

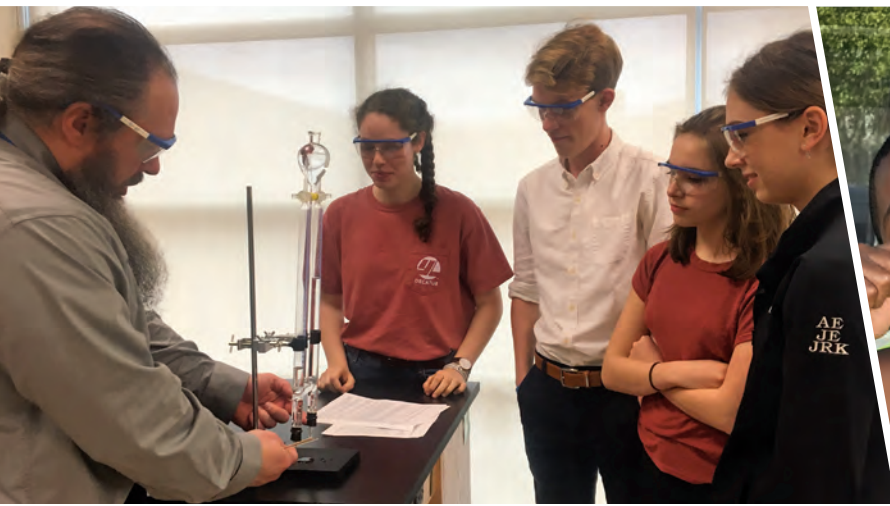


Decatur
Education
Foundation

MID-YEAR UPDATE 2018



WHEN YOU SAY YES TO DEF ...



together we
make a difference

When you say yes to DEF, you say yes to arts infusion!

Arts-Infused Learning is a collaboration between classroom teachers and teaching artists that results in learning experiences that enable students to identify and apply authentic connections between two or more subjects and to understand essential concepts that transcend individual subject areas.

Students engage in creative processes which connect art forms such as sculpting, singing, or performing to another subject like math, science, or social studies.

Studies have consistently shown that students who experience an arts-infused curriculum are more engaged in learning, perform better academically and develop creativity and problem solving skills.

This year DEF grants funded two arts-infusion pilot projects at Westchester Elementary: One Well and Our Movement Through Space.





OUR MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE

How do you really learn a concept? By getting your whole body involved! The second grade classes at Westchester Elementary learned all about the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the constellations in their Movement through Space expedition. They learned not only through molding suns out of clay in art and learning songs about astronomy, but through emulating the movement of the celestial bodies with their own bodies. With the help of a DEF grant, performance artist Ericka Shannon came into the classrooms to get the students moving. Students chose which part of the solar system they wanted to emulate, and the classroom was transformed into a life-size model while they tangibly acted out “orbiting.” Second-grade teacher Mr. Cordy said, “Adding the element of movement to the expedition caters to a diversity of learning styles and truly engages every child. It provided the perfect opportunity to integrate arts education into the expedition to help build the most well-rounded, adaptable, and developed students we can.”



“ONE WELL” AND WOLFPACK CREEK

“One Well” was a Westchester Elementary expedition about water and its importance as a resource. Teachers report the expedition brought life to the content, and students who are normally passive participants in learning had an active role and interest in investigating water. The comprehensive project incorporated lessons in music, art, math, and social studies. The final project was an outdoor sculpture by the newly named (by them) Wolfpack Creek. Students participated in every stage from conception to design to production. The expedition concluded with a celebration at which the third graders enthusiastically voiced their expertise on water, shared movement and songs, and unveiled their sculpture.

“The arts infusion partnership at Westchester School was very satisfying and successful on many levels. [It] has already opened up meaningful learning and adventures in creativity for everyone involved, including me,” says Jeff Mather, arts infusion specialist and teaching artist. “When we take on the challenge of true collaboration, which can be an art form itself, we can go beyond the limits of what arts infusion education has been and surprise our communities and ourselves with fresh approaches and fresh ideas.”

DEF funded the project in partnership with the Westchester Elementary PTA through the Zara Yee Hawthorne Memorial Fund. Special thanks to Westchester teachers Stacy Foster and Nadine Howarth, and artists Jeff Mather and Ericka Shannon.

“Integration is a perfect word for this experience. Collaboration was the name of the game, which made it so exciting to watch the process. It engages all aspects, all standards and is powered by enthusiasm and imagination.”

— Movement Artist Ericka Shannon

When you say yes to DEF, you say yes to mentoring that makes an impact.

DEF's Opportunity Partnership mentoring program, now in its second year, was established to help address the Opportunity Gap that exists in our community.

Currently two cohorts, a total of 18 kids, have adult volunteer mentors who meet with them regularly to learn about their interests and to connect them with opportunities that will help them develop useful life skills and discover their passions.

The steady growth of our mentoring program has been bolstered by the ongoing partnerships that DEF has established with many of our youth-serving local businesses. These four local organizations – Märchen Sagen Academy, FitWit, Gathered and Grounded, and Decatur City Church – have recently invested their time and resources to provide experiences for our mentor groups, not only exposing them to new activities, but also providing opportunities for each cohort to bond and have experiences as a group.



MÄRCHEN SAGEN ACADEMY FOR VISUAL STORYTELLERS

Märchen Sagen provides afterschool and summer camps for kids interested in audio and video production. Our OP cohorts have loved their sessions with “Mr. AI”, a true production expert who always encourages their curiosity and collaboration. Our group of third graders created and produced a stop-action film, and the fourth-grade cohort wrote, mixed, and produced their own song!

FITWIT KIDS

DEF mentors Erin and Josh Guerrieri, owners of the local gym FitWit have offered spots in FitWit Kids to ANY of DEF's mentees who are interested. The program uses a combination of games and workouts to build strength, confidence, and endurance and promotes teamwork and healthy choices. Three of the fourth grade boys have not missed a week yet! Now that DEF has a van, transportation is no longer a limiting issue for any number of mentees who wish to participate!

“When I first started taking the kids to FitWit, I noticed one boy seemed hesitant to fully participate in the conversation and activities. Now, [he] is the most excited to go each week. FitWit Kids’ focus on teamwork and encouragement has noticeably increased his confidence. . . and has helped him forge stronger bonds with his peers. That’s huge.”

— Mentor Program Coordinator Marie McCollum



GATHERED AND GROUNDED

Marnie Grodzin is a Decatur parent and the owner of a new business called Gathered and Grounded, which provides holistic mental and physical health services for youth and those who care for them. Marnie recently held a yoga class for our OP mentors, mentees, and their families, and it was a packed house! The kids learned how to use their bodies in a healthy way, and practiced breathing techniques that can help manage stress and anger. At the end of the class, the group of kids and adults joined hands and leaned into each other as they each held their tree poses – one excited third grader exclaimed, “Look! We’re a forest!”



A VAN TO EXPLORE BEYOND DECATUR

Decatur City Church attendees have been saying “YES” in support of DEF for years, but they recently came through in a monumental way by providing a matching grant for the purchase of a van to support our mentoring programs. The grant was subsequently matched by donors who have supported the program from the beginning. Transportation has been an ongoing impediment to our mentor groups exploring the world beyond Decatur. Because the minivan can transport an entire mentoring cohort, it broadens the scope of where these groups can go and the types of adventures they can have together.



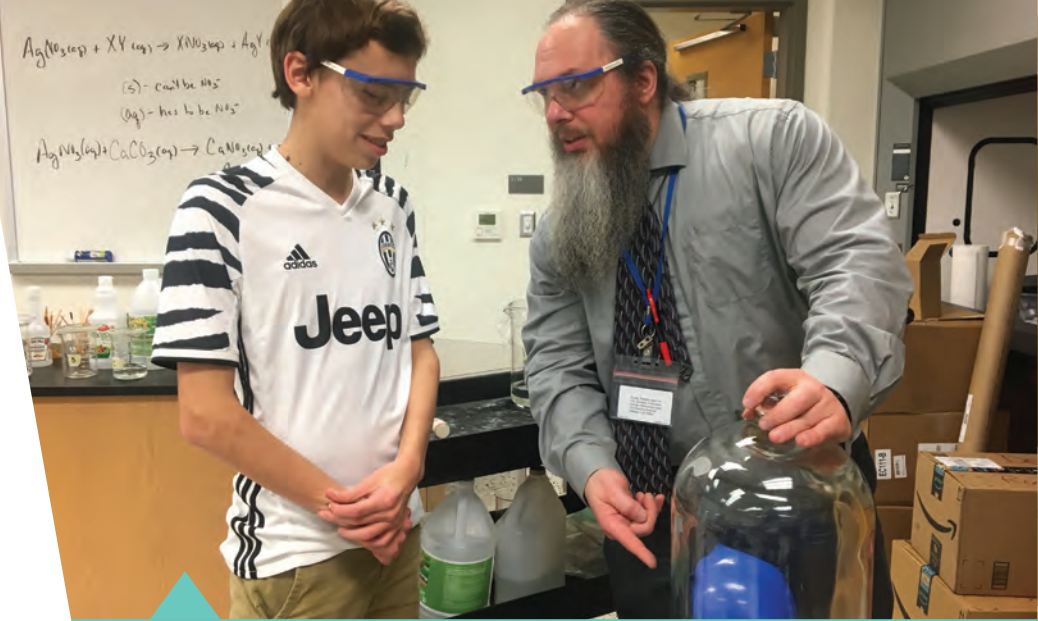
“I love Märchen Sagen because we get to learn about all different kinds of creative things.”

— Nadiya, 3rd grade

When you say yes to DEF, you say yes to teachers.

Twice every school year, DEF provides Teacher Innovation Grants that allow teachers to be creative in meeting the learning needs of all types of students. Great teachers have great ideas and write grants to help bring them to life in the classroom.

To read more impact stories, visit decatureducationfoundation.org/impact.



SUCKING UP ALL THE KNOWLEDGE

DHS Chemistry teacher, Sean DeWeese, believes that students learn best when exposed to discrepant events that challenge the students' understanding of how the world works. Some of the most startling presentations involve the use of a bell jar and vacuum pump to create an environment inside the bell jar that is drastically different from normal conditions. With the help of a DEF Teacher Innovation Grant, Dr. Dewese purchased a new, efficient vacuum pump. He is now able to conduct more experiments by removing the air from the bell jar, creating surprising effects, such as causing shaving cream and a balloon to expand, or making water boil without raising the temperature. The whole science department has access to the new vacuum pump for experiments in physics and chemistry classes.



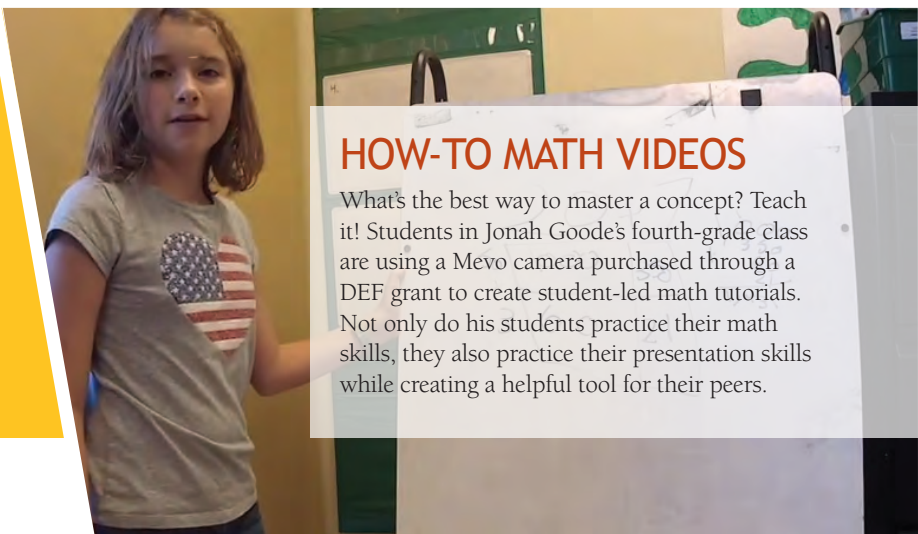
ROUNDING OUT THE SOUND

The Decatur High School Band Program, an important creative outlet for hundreds of Decatur students, also serves as an integral source of entertainment at school events and competitions. The band currently has three different ensembles. Typically an ensemble has two bass clarinets, but one of the band's ensembles had none. With help from a DEF grant funded through the Mead Road Mardi Gras, the program purchased a much-needed bass clarinet that will allow the third ensemble to expand its musical repertoire and competition participation. The instrument can be loaned annually to a student who needs it.



AMPLIFYING SOFT VOICES

Learning to express oneself orally in class is an important skill for third graders, but not every student feels confident projecting their voice loud enough to be heard. To encourage even the most bashful students to share during classroom discussions, third-grade Westchester teacher Stacey Foster purchased a Catchbox – a soft, throwable student microphone that not only amplifies students' voices, but also provides a visual clue of who "has the floor." This useful and fun classroom tool that was funded through a DEF grant reinforces the "think-pair-share" discussion system and encourages student engagement.



HOW-TO MATH VIDEOS

What's the best way to master a concept? Teach it! Students in Jonah Goode's fourth-grade class are using a Mevo camera purchased through a DEF grant to create student-led math tutorials. Not only do his students practice their math skills, they also practice their presentation skills while creating a helpful tool for their peers.



HANDS-ON MATH

Math teacher Mr. Champion at Decatur High School sought hands-on activities to inspire his students and show math uses in daily life. The class planned out a monthly project using materials purchased with help from a DEF grant, and worked with community experts like the Decatur Makers. Students learned useful skills, tried new hobbies, and saw how math can be applied to everyday life – that’s win³!



MAKING FRIENDS WITH VETERANS

Sixth-grade Studio Art students were able to show local veterans that their sacrifices are not forgotten. A DEF grant funded the supplies for Ms. Kanne’s class to make friendship bracelets. They hand-delivered bracelets to the veterans at the VA Center, and they visited with the residents. The project and visit left a big impression on both the veterans and the students.



ESPAÑOL SOLO PARA MI

For two years, FAVE students in Señora Souki’s Spanish class have created videos in Spanish that reinforce their writing, speaking, and comprehension, and entered several videos in the Georgia Student Media Festival! But because not every student has their own headphones, not everyone could participate in this high-level, engaging project. With funds from a DEF Teacher Innovation Grant, Señora Souki purchased a classroom set of lightweight, durable headphones with microphones and volume control. Now every Spanish student can learn and practice at their own pace, and create videos for consideration at the next media festival.



THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR LEARNIN’

Sometimes a simple grant becomes much more than anticipated. College Heights Pre-K teacher Angela Gabriel wanted a way to have valuable outside play for her students, even when it’s wet. With a DEF grant, she purchased over-the-shoe rain boots and raincoats for her entire class, taking them to wonderful and unexpected places. Playing in the puddles led to an impromptu literature discussion about the book *Raccoon on His Own*, and naming animals that live in the swamp. The boots also led the class to participate in a “Welly Walk,” a worldwide fundraising initiative in support of pediatric cancer research.



CHOOSE YOUR SEAT

As a result of increasing grant requests for alternative seating over the past two years, DEF has launched a pilot program in multiple schools across the district to study how exercise balls, wobble stools, desk cycles and stability cushions affect focus and productivity in the classroom. The initial feedback has been positive, with teachers reporting improvements in students’ productivity and reductions in behavioral re-direction. DEF is working in collaboration with CSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction Daryl Campbell to help inform future decisions about what works best in our classrooms for our kids.



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The Decatur Education Foundation

connects resources in our community with the needs of kids. We do this in four main ways: removing obstacles to learning, providing opportunities, supporting teachers and educational programs, and strengthening community initiatives. Our success is due to an actively involved community and their generous donations of volunteer time, special skills, and financial gifts. We have touched upon just a small fraction of the work we do in these pages. If you would like to learn more and join our community go to:

- DecaturEducationFoundation
- @DEF_DecaturGA
- DecaturEducationFoundation

STEP UP FOR TEACHERS

Every day in classrooms across our city, teachers and support staff step up for our kids. They do this because they are passionate about helping each child reach his or her full potential. They do this in big ways – differentiating learning to reach every child regardless of ability – and in small ways like attending a student’s musical performance or what book the student is reading at home.

Each spring, we give the community a chance to #STEPUP for teachers and show them just how much they are loved and appreciated.

Here’s how it works:

During April and May, you make a gift to DEF in honor of a CSD teacher, administrator, or school support staff. With your gift, you can leave a short note of gratitude in tribute. DEF then sends the teacher a link to a webpage with your

tribute message and DEF volunteers deliver a yard sign to you so everyone can see that you step up for teachers. If you have a graduating senior, you can also choose a Congratulations Class of 2018 yard sign instead. Our goal each year is to blanket the city with yard signs so that it’s clear to all who pass through just how important our educators are to us!

The best part? All of the funds raised during our Step Up campaign support grants that allow our teachers to find creative ways to engage all of their students. Most of the stories shared on these pages are funded in part by our spring Step Up campaign. DEF invites



you to honor a CSD teacher or staff member with a donation and an online tribute today!

To learn more and make a tribute gift, please visit StepUpforTeachers.com.