

# COMMUNITY REPORT 2016 - 2017



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## OUR MISSION REMAINS THE SAME

As we begin another new school year, a look back shows our District certainly experienced a year of change. However, even in the midst of all that change, one thing remains very clear to me, the Mission of the Wilson Education Foundation remains constant-- "To positively impact students' lives by supporting the Wilson School District in student experience, teaching excellence and community engagement." The executive committee and the full board look forward to working together with our newly hired superintendent, Dr. Richard Faidley, to positively impact our students lives by supporting him and the District in executing our mission.

We also experienced a change in leadership at the Foundation. I would like to thank former executive director, Kristin Kramer, for her years of service to the Foundation. Kristin left her position with the Foundation in January, 2017 after 3 ½ years of leading our organization. Under Kristin's leadership we enjoyed growth in all areas of the Foundation, including funding, volunteers and community impact. We wish Kristin well in all her future endeavours!

I'd like to welcome our new executive director, Karen Troutman. She brings over 20 years of experience in public relations, communications and marketing to her new position, and we are looking forward to our next chapter with her at the helm. Karen is a 1989 graduate of Wilson and is proud to be raising her two children in the Wilson School District, along with her husband, Mark, who is also an '89 grad. It's been a true pleasure working with her so far and I know she is destined to do great things for the Foundation.

As we navigate change, we must continue to help ensure a sustainable and differentiated Wilson educational experience. School districts continue to battle shrinking funds from the state, and to remain competitive we are going to need the investment of parents, alumni and businesses. The Wilson Education Foundation was set up to be the conduit for these investments.

The money the Wilson Education Foundation raises is used to support and assist the needs of



our students, teachers, and community. We are always working with our District leadership to find ways to differentiate the educational opportunities that our students receive at every level of their Wilson education.

During the past year alone, the Wilson Education Foundation provided over \$8,600 to the Venture Grant Program. Read about the innovative programs supported through this program on pages 2-3. More than \$15,500 in scholarships were awarded to members of the Wilson High School Class of 2017. We also introduced the Bulldog Summer Blast program to keep students engaged in learning throughout the summer and help reduce the summer slide. You can learn more about Bulldog Summer Blast on page 3. In addition, through the monies received from the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program, we are able to support Wilson's STEM program, which is recognized among the most prestigious STEM programs in the nation. These are just a few of the ways Wilson Education Foundation is making a difference for Wilson students!

Major change is also in the air at the state level. No matter which side of the Real Estate Tax argument you prefer to defend, there is one clear message. The pool of money that is used to differentiate and provide our students with the ability to follow their dreams is shrinking. The Wilson Education Foundation continues to position itself to help fill the gaps the District will no longer be able to provide. Accomplishing this will not be possible without the help of our community. Please find a donation form on page 4, and consider how you will help us succeed with our mission. We need your continued investment in supporting Wilson excellence. ■

Sincerely,  
Bernie Campbell, WEF Board President

## WILSON IRON CHEF ONCE AGAIN A HOT TICKET!

Full trays, full stomachs, and a full house set the stage at Wilson's 4th annual Wilson Iron Chef Competition & Benefit Auction on March 26. The 1,000 attendees, made up of community members, chefs, and volunteers, were treated to an afternoon of indulgence and entertainment. While guests tasted a variety of treats on Vendor Lane, Wilson students performed live music, and other students showcased their cake-decorating skills. Other restaurants participated in the People's Choice competition where attendees sampled dishes and voted for their favorite. The main event is an intense timed cooking competition between three local chefs, which was held on the stage in the H.S. Auditorium. Chef Joshua Haines, Executive Chef of

Beverly Hills Tavern, was named this year's Iron Chef!

For the second year WEF partnered with Sun Federal Credit Union on the Extraordinary Teacher of the Year! Congratulations to Wilson's 2017 Extraordinary Teachers of the Year Mr. Anthony Dusko, a fifth grade teacher at Shiloh Hills Elementary, and Ms. Kathleen Ramsey, Wilson Southern Middle School Reading teacher! Each received a \$1,000 prize. Through this year's event, over \$25,000 was raised to support the WEF efforts. Please save the date for Sunday, March 11, 2018, from 1-5pm, for the next Wilson Iron Chef! There are opportunities for area restaurants and food vendors to participate as well as sponsorship opportunities. For more information, please contact WEF Executive Director Karen Troutman at 610.670.0180, x1111 or trokar@wilsonsd.org. ■

# WILSON EDUCATION FOUNDATION VENTURE GRANTS 2016-2017

The mission of the Wilson Education Foundation (WEF) is to support Wilson excellence! One way WEF does this is to provide Venture Grants, which enhance and expand educational experiences and opportunities for Wilson students. Grants, provided to individual teachers, groups of teachers, departments, and other professional employees, support creative and innovative programs that would not normally be funded through the school budget. Grants are awarded semi-annually to enable unique programs, teaching strategies, and learning experiences to become a reality in the classroom or through support services where they can influence the learning climate and directly benefit students. The following projects were awarded grants in 2016/2017:



## Fall 2016 Venture Grants Total Awarded: \$5,000

**Art and Math Collide:** The project exposed students to integrated learning through challenges designed to make students think outside the box. The Rubik's Cube curriculum extended the previously purchased curriculum with mosaic extension opportunities to integrate art, design and history. The goal of the project was to increase the transfer of integrated learning and skills into the classroom. This grant was used to purchase a Rubik's Cube Program that was utilized by students at two elementary schools.

**Elementary Lending Library:** A Lending Library was developed at one elementary school for Title I students. Title I students are students in grades 1-3 who are having reading difficulties and are being serviced by a reading specialist or instructional support teacher. The hope in creating the Lending Library was to strengthen the home and school connection, promote literacy, and provide parents with resources to support their child's literacy development at home. Approximately 50 students benefited from this project during the 2016-2017 school year, but the effects of the project will be everlasting as hundreds of students in years to come will benefit from it in the future.

**Elementary Reading Olympics:** Approximately 250 students from the Wilson School District elementary schools participated in the Reading Olympics, regardless of their reading abilities. The grant provided audio versions of books, duplicate copies of high interest titles, and ebooks to elementary libraries. The team format of the Reading Olympics encourages students

to share the challenge of reading a wide selection of books with their friends.

**Elementary STEM Club:** Approximately 20 students in grades 4-5 at an elementary building participated in an after-school STEM club in order to explore coding, programming, robotics, and critical thinking skills. In addition, students were empowered to construct their own learning through creativity and collaboration embedded in the innovation and design process. The grant provided access to several new and exciting tools for students to explore and cultivate skills in the STEM field, like a Bloxels game creation kit and 3D printer filament.

**Teach, Learn and Make with Raspberry Pi:** Middle School Gifted students used the Raspberry Pi Kit, a low-cost, high-performance processor that people use to learn, solve problems and have fun in order to create an innovative device. In the past, students have used the relatively inexpensive processor to create radios, baby monitors, bicycle cameras, and light timers.

**High Altitude Balloon:** A group of iSTEM students from Wilson High School designed and launched a High Altitude Balloon into the Stratosphere in order to observe and collect data on the balloon's journey to the upper stratosphere. The grant was used to purchase materials for the high altitude balloon.

**Innovative Flexibility in Physical Education:** Wilson High School physical education classes purchased twenty foam rollers for use in flexibility lessons. Students need exposure to a variety of flexibility activities to decide their personal interests and preferences for engaging in their own workouts. Currently, there is limited flexibility equipment available for Wilson High School students, so the twenty foam rollers were immediately put to use. Students performed a flexibility fitness test in the beginning of the semester to test their currently flexibility status. Then, the classes engaged in a variety of flexibility workouts utilizing the foam rollers in order to improve their flexibility.



**Middle School Mentor Program:** Approximately 20 middle school students from grades 6-8 participated in a new mentor

program where at-risk students received extra homework help to improve their grades and their social skills in a safe environment. The program provided academic, computer, arts, and recreational activities to district middle school students in a relaxed, adult supervised, safe setting between the hours of 2:45pm and 4:00pm once a week. The program was created to foster personal growth and academic success through guided instruction and mentoring.

**Reading Workshop Books:** The grant was used to purchase sets of The Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project classroom library to supplement the elementary Reading Workshop curriculum. Each set contains high interest fiction, non-fiction, biographies, poetry, picture books, mysteries, and animal books. Furthermore, the sets are leveled and came with online resources to supplement classroom instruction in reading. These "libraries" of books are sets of 400-700 books per grade level that are all high interest, up to date, and on the reading levels of students at each grade level.

**Rubik's Cube Challenge:** Gifted support students in grades K-5 at an elementary school benefited from a program called the "Rubik's Cube Challenge," in which students used hands on discovery and higher level mathematical skills to "unlock the solution" to the Rubik's Cube. Whole group and individualized lessons were already developed by the company, and students at this elementary school participated in this program. This program allowed students to compete with other Wilson schools in the annual Rubik's Cube Competition that Wilson hosts each spring. The purpose of this program is to inspire students to take on a challenge and learn to use different techniques and strategies to overcome this challenge. The program is difficult and pushes students, which encourages them to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from those mistakes.

**Skype with a Poet:** Grade 3 students at an elementary school had the opportunity to Skype with critically acclaimed author and poet Ken Nesbitt. The Skype session was educational, fun, and more cost-effective than a traditional assembly. The session included a creative component where students were able to collaborate with Nesbitt on original poetry. The purpose of this project was to make writing poetry fun for students and to teach students to express themselves and their opinions through their writing.

## Spring 2017 Venture Grants

Total Awarded: \$3,900

### Fly Fishing and the Tulpehocken, Partnered with Trout Unlimited:

Trout Unlimited is a national environmental group related to fly fishing with a goal of maintaining clean waters and is a partner with Wilson West for the Trout in the Classroom project. This club will serve as an extension for those high school students that participated in the project. Students can participate in caring for local streams and learn about fly fishing. Students will become involved with clean up and improvement projects and can attend monthly presentations about environmental concerns and fly fishing. Two teachers along with the HS Principal will be involved as well as approximately 25 students in grades 9-12. Funds will be used for supplies and instructional materials.

### Science and Innovations:

**Extreme Biosuits** Eighth grade gifted support students will engage in the engineering design process to make a model biosuit (used by oil pipeline engineers, glaciologists, and hazardous material engineers) and then market their design to potential customers. This project is meant to provide an interdisciplinary means for students to explore areas of academic strength and personal interest. It is meant to expose them to real world challenges which were developed by Boeing Corporation. One teacher would oversee approximately 20 8th grade gifted students initially, but the project will be offered to other students after the first year. Funds will be utilized to purchase supplies to create the suit.

### Wilson Literary Magazine

**INK:** In the upcoming school year Wilson High School students will assemble a literary magazine that includes short stories, drama, poetry, photography as well as other written or artistic submissions. The main goal of the literary magazine is to provide students with a voice and an audience for their writing and art. The intention is to create two issues for the year with two teachers, two student editors and a panel of student collaborators. Each issue will invite students from diverse backgrounds to submit their work and the staff will use predetermined criteria to select which pieces to publish. The funds will be used to print the magazine in book form.

### Learning with Legos in the Library:

A library Makerspace provides a space where students can gather to inquire, create, design and build while learning new technologies through shared skills, resources and knowledge. The funds will be used to purchase LEGO Blocks, baseplates and accessories for the Middle School Makerspace which will be an extension of the elementary Discovery classrooms. LEGOs promote the 4C's of learning: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity and would also serve as a bridge to the high school STEM program. Any student that visits the library will have access to the LEGOS and all teachers in the building can use them to enhance their lesson or project.

### Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Program:

PBIS is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions that enhance both academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. PBIS is not a packaged curriculum so it must be developed by staff. The purpose of this proposed project is to help teach students the behavioral expectations inside and outside of the classroom that are expected of them on a daily basis. This is done by creating common lessons to be taught and emphasized by staff throughout the year, common language for all teachers, staff and students to use as well as common positive and negative consequences. There will also be an emphasis placed on creating a positive school climate. Since PBIS has a preventative and proactive approach to behavior in all areas of the school, it will in turn positively affect student performance by decreasing student misbehavior and increasing instructional time. The funds will be used to purchase student incentives, a PBIS kick-off speaker and PBIS school-related apparel. This program will affect the entire staff and student body of a Wilson School District middle school.

**Outdoor Club Grant:** The purpose of this grant will be to establish an Outdoor Club at Wilson West where students can gather to learn about and gain an appreciation of the outdoors, as well as participate in outdoor activities. They will also maintain the pond area. This club will encompass multiple disciplines such as science (researching plants and animals) and technology (designing and constructing).

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## BULLDOG SUMMER BLAST A HUGE FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS-- THANKS TO FUNDING FROM THE WILSON EDUCATION FOUNDATION!

The summer months are a time for kids to kick back and relax before gearing up to come back to school. This time can also be used to enjoy reading for fun, which is a great way to reduce the "summer slide" of reading skills slipping away when not in use. Keeping reading in the forefront of summer activities takes a group effort, and the Wilson School District has developed community partnerships to help students keep reading over the summer.



In a collaborative effort among the Wilson Education Foundation, the Wilson School District Administration and the Sinking Spring Borough, the Bulldog Summer Blast program was developed to keep students engaged in learning throughout the summer. This program was funded in part with a \$15,000 grant from the Wilson Education Foundation. This is the first year for this program and it was maxed out with 99 students enrolled.

This totally fun summer program, taught by Wilson teachers, helped to foster learning through summer months. The program is designed to help diminish the "summer slide" and offer continued academic opportunities while having fun outside. The camp was held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 - 11:30 am from June 20- August 3 at the Sinking Spring Main Playground. Not only did students have fun OUTSIDE, but they also engaged in activities related to some awesome themes like Super Heroes, Sports, Luau, and more! The program was for students entering 1st-5th grade for the 2017-18 school year.



According to Jill Lynch, program coordinator for Bulldog Blast, "The most rewarding part of this program was seeing the kids show up every day excited to be there. It was amazing that these

kids were so engaged in what they were doing that they didn't even realize how much learning was going on! I can't wait to see how our program continues to grow each year."

Due to the overwhelming success of this year's Bulldog Blast, we are looking to expand the program next summer to involve even more kids at different locations throughout Wilson School District. The Foundation is committed to seeing this program continue. When you give to the Foundation, you support programs like this that ensure our students keep their skills sharp and minimize the summer slide! ■

Students will take part in hatching trout and raising ducks as well as helping to maintain the natural habitat and learning about these species of animals. The surrounding Wilson community will also be able to enjoy the pond area. Two teachers will oversee the club and will use the funds to purchase equipment and materials needed to build and maintain the outdoor pond area (i.e. build bat boxes) as well as provide guest speakers.



**Theater Artist in Residence:** As part of a project with Whitfield and Yocum Institute for Arts Education, WHS drama students will work with a theater artist to create original devised theater pieces. This grant will provide high school theater students with the opportunity to work with a theater artist with specialized skills. This project includes collaboration between high school and elementary students to create works of art. Students will have a chance to build on their theater skills and explore curriculum based ideas with an ensemble of students. This project will involve 5 teachers as well as the high school theater class and 4th and 5th grade Whitfield students. The grant will be applied to the total cost of the artist in residence. ■

## EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT (EITC) PROGRAM

The Wilson Education Foundation (WEF) continues to participate as an Educational Improvement Organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's EITC program. The EITC program offers substantial tax credits to eligible businesses that make financial contributions to approved organizations. Through EITC contributions, the Foundation received \$59,750 for the 2016-17 school year. With EITC funding, WEF was able to support the Wilson High School I-STEM Academy, a rigorous program for grades 9-12 that focuses on integrated Science, Technology, Engineering and Math concepts. WEF would like to thank the following businesses for their generous support though EITC for the 2016-17 school year:

- BB&T
- East Penn Manufacturing Co. Inc.
- E.G. Smith Jerome H. Rhoads, Inc.
- First Priority Bank
- Quadrant EPP USA, Inc.
- Riverview Bank
- Tompkins VIST Bank
- Weis Markets, Inc.

## THANK YOU TO WILSON IRON CHEF 2017 SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY & SUPPORT:

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Merrill Lynch – The Swift Group  
RBC Capital Finance/  
Municipal Finance

### Hors d'oeuvres Level Sponsors:

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Financial S&L solutions LLC  
Pruitt Family  
Reinsel Kuntz Leshner LLP  
Rich's Automotive Sales & Service  
The Matt Wolf Team, RE/MAX of Reading

## ADDITIONAL WILSON EDUCATION FOUNDATION NEWS AND EVENTS

### 4th Annual Wilson Back-to-School Bash Saturday, October 14 | 5:30-10pm



Enjoy an evening out with fellow Wilson parents, alumni and supporters at this more casual fundraiser that will include LIVE music, dancing, raffles, auctions and games! Have an opportunity to bid on several Wilson-exclusive items & experiences! A great addition to this year's event will be the awarding of the inaugural **Wilson Legacy Award**. This award is given to a teacher with a long history of service to the school and the community. **We are excited to announce that this year's recipient of the Wilson Legacy Award will be Doug Dahms.** This fun-filled event will be held at the Green Valley Chateau Tent. Tickets are \$75/person, which includes food & beverages. To purchase tickets, please visit [wilsonsd.org/backtoschoolbash](http://wilsonsd.org/backtoschoolbash) or call 610.670.0180, x4842. Please note you must be age 21 or older to attend. Proceeds benefit WEF. Hope you can join us! ■

### Wilson School Spirit Game at the Reading Royals!



Mark your calendar for Sunday, January 21 at 4 pm. WEF will host the Reading Royals Wilson Spirit Game! The Wilson community can purchase tickets for \$16 to the game and \$5 from each ticket will be donated to the Wilson Education Foundation. Game time is 7pm. Watch for more details on the Wilson Education Foundation website. Last year's event raised \$610 for the Foundation--hope to see you at this year's event! ■

### Wilson Community Night at the Fightin Phils



Annually held in June, the Foundation provides free tickets to the game to Wilson students at all grade levels for academic achievement. These students are recognized during pregame festivities. At the 2017 event, the Wilson County Championship Baseball team was recognized as the Hometown Hero and rising senior, Abby White, performed the National Anthem. Tickets are sold to Wilson community members, faculty, staff and alumni at a discounted rate of \$2 each. Sponsorships help make this evening of family fun possible! This event provides over \$500 in revenue for the Foundation each year. Watch for dates for the 2018 Community Night on the Wilson Education Foundation website. ■

**Please consider contributing to the Wilson Education Foundation** and help meet our fundraising goal of raising at least \$20 per Wilson student, per year. Checks should be made payable to Wilson Education Foundation. Please complete the following form and mail it with your contribution to Karen Troutman, Wilson Education Foundation, 2601 Grandview Blvd., West Lawn, PA 19609. Questions, call 610.670.0180 x1111 or [trokar@wilsonsd.org](mailto:trokar@wilsonsd.org).

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Contribution Amount: \_\_\_\_\_