Student Historians Bring the Past to Life at the Merced County Museum

Local teachers and students help design the city exhibit for the 125th Anniversary Celebration

Connecting students in a meaningful way to their collective past has been a passionate goal for three CTA members from Merced High School, Sarah Morgan, Joel Sebastian and Rich Sandoval. This year, they were able to utilize a grant from IFT to create and sponsor the MUHSD Summer History Program (SHiP) for high school students. The program actually began months ago as the students did local research and visited other museums to understand the power of historical exhibits. To celebrate the city’s 125th anniversary, staff at the Merced County Courthouse Museum and the teachers joined forces to present an exhibit that chronicles the history of Merced from its incorporation in 1889 to the present day. The exhibit utilized photos, maps and artifacts to focus on Merced’s government, business and culture. In addition, students created a 3-D model of the thriving Main Street businesses in the 1950s.

The historical exhibits included an interactive map (above right) that showed selected Merced landmarks “then and now.” The rich history of the Central Valley community was on display with the assistance of student guides from four high schools in the Merced Union High School District. The exhibit was spearheaded by Museum Director Sarah Lim in collaboration with the high school educators as part of a 2013-14 IFT Grant.

(Left) The participating high school students in the Merced Summer History Program were on-hand as guides for the June 26th opening of the museum exhibit. (Right) Merced High Social Studies teachers Rich Sandoval and Joel Sebastian and IFT grant recipient, Sarah Morgan, the teacher-librarian, stood by as museum and city officials praised the group for their contributions to the civic event.
Classroom Technology Assistants and Programmers (CTAP) — Butte County TA
Educator Grant- $5,000
Middle School girls in grades 6-8 at Four Winds School will learn and apply different technology skills. Students will write and publish eBooks for younger students to use as STEM textbooks and interactive readers on the school iPads; focus on coding and web design, where the students will each create a website or game; and build and program robots for a competition.

Camarena Life Science Center — Chula Vista Educators
Educator Grant- $5,000
The Life Sciences Center (LCS) at Camarena Elementary is a commitment to real-life learning. In its first year, the LSC already has an aquatic turtle habitat, a marine life habitat, and a leopard gecko habitat, as well as birds, tadpoles, and a rabbit. The project involves having students observe and learn what different living things need to survive, how to manage those needs in an indoor, controlled habitat, and how their needs interact with other species, plant life, the water cycle, and our larger environment.

A Coastal Community Network — Huntington Beach
UHSD EA
Educator Grant- $5,000
This project offers the opportunity for AP Environmental Science students at Ocean View High School to engage with the parents and students at Oak View Elementary School around shared interests in nature and science. In doing so, our project promotes a positive connection from the high school to the larger community. Planning field excursions, trainings, and lessons enhances students’ opportunities to share knowledge and become more involved in school activities, the larger community, and helps to create life-long learners.

Moreno Valley Math League (MVML) — Moreno Valley EA
Chapter Grant- $20,000
Teacher leaders in Moreno Valley are able to utilize this grant to continue and expand the Moreno Valley Math League (MVML) program to all 8,000 MVUSD middle school students and their families in 2014-15. MVML leaders will create a student-centric learning environment where Common Core standards of mathematical practices are intertwined in math content standards. Utilizing exploration, discovery and creativity, math classrooms will be transformed into learning laboratories.

Next Generation Kindergarten Scientists — Palm Springs TA
Educator Grant- $5,000
This project will allow the kindergarten team at Della Lindley Elementary to support and expand their science program. Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are based on the principle that children are born investigators that explore and interact with their world and that scientific concepts are naturally engaging. At the district level, excellent science mentors will provide science trainings. In addition, teachers will participate in science and Project Based Learning trainings to develop strategies to facilitate science instruction. There will be opportunities to include “science buddies” (older students), as well as parent participation with “Science Hikes” and presentations.

Out of the Box — San Joaquin County EA
Chapter Grant- $20,000
The Out of the Box project will place thirty 7th-12th grade special education students in collaborative relationships with California Waterfowl Association mentors to establish a sustainable population of Wood Ducks in the riparian oak habitat of Historic Durham Ferry School of Agriculture and Outdoor Education. Located on 290 acres along the San Joaquin River in California’s Central Valley, Duck Boxes placed at Durham Ferry would provide nesting space for over 100 ducklings to hatch from each year. The grant would also fund cameras and a website, providing real time classroom access to the nests from Stockton and Manteca school sites.

Solar for Success: Phase 2 — Temecula Valley EA
Educator Grant- $5,000
This program builds on the work from last year’s project by using real-world applications in math and science to build a hands-on “school to work” program for at-risk students from Rancho Vista Continuation High School. Through teacher teamwork, math and science instruction is aligned with work applications. Solar for Success, Phase 2, is the natural progression to another aspect of the program—from outside hands-on to “inside,” generating sales proposals and learning the permitting process for local governments.

Agriculture Science — Val Verde TA
Educator Grant- $5,000
Creating an agricultural class at Lakeside Middle School will give students the opportunity to become garden-literate. They will learn about the environment, improve leadership and social skills and work together as a class to accomplish a common goal.

Hydroponics and Aquaponics — Val Verde TA
Educator Grant- $5,000
This grant will provide funds for the establishment of a hydroponic system and the continued growth of an aquaponics system for the Plant and Soil Science class at Rancho Verde High School. The project allows for the purchase of materials to design, build, and create scientific experiments to determine the efficacy of using aquaponics and hydroponics as a medium for vegetable and crop production. Not only does this program target students immediately entering the career field after high school, it also fuses the development of scientific thinking with the actual production of goods, making it intrinsically motivational. Students will also develop business and marketing skills.