**For release Aug. 3, 2002**

**Milan schools get over $32,000 this year to fund academic extras**

*Local MEGA endowment has allocated $740,389.91 since 1991*

MILAN, TN Aug. 2 – Public school students in Milan will benefit from over $32,000 in grants for new classroom equipment and special programs promoting academics and the arts during the 2022-23 school year.

For the 32nd year, a local, nonprofit organization, MEGA, the Milan Endowment for Growth in Academics, is awarding grants to teachers in the Milan Special School District to pay for classroom “extras” – high tech lab equipment; innovative programs teaching science, math, history, reading and other subjects; student field trips; and experiences in graphic arts, theater and music.

**29 grants valued at over $32,000**

29 new MEGA grants totaling $32,449.67 were announced by the organization’s president, Bruce Niven and awarded to teachers at the 2022-23 school year kick-off breakfast at the high school, Aug. 2

“I am humbled and honored to represent the fifteen dedicated and committed members of the board of MEGA,” said Mr. Niven. “We are all proud to be carrying on the work that started with an idea from Ben and Tina Huey thirty-two years ago.”

Milan Special School District Director Jonathan Criswell thanked Mr. Niven and other MEGA board members attending the kickoff event: Thorne Barbour, Denise Clemmer, Lacee Mallard, Jackie Parr, Steve Short, and Julie Allen Ward.

**Allocations since 1991 exceed $740,000**

Established by local citizens in 1989 and built with donations from individuals and businesses, the Milan Endowment for Growth in Academics has now funded 1,032 total grants for educators valued at $740,389.91, including grants for the new school year (2022-23). The first MEGA grants were awarded in 1991-92, when $2,072 was allocated for 5 programs.

MEGA’s endowment has grown through investments, earned interest, dividends, and capital gains. Currently, annual grants are funded by allocating 5 percent of the endowment’s average value over a 3-year time period.

“This strategy, by our Investment Committee, is what gives us the opportunity to be able to still award grants during such a difficult time in the stock market that we are experiencing currently,” said Mr. Niven.

Managed by volunteers, MEGA has been touted by former U.S. Senator Bill Frist and other state leaders as a model for other communities to support public education. MEGA was awarded the state Friend of Education Award in 2004 by the Tennessee Education Association (TEA).

Tax deductible donations can be sent to MEGA, P.O. Box 641; Milan, TN 38358. Visit the MEGA Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/MEGA.Milan

**Honorary grants presented**

MEGA awards special grants that pay tribute to individuals and a local industry that made extraordinary contributions to the organization. Allie Vee Fly Blankenship bequeathed $40,000 to MEGA, the largest contribution by an individual donor. Blake and Sara Wilkinson were two of the leaders who founded the organization. Ceco Door Products manufacturing under manager Frank Kos donated $10,000 in seed money in 1989 to start MEGA and followed up with large contributions in subsequent years.

Special MEGA grants and winning teachers for 2022-23 are:

**ALLIE VEE FLY BLANKENSHIP GRANT** – Allison Archie, 3 grants funding arts programs: Arts are Amazing, College Art Day, Museum Madness; Milan High School; 9th - 12th grade; $3,550.

**BLAKE AND SARA WILKINSON GRANT** – Amanda Jones, Legends of Learning math and science initiative, Milan Elementary School, K-4th grade, $2,200.

**CECO DOOR PRODUCTS GRANT** – Nathan Nicholas, 4 grants funding science programs and equipment: Blowing in the Wind, Maze Run, Electricity & Magnetism, and an Additive Manufacturing 3-D Printer; Milan Middle School, 5th-8th grade, $3,132.

**MEGA grants for 2022-23**

**Milan Elementary School**

Check My Learning!, Sara Jane Roberts, K, $800

Check My Learning!, All First Grade Teachers, 1st, $800

Hydration Station, Ashley McKnight, K, $854

Can You Hear Me Now?, Beth Glover, READ (Pre-K-4th), $1,172.75

Let’s Glow! A Classroom Transformation, Kathy Witherington,3rd, $1,112

MES Musicals, Rachel Edmaiston, K-4th, $300

Boogie Down for Learning, Jenna Butler & Lyndsay McKnight, 3rd, $2,400

Legends of Learning, Amanda Jones, K-4th, $2,200

Butterflies, Amybeth Hughes, 1st, $295.92

**MES Total: 9 grants $9,934.67**

**Milan Middle School**

Next Generation Science Activities, Drew Gordon, 7th, $500

Blowing in the Wind, Nathan Nicholas, 5th-8th, $526

Maze Run, Nathan Nicholas, 5th-8th, $894

Electricity & Magnetism, Nathan Nicholas, 5th-8th, $1,007

Additive Manufacturing 3D Printer, Nathan Nicholas, 5th-8th, $705

Frog Dissection System, Drew Gordon, 7th, $400

5th Grade Discovers, Matt Dunagan, 5th, $1,800

Milan History on the Move, Matt Dunagan, Jeffrey Clippard, John Hyde, 5th, 7-8, $2,800

A History of Milan, Matt Dunagan, 5th-8th, $335

Science Comes Real, Dr. Shelia Dunphy, 6th, $500

Digital Boards, Lauren Rich, 7th, $500

The Play’s the Thing, Becky Reeves, MMS Principal Chris Jones, 5th-8th, $1,000

**MMS Total: 12 grants $10,967**

**Milan High School**

Lab Rats Need Some Cheese, Julia Allen, 9th-12th, $1,000

Math - Easy as TT (Pi), Dr. Sarah Ledford, 10th-12th, $400

Arts are Amazing, Allison Archie, 9th-12th, $2,800

College Art Day, Allison Archie, 9th-12th, $250

Museum Madness, Allison Archie, 9th-12th, $500

Wanted: Dead or Alive, Brittany Reeves, 9th-12th, $1,000

Enriched Science project, MHS Principal Jennifer Yates, 9th-12th, $1,724

MHS Theater, Marsha Lantz, 9th-12th, $3,874

**MHS Total: 8 grants $11,548 Total**

Total MEGA allocations for 2022-23: 29 grants worth $32,449.67

MEGA cumulative allocations 1991-2023 - 1,032 grants worth $740,389.91

Photos and captions

**EXTRAS FOR EDUCATION** – Leaders of the Milan Endowment for Growth in Academics (MEGA) awarded 29 grants totaling more than $32,000 to Milan educators to fund new academic and art programs during the 2022-23 school year. Grants were announced at the school system’s kickoff breakfast Aug. 2. MEGA president Bruce Niven (right) and board member Jackie Parr presented certificates to Milan Middle School Principal Chris Jones to fund science equipment and programs. Teacher Nathan Nicholas received the grant funding which totaled $3,132. This was the 32nd year for MEGA grant awards.

**ADVOCATING FOR ACADEMICS** – Denise Clemmer (left), a member of the board of directors for the Milan Endowment for Growth in Academics (MEGA), presented Milan Middle School teacher Matt Dunagan a grant of $1,800 to fund a new, academic program, 5th Grade Discovers during the 2022-23 school year. The award presentation was made Aug. 2 at the school year kickoff breakfast. Dunagan and other teachers also received grant funds to form a new student History Club for students. MEGA awarded nearly $32,500 for academic “extras” in all three Milan schools during the coming school year.

**HELPING SCHOOLS** – Thorne Barbour (right), a member of the board of directors for the Milan Endowment for Growth in Academics (MEGA), presented a grant for $1,724 to Milan High School Principal Jennifer Yates at the Aug. 2 kickoff breakfast for the 2022-23 school year. Funds will pay for new equipment to enrich science programs at the high school. MEGA awarded nearly $32,500 to Milan schools this year for academic and art programs. Since its organization in 1991, the MEGA endowment, funded through donations by individuals and local businesses, has allocated over $740,000 to Milan schools. # # #

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