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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 February 2014

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Laingsburg students and teachers to benefit from new grants

Laingsburg, Mich. – It's that time of year again when students and teachers at Laingsburg Community Schools see a big boost in the "fun factor" of their teaching and learning, thanks to \$20,000 in new monies recently granted. This is the largest amount of grants awards LEAF has made since its inception 20 years ago.

The Laingsburg Educational Advancement Foundation has made its annual awards to area teachers who applied for funding for items not covered in the school system's general budget. With funds requested topping \$52,000 – the highest amount ever – LEAF is especially pleased to be able to fully or partially fund nearly all of the requests. Grantees are as follows:

- Deb Farzam and Marie Moreland: District-wide Bullying Prevention Program Phase III (year three of support for the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program)
- Mindy McLellan, kindergarten teacher: iPad apps for Kindergarten students
- Kathy Gregory, elementary teacher: Wolfpack Academy enrichment program
- Steven Easterling, elementary music teacher: Ukeleles for music enrichment
- Dean Meyer, elementary teacher: Mini Big Zoo Lesson for 5th grade classes
- Karen Perry, elementary teacher: Annie's Big Nature Lesson for 3rd grades
- Melissa Coleman, elementary science teacher: Science Kits for K-5 classes
- Sara Perrin, elementary teacher: Wireless listening center for 4th grade
- Melissa Kramer, middle school teacher: Math Magazine and Math apps
- Lisa Kingsbury, middle school teacher: iPad keyboards for 8th grade classes
- Brandon Woodworth, high school teacher: Robotics programming materials
- Thomas Cousineau, high school music teacher: Electric Upright Bass for Jazz Band enhancement
- Michelle Cousineau, high school teacher: Leslie Nature Center Physics of Flight presentation
- Diane Herder, high school teacher and Laingsburg Community Schools Technology Committee: annual sponsorship of K-12 Film Technology Open House and Desserts with Young Artists

Given the drastic cuts all districts in Michigan have taken, including Laingsburg, the monies help fill the gaps for all core curriculum areas, as well as fine arts that have especially been victims of limited dollars.

LEAF uses three main criteria when evaluating the grant applications: Is the program innovative or an enhancement of an existing program? Does it create a new program that's of value to the district and that will impact a maximum number of students? Is it something already covered by the school budget?

If chosen, the recipients are asked to measure the impact of the initiative and provide a final report with their evaluation to the LEAF board at the end of the school year. Grant winners are also asked to promote their grant program within the community so parents, grandparents, business owners, community leaders and others can see the unique things going on right here in Laingsburg.

"Our teachers and students are truly talented and deserve every chance to showcase that talent," explained LEAF Grants Committee Chair Dane Nickols. "Thanks to the generosity of individual donors, memorial gifts and events like the annual Burg Run and Reverse Raffle, LEAF can provide a funding source that allows for materials and programs that truly enhance the quality of education in our local schools."

The annual LEAF Reverse Raffle event is coming up soon at Eagle Eye Golf Club on Sat., Feb. 22. The group netted more than \$8,000 last year, said Nickols, which was used to help fund these grants.

Founded in 1994, LEAF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are accepted throughout the year by mail at 205 S. Woodhull Street or through our Web site, at www.leaf4kids.com.

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Editor's Note: To contact individual teachers, please call the superintendent's office at 517-651-2705. For specific dollar amounts of each grant, visit LEAF's Web site.