



Riverside Educational Enrichment Foundation

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REEF AWARDS \$115,731 TO FUND 143 CLASSROOM GRANTS TO INNOVATIVE RUSD TEACHERS

Annual REEF Grant Reception to be held Thursday, January 14, 5:30 – 7:00 PM, in the Copenbarger Dining Room at California Baptist University

In its biggest year ever since the Riverside Educational Enrichment Foundation (REEF) was launched in 1993, on Thursday, January 14, REEF will award \$115,731 to 143 individual teachers or teacher teams to help bring creative and innovative learning to life in classrooms across Riverside Unified School District.

“At a time when the budget news from Sacramento just keeps getting worse for California school districts, we are able to offset some of the negative impact for our students by providing funding to keep programs and projects alive in our classrooms – programs that inspire students to experience the excitement of learning and enrich their educational experience,” said Steve Berry, REEF Chairman.

Programs supported by the 2010 REEF grants include virtually every curricular area and grade level, with grants to help all kinds of students from those with disabilities, to English Learners, to advanced placement students, to those in independent study programs. In addition to supporting classroom needs in the core curriculum, REEF grants will help fund physical fitness programs, garden projects and parent involvement activities.

Almost half of the REEF funding is targeted for visual and performing arts programs, thanks to a generous grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. This is the second year REEF has been awarded a Carpenter Foundation grant to support arts programs in RUSD schools, resulting in a total of \$105,000 in much-needed funding for music, drama, dance and visual arts programs.

Legendary Disney Imagineer Bob Gurr is the foundation’s honorary chairman. He will be present at the grant reception January 14th to hand out a grant funded by Robert H. Gurr and Nancy Gurr Johnston Fund, which was established in 2004 to support projects that excite middle school students about careers in the practical trades, mechanical, electrical, and electronic trades, theatrical and themed entertainment, audio and lighting.

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The Susan J. Rainey Fund was established in 2008 in honor of RUSD's ninth superintendent. This fund provides grants in support of instrumental music programs in RUSD schools. Last year, music students from John W. North High School were the beneficiaries, receiving funds to support the marching band's trip to China. This year, Susan J. Rainey funds will benefit middle schoolers across the district, supporting the RUSD Middle School Honors Band presented by REEF.

Every project or program funded by a REEF grant is standards-based and addresses a significant need for RUSD students. Funds are raised each year through a combination of grants, sponsorships, an annual golf tournament, individual gifts, and RUSD's employee contribution program, which provides about \$24,000 in funding each year.

"At no other time in recent history has it been more important for communities to work together to support their public schools," said Berry.

"We'd like to especially thank the RUSD employees who support REEF's work in our schools with their monthly payroll deductions as well as REEF's premier sponsors – Altura Credit Union, Tilden-Coil Constructors, Provident Bank, Student Transportation of America and Schools First Federal Credit Union – for their faithful support and commitment to our schools. With the ongoing fiscal crisis in California and the impact in schools throughout the state, educational foundations such as REEF will play an ever more important role in providing an excellent education for all students."

Earthwatch Fellowships

At the reception on January 14th, REEF will also announce the fourth year of REEF Earthwatch Institute scientific research fellowships. This summer, REEF will send two RUSD teachers across the globe to participate in actual field research on the environmental challenges facing the world today. This opportunity is made possible by a generous Riverside family who wishes to remain anonymous and has for the past four years provided funding for two Earthwatch fellowships each year. Because REEF has had such strong applicants for these fellowships, Earthwatch has funded additional teachers and in the past three years, a total of 10 RUSD teachers have participated in Earthwatch fellowships. Summer 2010 will see that number rise to 12 teachers helping to make change in the world and bringing their experiences back to their classrooms to impact students in Riverside.

Amber Carrow, a teacher at Chemawa Middle School who participated last year in Earthwatch's Live from the Field program, was recently named one of five California State Teachers of the Year.

REEF's 2009 Earthwatch teachers Yvonne Weinstein and Julianna Cruz will be recognized by Mayor Loveridge with a special proclamation to be presented at the February 2nd City Council meeting.

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