, 1st Grade*

\$2,395.00

Kreamer Street First Grade Classes will take a trip to the nature center to explore life cycles. Through stories, role playing, and direct interaction with the natural world. Children will learn that all things in nature change, and that many of the changes are cycles including life cycles. The life cycles represented are that of plants, butterflies and frogs. They will make memories that will last a lifetime. Includes cost for nurse, \$284.

## **THEATER THREE: DOROTHY'S ADVENTURE IN OZ**

*Corinne Figueroa*

*Kreamer St Elementary School, 1st Grade*

\$2,537.00

The purpose of visiting Theatre Three in Port Jefferson is to give the First Grade students a trip they will never forget. They will take a trip down the yellow brick road to the magical land of OZ. They will meet many characters and experience sights and sounds of live musical theatre. The children will reflect on their friendships and believe in themselves. The trip will help with the discussion that aligns with the district's social emotional curriculum. This trip will make a difference in the students' education and create lifelong memories. Includes cost for nurse, \$284.

**TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED: \$70,923.96**