
Partnership Grants

2012/2013



Business Coalition

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Since 1990, the Newburyport Education Foundation (NEF) Business Coalition, formally known as the NEBC, has been collaborating to enrich our schools' curricular objectives through activities such as development and funding business partnership grants, internships, classroom speaking engagements, involvement in school projects/ events, company site visits and more.

The Business Coalition has had another rewarding year watching partnerships grow between businesses, community organizations, and the schools. Through the Partnership Grant program, several motivated businesses and energetic teachers have come together and created some amazing learning experiences for our students.

As you can imagine, a group such as the Business Coalition is only as successful as its participants. Without motivated businesses and energetic, creative teachers working together we wouldn't be able to put these successful programs together. And successful they are!

Do you have a business or skill that might be a good fit for our students? Are you a teacher that has an idea but needs help partnering with a business? We want to hear from you! Please contact Heather Hansen (hhansen@newburyportef.org) for more information.



Beth Simkins

NEF Business Coalition Chairperson

Visit the NEF Business Coalition website to start your collaboration:
<http://www.NewburyportEF.org/business.shtml>
or contact Heather Hansen at hhansen@newburyportef.org

Partnership Grants

The Partnership Grant Program is the heart of the NEF Business Coalition. The program joins business partners with teachers who then work together to create meaningful educational experiences that allow students to see how their skills apply to the world of work. The program connects the standards-based curriculum content to the skills that relate to real life experiences. As a result, students have chosen the specific fields explored through the partnership program as careers.

The NEF Business Coalition strives to maintain strong links and ongoing collaboration between our community's businesses and our schools' educators. These collaborations support and enrich our schools' curricular objectives through activities such as development and funding of business partnership grants, internships, classroom speaking engagements, involvement in school projects/events, company site visits, and more.

Alternative Education Brochure

Program Goals and Achievements

Students partnered with David Strand from Strand Marketing to develop a brochure that describes what the Newburyport High School Alternative Education program is all about. The brochure will be used to inform students and parents about the option to participate in the Alternative Education program, which is designed to help students who are not succeeding in the conventional school setting.

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educator

Shawn Bleau

Business Partner

Strand Marketing

Grant Award

\$ 300

Artist In Residence

Grade Level

Kindergarten
G.W. Brown School

Educator

Melissa Duguie

Business Partner

Symmetry Tile
Works

Grant Award

\$2,506

Program Goals and Achievements

The Artist in Residence program included all nine kindergarten classrooms at the Brown School. Students explored eco-textural stations with Artist Robert Rossell and used clay and textural stamps to create tiles that celebrate nature and sustainability. The tiles were then fired in the kiln and returned to the students to take home.





Our Community: An A-Z Guide of Health & Safety

Program Goals and Achievements

To create our book, students brainstormed a list (from A to Z) of people, places, and items in our community that help to keep us healthy and safe. The list was made through a shared writing process where students shared the pen with the teacher (i.e. writing known words and sounding out unknown words). This list was then used to guide our learning on safety in the community.

Throughout the year, we invited community workers into our classroom and went on walking field trips. Each visit taught us more about our community and its resources. We took photos and drew pictures to create the images throughout the book. The final product was printed at Zip Type Printing Services.

Grade Level

Kindergarten
G.W. Brown School

Educator

Melissa Duguie

Business Partner

Zip Type Printing
Services, Inc.

Grant Award

\$1,000

Chemical Bonding

Grade Level: 8

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Educators

Kristen Quinn,
Mary Kate Allan

Business Partner

Strem Chemicals, Inc.

Grant Award

\$1,100

Program Goals and Achievements



Eighth grade students at the R.A. Nock School collaborated with Strem Chemicals to observe and further investigate ionic and covalent bonding. To support the classroom lesson on ionic and covalent bonding, scientists from Strem Chemicals demonstrated the different types of bonds, thus providing a strong visual for all students. The scientists also used their expertise and the grant funding to help teachers purchase water molecule kits for student

usage. The water molecule kits are durable and will be used for many years to come to illustrate bonding.

Composting in the Classroom

Program Goals and Achievements

Children today are growing up in a world where people are asked to “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” But, do they know why? The Composting in the Classroom partnership grant provided a hands-on approach to expose students to science standards that would help them learn about the earth and how/why we need to protect our natural resources.

Mrs. Westgate’s class partnered with Molly Ettenborough of the City of Newburyport Recycling Department to lead second graders in this earth-friendly project. Two types of compost bins were used for the project. One compost contained yard waste and food scraps. Worms were included in the other compost. Students observed both composts on a weekly basis and recorded observations. They watched contents decompose and compared which type of compost was more efficient. The compost was donated to the Bresnahan School Opportunity Garden where everyone can enjoy watching a plentiful garden of flowers and vegetables grow through this meaningful project.

Grade Level: 2

Francis T.
Bresnahan School

Educator

Susan Westgate

Business Partner

City of Newburyport,
Recycling
Department

Grant Award

\$ 427





Fun with Fairy Tales and Nursery Rhymes

Grade Level:

Pre-Kindergarten
G.W. Brown School

Educators

Suzanne Simon,
Maya Menezes

Business Partners

Theater in the Open
Jabberwocky
Bookshop
Eureka Toys

Grant Award

\$1,500

Program Goals and Achievements

With the generous support of the NEF Business Coalition, preschoolers embarked on a new unit of learning entitled, Fun with Fairy Tales and Nursery Rhymes. This unit has been designed by the teachers at the Brown School to align with the new standards for pre-kindergarten from the national common core curriculum. Business partners for the grant were Theatre in the Open, Jabberwocky Bookshop and Eureka Toys. Theatre in the Open came to the Brown School to present an interactive performance of Mother Goose: A Nonsense Nursery Panto for all the preschool classes. Students also benefited from the books, props, puppets and manipulatives from Eureka and Jabberwocky to support their learning.

Hospitality Program

Program Goals and Achievements

The Hospitality Program was a course offered to high school students through Newburyport Adult Education. The five-week course addressed the skills sets outlined by the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan including foundation skills – attendance, punctuality, appearance, motivation/initiative, workplace culture, policy and safety. Communications skills were also studied – speaking, listening, interacting with co-workers, and resume/interview skills. Specific industry-based skills were also discussed. Restaurant professionals were present for weekly discussions and the final class the students visited a professional restaurant kitchen at the The Grog in Newburyport. Students were presented with a certificate at the conclusion of the course.

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educators

Cheryl Zaino,
Vicki Hendrickson

Business Partners

Newburyport Adult Education
The Grog Restaurant

Grant Award

\$1,500



Molin School Babblers Newsletter

Grade Level: 5

Edward G. Molin
Upper Elementary
School

Educator

Jessica Burke

Business Partner

The Daily News

Grant Award

\$1,500

Program Goals and Achievements

A group of students from the fifth grade class came together to create a monthly newsletter titled *The Molin School Babblers*. The newsletter, which was distributed to the entire Edward G. Molin School, was filled with current events, debates, creative short stories, comics, and an array of other topics. Students interviewed one another and various teachers on events and activities happening inside and outside of the school community to create a newspaper that connected students to their community and school climate/culture. The most important piece for the students was that all of the ideas and voices in the paper came from the students.

Working with the student's business partner John Macone, editor of *The Daily News*, students have learned essential life lessons such as compromising, time management, organization, leadership, and communication. Mr. Macone participated in our brainstorming process and article assignments, and he discussed with the students the process by which *The Daily News* maps out its next issue and what the printing process looks like. Students were excited to share their work and learn about how the local and national news is communicated to a community via *The Daily News*.





NHS Library Gallery & Art Wing Exhibition

Program Goals and Achievements

Newburyport High School students transformed the school's hallways to showcase both the talented works of the students and staff, as well as professional artists from the North Shore. The students worked with the Newburyport Art Association (NAA) and professional artists, to design and set up a new gallery in the school library where both students and professional artists will have regular exhibits. In addition, students created a more contemporary exhibition space in the art wing. Students worked with the NAA Director Elena Roucco acquiring skills in gallery management, public relations, advertising, and curatorial skills for exhibitions. Connections made to the art curriculum include exhibiting, business of art, use of technology in the arts, and making community connections. The project also met the National Art Honor Society goals for community service and art advocacy as well as the American Association of School Libraries standards that ask students to “pursue personal and aesthetic growth” in response to literature and creative expression of ideas in various formats and genres.

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educators

Aileen Maconi,
Lynne Cote

Business Partner

Newburyport Art Association

Grant Award

\$1,533

Number Sense at the Bank

Grade Level:

Kindergarten
G. W. Brown School

Educator

Melissa Duguie

Business Partner

Institution for
Savings

Grant Award

\$1,650

Program Goals and Achievements

Kindergarten students in all nine classes at the Brown School learned about the concept of money and then took a walking field trip to the Institution for Savings. There they learned about spending verse saving and saw where the money is kept. Students then returned to the classroom to apply their knowledge with math manipulatives, games, stories and activities. The grant funded the purchase of leveled reader books on early math concepts.



Ocean Drifters

Program Goals and Achievements

The Ocean Drifter program offered an opportunity for high school physics students to understand the mechanisms which cause ocean currents. Ocean drifters are used worldwide to measure variables related to the ocean such as wave amplitude and period, wind speed, current, temperature, and salinity. Our model drifter was designed and constructed to measure ocean current only. The drifter was deployed with a transmitter that communicates with a satellite in geosynchronous orbit. Four daily transmissions are collected from the buoys in order for students to get an intimate profile of the subtleties of ocean current and to make predictions based on historical data regarding the path of their classroom buoy. Students learn that ocean current is affected by the wind, tides, Coriolis Effect, convection currents and turbulence and is hard to predict accurately. Two ocean drifters were launched in May 2013 and will be actively transmitting signals well into 2014.

Grade Level: 7-12

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Newburyport High
School

Educator

George Masterson

Business Partner

Gulf of Maine
Institute

Grant Award

\$1,500



Underwriting
for this grant
was generously
provided by
New England
BioLabs.

Our Glorious Tea Party & Oral History Chat

Grade Level: 4

Edward G. Molin
Upper Elementary
School

Educator

Patricia Levitt

Business Partners

Atria Merrimack
Place

Carry Out Cafe &
Catering

Auditory-Verbal
Communication
Center

Grant Award

\$650

Program Goals and Achievements

Following an interactive read aloud and literature discussion of the *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, a fantasy story set in World War II England, students from Mrs. Levitt's 4th grade class joined the residents of Atria Merrimack Place, an assisted living residence in Newburyport, for a formal English Tea Party and an oral history chat, comparing childhood experiences.

Under the skilled direction of Paula Simpson, owner of Carry Out Cafe, students planned the tea party menu, prepared the tea party delicacies at the Carry Out Cafe commercial facility, dressed the tables at Atria Merrimack Place, and graciously welcomed their guests to join in the festivities.

Prior to the tea party, students learned about the kinds of care that exist for our elder citizens, such as Atria Merrimack Place. With the assistance of Listening and Speaking Language Specialist Lea Watson, children learned appropriate listening and speaking skills when conversing with the elderly, including the significance of speaking clearly and distinctly.

Additionally, students learned of the importance of oral history, creating childhood comparison questions for their chats with our tea party guests. Their comparison questions covered the areas of communication, transportation, entertainment, education, recreational activities, and World War II. Students were paired with Atria residents at the beautifully set tables, with the assistance of Gisela Ashley, Engaged Life Director at Atria, for a spot of tea, elegant sandwiches, sweets, and delightful conversation.

To recount the entire experience, a video was created by Thomas Goodwin, the father of student Andrew. Using childhood stories of Atria residents, students compared their own experiences, wrote a script and narrated the video as a keepsake. As well, the class wrote a Tea Party poem to



present to Atria residents and to include in their personally-bound poetry books. The entire project allowed students to apply their growing skills in reading comprehension, writing, mathematics of measurement and fractions, technology, listening and speaking, and appropriate social deportment. The treats were divine, the conversation memorable, and a wonderful time was had by all.

Place-Based Education Unit

Grade Level: 7

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Educators

John Reynolds,
Jessica DeLacey,
Shawn Flaherty

Business Partner

Plum Island Kayak

Grant Award

\$3,400

Program Goals and Achievements

As part of the Place-Based Education initiative in the Newburyport School District, teachers John Reynolds, Jessica DeLacey, and Shawn Flaherty planned a seven week cross-curricular unit of study for all 7th grade students at Nock Middle School. This presented a very exciting opportunity for hands-on learning experiences at locations throughout our community in partnership with the Gulf of Maine Institute (GOMI) and local naturalists and historians.

Week One: As an introduction to Place-Based Education, students determined what their place is. In doing this, they worked cartographers, mapping their place, in addition to mapping areas surrounding Newburyport and the entire Gulf of Maine bioregion. Gaining an appreciation for their place, this process also helped them develop a sense of stewardship for the bioregion.

Week Two: Students were immersed in nature when they traveled via bicycle to Maudslay State Park where they learned how to be present in nature. They practiced and developed their skills for sketching nature and identifying forest plant species using a dichotomous key. A scavenger hunt taught them to identify geographical features of Maudslay including kettle holes, drumlins, and erratics.

Week Three: Students traveled to either Joppa Flats or the Parker River Wildlife Refuge to work with Audubon scientists conducting research and collecting data.

Week Four: Students spent their day exploring the Merrimack Watershed via kayak! Tours were led by Plum Island Kayak Company.

Week Five: Students visited Joppa Flats and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and worked with Audubon scientists and naturalists collecting data from the various areas.

Week Six: Students found out how Newburyport has changed to become a much greener city. They participated in eco-tours via bicycle throughout the city.

Week Seven: Students explored the Merrimack River in the historic dories from Lowell's Boat Shop in Amesbury, MA. They learned how the river has changed over the years and gained an appreciation for river ecology. Students began to understand the impact of humans on the environment as they learned about the Merrimack River's history.



Plant Therapy

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educator

Betsy Scott

Business Partner

Wentworth Greenhouses

Grant Award

\$1,500

Program Goals and Achievements

The Plant Therapy program continued to partner with Wentworth Greenhouses. Through this project, High School Language Based Learning Disabilities teacher, Betsy Scott, taught her students team building, social skills, research and writing skills, using a hands-on approach to learning.

Students traveled to Wentworth Greenhouses to meet with Brian Wentworth to learn about the horticulture business. As part of the Wentworth Greenhouses project, Brian Wentworth taught the students about the various aspects of the horticulture business. In the classroom, students role played and researched various issue of the elderly with the end product of a research paper.

This year, the focus has been with Wentworth's Greenhouse and a more in-depth study of the horticulture business. The students have set up a hydroponic garden in the greenhouse and are learning through hands-on application. Research, observation and writing skills are taught through this thematic unit. The project provides connections for the students to their learning and the real life environment of health care and horticulture.



The Plant Therapy program is a continuing program that has been successful in facilitating the transition from school to work for the last 18 years for the Language Based Learning Disabled students at Newburyport High School. Several former students have chosen to work in the health care field, while another student completed his Master's degree in horticulture from the University of Massachusetts. Others are pursuing degrees in teaching. This exhibits the close ties to the "world of work" coupled with a thematic method to build skills, teach stewardship, build self esteem, and help some of the frailest, often neglected members of our community.

Poetry Soup

Program Goals and Achievements



Throughout this year, Newburyport High School students gathered fourteen times at Jabberwocky Bookshop to share poetry. They read their original poetry and listened to the work of guest speakers, as well as Newburyport High School

alumni. The meetings ended with a question and answer period, sometimes followed by music, when students brought their guitars, or a spontaneous “haiku battle.”

At the end of the year, students put together *Poetry Soup Magazine*, which provides our young poets an opportunity not only to get published, but also to be read alongside some very prominent contemporary writers, such as Rhina Espaillat, Alfred Nicol, and Richard Wollman. It also serves to keep a connection with alumni, some of whom still enjoy contributing to the magazine, even after graduation. NEF Business Coalition Partnership Grant provides funding for the printing of the magazine.

Student editors make all the decisions necessary to print this first-rate literary magazine, including design, layout, and photography. After contacting Sumner Misenheimer and his supportive staff at Minuteman Press, students proofread, edit, price and send out the final copy – then proofread the proofs! In other words, they do the job of any magazine editors and publishers in real life.

Many of our guest speakers are members of our local Powow River Poets, none more beloved than internationally acclaimed poet Rhina Espaillat, who boasts about her “complete collection” of Poetry Soup Magazines and has brought the magazine across the country to use as a model in her workshops for teachers.

Our magazine demonstrates how students, teachers, alumni, and business partners alike feel uplifted and connected through the magic of poetry. Thanks NEF Business Coalition for affording us this opportunity.

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educator

Deborah Szabo

Business Partner

Minuteman Press

Grant Award

\$650

Racket Sports

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educator

Amy Heath

Business Partner

The Racquet Club of Newburyport

Grant Award

\$1,521

Program Goals and Achievements

The Racket Sports program provided the beginning tennis players with a basic knowledge, understanding, and skill in the game of tennis.

The program goals and achievements were for the students to acquire:

- an understanding of the basic rules and regulations of the sport of tennis;
- game strategy for singles;
- the ability to apply the sports terminology;
- awareness of the safety factors;
- knowledge of the basic grips;
- the basic fundamental techniques and strokes;
- a level of confidence and enjoyment which will encourage the playing of tennis outside of school time, because tennis is one of the very few sports that can be played for a lifetime;
- understanding of the health benefits of exercise in a way that is interesting for them;
- insight into a variety of games while displaying a knowledge of basic principles and rules of tennis; and,
- a sense of personal fulfillment through achieving a level of success in playing tennis; and,

Most importantly, the goal was for the students to have fun.



Reading for Life

Program Goals and Achievements

In kindergarten, children come to school as a diverse group of learners. Pre-reading/reading skills are a primary focus for the entire year. Through the Reading for Life partnership grant, Mrs. Ouellette's class invited community members to visit her classroom bi-monthly to read a book to the students. Readers described their jobs and shared ways that reading is important to the work they do. Students took field trips to visit participating partners' workplaces. A student/teacher book was created with photographs of guest readers and the community field trips as well as the reasons why reading is important to jobs that people have. The book is available at the Brown School Library and the Newburyport Public Library.

Grade Level:

Kindergarten
G.W. Brown School

Educator

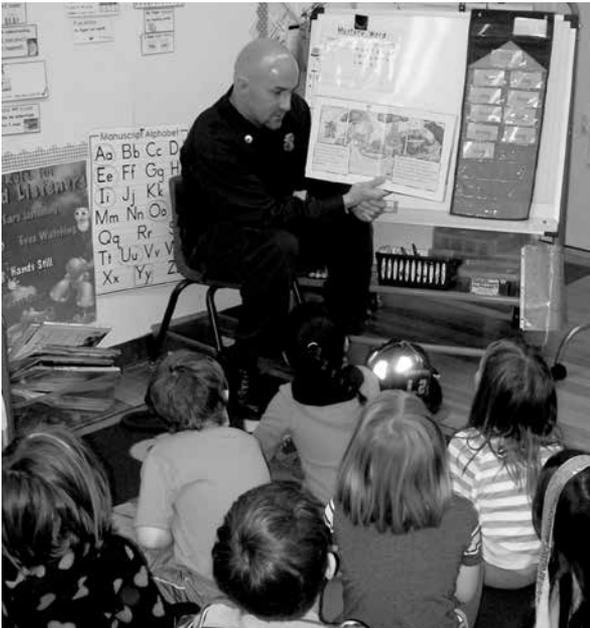
Dianna Ouellette

Business Partner

Agave Mexican
Bistro

Grant Award

\$1,500



Rock the Nock

Grade Level: 6

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Educator

Jamie Sokolowski

Business Partner

The Musical Suite

Grant Award

\$2,000

Program Goals and Achievements

The sixth grade SING classes worked hard to create their own studio album, with original music and lyrics. After exploring the elements of songwriting, students dove into writing songs of their own on topics that were important to them. Each class voted on a topic for their class song. Each student wrote their own song, and then we used a mix-and-match process, scattering all of their lyrics onto the ground, looking at the big picture and narrowing it down to compile their individual lyrics into a class song. After the students had an outline, they worked as a large group to fine-tune the lyrics and create a melody. It was a long, collaborative process that involved teamwork, patience, and creativity.

The students collaborated with The Musical Suite allowing the them to experience the recording process firsthand. Audio Engineer Chuck Walker, introduced them to the terms, equipment, and recording procedures. The sixth grade students upgraded to rock star status as they sang into professional microphones and heard their songs mixed and mastered on professional recording technology.

The topics covered on our album depict a picture of what it's like to be a sixth grader at this time. On the album listeners

will see and hear songs about school stress, sports, summer vacation, friendship, family, having hope, living your life to the fullest and reaching your goals.



Sailbot Robotics Competition

Program Goals and Achievements

The Sailbot Competition is an annual robotics challenge that asks participants to design and build a small-unmanned sailboat that can navigate a variety of challenges with limited, if any, human control.

Geared primarily to colleges and universities, each year the competition is hosted by a different school in a different part of the country and traditionally a handful of local high schools are invited to participate. This year's event was hosted by Olin College and took place in Gloucester harbor.

While many of the universities built their own boats from scratch, following the suggestion of the organizers, Newburyport High School students purchased an off-the-shelf remote controlled sailboat so that they could focus on the programming and control system rather than having to first build a seaworthy vessel.

David Simkins of Rhumb Line Yacht Sales gave the team a crash course on the theory of sailing and took the boat to Lake Gardner to reinforce their knowledge and to become comfortable with the basics of sailing. Based on this introduction the team started planning out how the boat would function.

The boat has two onboard servos, one of these servos controls the rudder and the other one adjusts the sails. The team determined that they would need to collect sensor data to determine wind speed and direction and that they would program the sails to adjust automatically based on that data and the position of the rudder.

Rudder data would in turn be calculated based on the course that the boat needed to sail and said course would be determined based on the GPS coordinates of a series of buoys around which we would need to navigate. The team determined that the best option for the main onboard control system would be the use of arduinos, they started teaching themselves how to program them.

The competition is scheduled to take place in June 2013.

Grade Level: 9-12

Newburyport High School

Educator

Sarah Leadbeater

Business Partner

Rhumb Line Yacht Sales

Grant Award

\$1,500



Science Centers (Mobile Animal Habitats)

Grade Level: 1-3

Francis T.
Bresnahan School

Educators

John Gangemi,
Cathy Hill

Business Partner

Village Pet Shop

Grant Award

\$2,350

Program Goals and Achievements

The Science Centers, funded through an NEF Business Coalition Partnership Grant, have allowed the Bresnahan School to continue to build a connection between the habitats on display and our science, language arts, and visual art curriculum. Students in all grades have had the opportunity to study the aquatic and terrestrial exhibits.

This year we were able to incorporate several new displays that are permanently located in classrooms. Mrs. Westgate's classroom is home to Rocky an American toad and Mrs. Doyle's classroom welcomed a leopard gecko into their classroom. The Bresnahan office now has two new fish tanks for students and staff to observe. The Bresnahan also has several other exhibits that are continually maintained and updated. The bearded dragon and fish tank in the front foyer are appreciated by every member of our school community. New to the grant this year was GPS units for students to use outside of school. Physical Education Teacher Cathy Hill incorporated GPS units into the grant which provided Bresnahan students with the opportunity to observe habitats and a local landmark in the Newburyport Community. Using the hand held GPS (Garmin Dakota 10) students are encouraged to check the GPS unit out of the Bresnahan School library and visit with Mrs. Hill for instructions. They will receive three sets of local coordinates. Two sites are related to the study of habitat and the third site is related to using local landmarks and the Google Earth site to help students relate to "where on earth" they are. All three sites are within walking distance of the Bresnahan School.

The goals for this year's project included: incorporating GPS units for students to check out of the library and visit local habitats, bringing new habitats into classrooms, updating and maintaining displays, and adding appropriate animals, plants, equipment. Curriculum areas included: science, ELA, math and visual art.



Third Annual International Expo

Program Goals and Achievements

Sixth grade students at the Nock Middle School culminate the school year with an International Expo. The Expo is an interdisciplinary unit that takes the sixth-grade Social Studies curriculum and expands it to include elements of Mathematics, Science, and English Language Arts. Every sixth grader chooses one of the 203 countries of the world, randomly from a hat. In Social Studies class, the students research the topographical, geographical, and cultural aspects of their countries. In Science class, the students research the animals that are indigenous to that area of the world. They learn about their habitats, their predators, and which animals are endangered. In Math class, the students make computer climographs to examine the climate and precipitation in their countries in the recent past. In Language Arts class, the students research and write a five-paragraph, persuasive essay in which they encourage the public to come to their countries. Based on their research, the students decide whether the public should come to their country to provide humanitarian aid or to visit as a tourist. All the information is displayed on a tri-fold board which the students use as a visual from which they speak to all the people who visit the Expo. The International Expo is visited by everyone in the Molin/Nock building during the school day. In the evening, the students, families, and members of the community come to view the displays and talk to the “Ambassadors” who speak so knowledgeably about their countries.

Grade Level: 6

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Educator

Marilyn Johnston

Business Partner

AAA

Grant Award

\$2,000



Yoga and Mindfulness Program

Grade Level: 6

Edward G. Molin
Upper Elementary
School

Educators

Maggie Flaherty,
Stephanie
Dandurant,
Erin Rich,
Kate Gavora

Business Partner

Roots to Wings Yoga
Studio & Healing
Center

Grant Award

\$2,510

Program Goals and Achievements

The Molin Upper Elementary School strives to provide a safe and calm learning environment for all students. There are many stressors that students may encounter daily in the school environment including performance-based stress such as test-taking anxiety, fear of public speaking, social anxiety, peer conflict, and bullying. These stressors can have a negative impact on student success. The short term effects might include lower test scores, lack of self-confidence and social skills deficits. The long term effects, if performance based anxieties continue throughout a child's education, could significantly impact successful completions of secondary and post-secondary schooling as well as future success in the workforce.

Through the generosity of a NEF Business Coalition Partnership Grant, the school partnered with Beth Houlihan and Candy Blaxter from Roots to Wings Yoga and Healing Center to implement a Yoga and Mindfulness Program at the Molin Upper Elementary School. The goal of this partnership is to bring yoga into the schools by offering training for classroom teachers and school staff as well as direct yoga instruction for students. The program includes a six week yoga class held after school, six sessions of yoga for students in the classroom and a four hour staff training to sustain the program. Additionally, each of the nine participating classrooms will receive YogaKids curriculum cards to help foster and develop students' yoga practice.

The advantages of this partnership and program implementation will likely have a lasting effect; the skills that yoga teaches are easily transferable from school to home. An estimated 15 million people currently practice yoga worldwide in yoga centers, homes, hospitals, community centers, health clubs and schools. It is vital to the academic and future professional pursuits of children to prepare them for stressful situations experienced both in the school and work environments.



Special Project

Newburyport Gulf of Maine Institute Team (GOMI), The Pepperweed Project

Program Goals and Achievements

The NEF Business Coalition has continued to support the Newburyport GOMI team, a committed group of Newburyport High School students who help raise environmental awareness in the community and throughout the Great Marsh region. The group's objectives are to raise awareness of environmental issues through education and outreach, and to locate, educate, and help eradicate the invasive species, perennial Pepperweed.

The group has continued to serve the community as appointed representatives to 8 Towns and the Bay (8T&B), a regional environmental board of coastal Essex County communities. In this role, they have mapped the presence of Pepperweed in the Great Marsh, inspired the Parker River Refuge to hire an invasive species coordinator to oversee control efforts, and coordinated student volunteer efforts at NHS. This past school year, the team continued to teach Watershed, Climate Change, and Local Environments classes to groups of 7th graders at the Nock School. They also worked with principal Michael Parent to provide leadership in an expanded community service effort at the high school.

This past year marked the third year the team has collected water quality data, in partnership with the Merrimack River Watershed Council, at four sites in Newburyport. Funding for this project came from the Newburyport Bank. The team is hoping to expand that study into a "Safe Beaches" program that would test river sites that are used for swimming from boats.

With a grant from New England BioLabs, the GOMI team has also taught Climate Change classes to the public in a program at the Parker River Refuge, and to other GOMI teams in the annual New England GOMI mini conference.

This spring several GOMI students partnered with the Parker River Clean Water Association to help monitor and count endangered alewives in the Parker River. GOMI teams act locally yet think bio-regionally. We will continue to help move Newburyport student education beyond the confines of the community to a bioregional perspective.

Grade Level: 7-12

Rupert A. Nock
Middle School

Newburyport High
School

Educator

John Halloran

Business Partner

Parker River
National Wildlife
Refuge

Grant Award

\$1,500

Underwriting
for this grant
was generously
provided by
New England
BioLabs.

