“We Uplift Those We Serve by Uplifting Those Who Serve Them”

42 Grant Recommendations Will Be Presented to the IFT Board on June 20th

The IFT Grant Selection Committee gathered in Natomas on May 17-19, 2019 to evaluate 125 applications from CTA members.

All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to $5,000) or an Impact grant (up to $20,000).

We are fortunate to have six outstanding veteran educators doing this critical work. They are pictured here in Natomas on Day One of their deliberations.

This quotation comes from the late Patrick Dolan, a labor relations expert who influenced many in the world of education.

The CTA Institute for Teaching believes that this sentiment accurately captures the spirit of the our annual IFT Grant Program.

For the tenth consecutive year, funding recommendations will be brought to the IFT Board in order to uplift our members and their students.

The Institute thanks Barry Wissman (Palm Springs TA); Liane Cismowski (retired-Mt. Diablo EA); Peter Somberg (Inglewood TA); Anita Benitas (IFT Staff Consultant); Sarah Morgan (Acalanes EA) and Beth Micari (Exeter TA) for their outstanding efforts.

These educators represent various grade levels and CTA regions and are experienced in the strength-based approach.

This is a competitive grant program and the Committee uses the seven-factor IFT Strength Based Matrix (right) as the lens to evaluate the grant proposals. Since 2010, the CTA Institute for Teaching has been utilizing a portion of CTA members’ $20 voluntary dues contributions to fund strength-based teacher driven projects at schools all over California. To date, CTA members have funded 354 grant projects totaling more than $4 million. To ensure accountability and protect against tax liability, the grant recipient’s local Association will serve as a fiscal agent on behalf of the grant recipient(s).
Strength-Based Education Gets a Big Boost with the Establishment of a Los Angeles Teacher Think Tank

A dynamic group of educators in Los Angeles gathered at the UTLA office in late May for a two-day introduction into the world of IFT Teacher Think Tanks. Representing the largest local Association and school district in the state, these UTLA members are energized and enthusiastic about advancing the practice of strength-based teacher driven change.

The group was inspired to come together by IFT Board member Erika Jones and UTLA coordinator Jennifer Villaryo. At the meeting, which was facilitated by IFT Board member Michelle Ramos, teachers learned about the history of the strength-based education movement from former IFT Manager, Yale Wishnick.

We hope this Think Tank group will continue to work together in support of UTLA’s local efforts to promote teacher-led professional development and to elevate the practice of teaching. We sincerely thank the following teachers for their participation: Steven Bilek, Beth Devakul Clark, Marie Germaine, Mayra Gomez, Arian White, and Stacey Yakimovich.

The IFT Reluctantly Says Goodbye to an Extraordinary Educator

Teacher, leader and public education advocate Liane Cismowski is retiring to her native Hawaii after more than a decade as a member of the IFT Board of Directors. Liane is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher in English Language Arts and taught for 25 years in many different grade levels and educational settings: K-6 music teacher, middle school English and Social Studies, second grade, fourth grade, high school English, Continuation High School English, English Language Development.

As an administrator, she worked in Mt. Diablo USD as a vice principal, principal at Cambridge Elementary, and prior to her retirement, as the principal of Mount Diablo High School. She was also on the faculty of the Master of Arts in Teaching Leadership program at St. Mary’s College of California. She was the Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year in 2003, was the National Education Association California Teacher of the Year in 2004 and won the CTA Gold Award in 2004. She was also the public face of the California Teacher Association during the high profile 2005 special election between our union and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger over Props. 74, 75 & 76.

Beyond the facts and figures, however, are the personal qualities that enabled Liane to achieve so much during her career. Intelligence. Wit. Fairness. Equity. Compassion. Dedication. Life-long Learner. In an interview with the IFT in 2015, Liane spoke about strength-based education. “Will we continue to cling to a culture of deficits and deficit thinking or are we ready to create a teaching culture of strengths? For me, this means schools and classrooms based on student talents and a growth mindset, truly believing all students can learn. IFT is challenging teachers and administrators to join and create a school-family culture based on strengths, opportunities and potential.” She will be missed.