Moving from At-Risk to At-Hope: The Moreno Valley Teacher Think Tank Presents a Strength-Based Justice Summit

Over the past year, the CTA IFT Moreno Valley Teacher Think has examined strength-based strategies for increasing fairness, equity, and justice for public education children and young adults. They believe they have discovered a new approach, based on Strength-Based Teacher Driven thinking, which will revolutionize the public schools and create a culture of success for all students.

Strength-Based Justice (SBJ) is a unifying set of principles about ourselves as public-school teachers, the students we serve, and the role we play in preparing children and young adults to be responsible, contributing members of society. Simply speaking SBJ is about emphasizing strengths over deficits and opportunities over problems.

SBJ Summit participants will begin the all-important process of discovering, dreaming, designing, and delivering on the structural and governance changes necessary in the public schools and teaching profession to create a culture of successful opportunities for all students at an upcoming two-day gathering on April 20 and 21st.

Fullerton’s Social Enterprise Fair Enhances Student Relations While Focusing on the Future

IFT grant recipient, Dr. Tricia Hyun and her junior high colleagues celebrated the ideas and aspirations of their 7th-graders in a competitive, Shark Tank-style event held at Fullerton’s Muckenthaler Cultural Center on March 21st.

Tricia’s Impact Grant, PRiSM, gave students an opportunity to dream big by using a strength-based approach where children found something that was working in their community, built upon the idea(s), and innovated using their talents and strengths as identified by Thrively.com’s strength-based assessment. From microwavable heat warming jackets to innovative products for children on the autism spectrum, the student-centered project(s) indeed made an impact!

(Top left) Some of the participating students wore sweatshirts with their team name that happily coincides with one of IFT’s seven strength-based factors. (Bottom left) Local community leaders served as judges for the competition. Business plans written by the student groups required each team to support a good cause, while also turning a profit.
The April 30th IFT Grant Deadline is Fast Approaching
It’s time to put those finishing touches on your strength-based proposals

We hope you are considering becoming a 2018-19 grant applicant and that your educational dreams will come true, as they did for four dozen CTA members this year. IFT awards Educator Grants (up to $5,000) and Impact Grants (up to $20,000) and distributed nearly $600,000 this year for strength-based classroom projects and activities thanks to our members’ voluntary dues contributions!

Here is Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change IN ACTION

Michelle Heffner, teacher and member of the IFT Board of Directors, made a grant visit on March 23rd to Eisenhower Elementary in Garden Grove and met Brandy Peters. It was not the first time the two teachers had met. Let Michelle tell the story:

“I met Brandy Peters at the IFT Teacher Innovation Expo in 2017. After the presentations, I inquired about her ideas and any possible grants she might be considering. She spoke eloquently and with great passion about teaching her primary students to code and program robots. I encouraged her to write an IFT Grant and we brainstormed how it could fit IFT’s seven factors. I shared with her that my own District (Covina-Valley USD) had recently undertaken a similar curriculum and I offered to facilitate a visit for her to one of our primary grades’ ‘Epic Build’ events. Within a few weeks Brandy had visited one of our schools as they shared their year-end projects. When I saw that her grant had been awarded, I was so excited to see the process come full-circle. To me, making this grant visit was the culmination of IFT in action.”

Science Explosion was funded by a $5,000 IFT Grant. The grant recipient, Aba Ngissah (pictured left with IFT’s Anita Benitas), led a schoolwide, teacher-driven effort to engage TK-6 grade students at Inglewood’s Hudnall Elementary in STEAM disciplines. The staff exposed their students to practicing scientists, artists and career choices in fun and engaging hands-on activities and competitions. Among other activities, students learned about Echolocation (upper left), a technique that allows blind people to “see.” High School students (upper right) assisted elementary students in driving robotic cars. There was also a visit from the Nitropod man (lower left) with his super-cold popcorn and icy treats for students.

The CTA Institute for Teaching (IFT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
IFT supports strength-based teacher driven change in school communities across California.
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