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NEWS RELEASE

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**ARMSTRONG SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUNDATION AWARDS \$4,000 IN TEACHER GRANTS  
Non-Profit Group Doubles the Number of Mini-Grants from Four to Eight**

RURAL VALLEY – In its second year, The Armstrong School District Foundation’s educator grant program has doubled the number of mini-grants awarded to teachers.

Today at West Shamokin Jr-Sr High School, Armstrong School District Foundation officials awarded eight \$500 grants to teachers at the annual back-to-school in-service. These mini-grants enable teachers to have innovative educational projects in their classrooms which might not otherwise be funded by tax dollars. Last year, the ASD Foundation awarded four mini-grants in the augural year of the grant program. The foundation is a non-profit arm of the school district dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for youth. “Doubling the number of mini-grants was the right way to go so the Foundation could impact more students for the better,” said ASD Foundation Vice President Lisa Lambert. “These monies will literally reach more than a thousand Armstrong School District students with unforgettable educational experiences.”

ASD Foundation Executive Director Jonathan Szish said generous employee payroll giving helped the Foundation to grow enough to double its grantmaking. He also credited a successful golf outing in June at Kittanning Country Club – led by foundation trustee Tom Toy, along with other trustees – as a crucial factor. Gifts from corporations and companies were also a tremendous boost.

For the educator grant program, the Foundation reviewed a number of quality applications. Trustees chose the eight winners using rating sheets that match criteria listed in the applications. Here they are:

- 1) **Dayton Elementary:** Suzanne Safranyos and Carrie Patterson, “Storytelling Activities.” Benefits 50 kindergarten and extended-day kindergarten students. Students will be actively involved in retelling tales using characters/props provided in kits. This provides a unique alternative to traditional teacher-led story time. A culminating activity at year’s end will include a reading picnic – or Booknic – in which students can participate in retelling all of the stories introduced through the year.
- 2) **Lenape Elementary:** Susan Close, “Differentiated Instruction Learning Centers.” Benefits 25 fourth-grade students. The project will bring literacy, writing and math centers to her classroom all year to provide structured learning opportunities which focus on state academic standards and the district’s curriculum. Best of all, these classroom centers will increase students’ fluency, comprehension, writing and math abilities.
- 3) **Ford City High:** Victoria Orr, “A Celebration of National Astronomy Day.” Benefits 70 tenth- through twelfth-grade students. National Astronomy Day is scheduled for April 21, 2007. Leading up to this event, students will make educational posters that answer some astronomical question. They will also build K’NEX space vehicles. Both will be on display in the lobby and third-floor hallway of the high school. The third phase of the project will be a public star party the week of April 21 at the Environmental Learning Center, complete with visits from Alle-Kiski Amateur Astronomers who will bring telescopes and explain celestial objects being observed.

- 4) **Elderton Jr-Sr High:** Christie Orlosky, "Fight Bac (Fight Bacteria)." Benefits 450 seventh- through twelfth-grade students. Goal: To educate everyone about bacteria and everyday hygiene. Students will perform a bacteriology simulation lab to familiarize themselves with types of bacteria. Later, they will swab, culture and count samples taken from places where bacteria is likely to grow in a microbiology study. Then they will use disinfectants to rate their effectiveness and analyze how fast microbes travel. In February, they will compare student attendance rates since the start of the project. They will also participate in a food poisoning simulation. Clarion University's "Science in Motion" lab will provide microscopes and an autoclave, which is a strong, pressurized, steam-heated vessel for lab experiments.
- 5) **West Hills Intermediate:** Robert Cieslinski Jr, "Jazz Ensemble Project." Benefits 38 fourth- through sixth-grade students. Jazz is an American music form that seems to be lost among our youth today. Students will learn American jazz history and play jazz music, including a performance of a Jazz Band at the school's Christmas concert. Another jazz concert is planned during National Jazz Appreciation Month in April, 2007. This project is unique because Armstrong School District does not have an existing Jazz program.
- 6) **Dayton Elementary:** Tom Burkett, Carla Alese, Lynn Steffey, Brenda Huffman, Linda Shoop, "Walking Wellness Campaign." Benefits kindergarten through sixth-grade students. Dayton Elementary School's Wellness Committee will make walking a natural habit every day through this program. All students will get pedometers to track their steps and there will be a mileage club monitored by homeroom teachers to win healthy goals each month.
- 7) **West Shamokin High:** Brigitte Kennedy, "Writing 'Think-Alouds.'" Benefits 30 special education students in grades nine through 12. This project provides desktop tape recorders to help special education students with their writing skills. For students who have attention deficits or get caught up in the mechanics of what they're writing, using a tape recorder would allow them to "catch" their thought, write it down at their own pace and go back to check for grammar.
- 8) **Kittanning Senior High School:** Deborah Snyder, "Disposable Cameras Science Scavenger Hunt." Benefits 30 ninth- through twelfth-grade students. Students will get a list of living things to locate and photograph along the Rails to Trails near Kittanning Senior High School. Photos will be developed and students will make a poster of all the living things they located that will be displayed in the hallway. Students will learn to identify and locate various living things in nature and demonstrate what they have learned in the process.

Last year, the Foundation gave four teachers grants of \$500 apiece, enabling hundreds of students to experience magnetic history puzzles, disposable camera writing projects, electronic Math Whiz tutorial games and more.

A spring, 2007 TV episode of "Education Today" is planned that will take viewers inside the classrooms where these mini-grants are at work. The student-filmed TV program airs evenings on Adelphia Channel 20 and Comcast Channel 21. An air date will be advertised on the district's Web site ([www.asd.k12.pa.us](http://www.asd.k12.pa.us)).