



NEWS RELEASE

Community Foundation of the Ozarks

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Subject: RURAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP AWARDS \$140,823 IN EDUCATION GRANTS

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The Rural Schools Partnership awarded \$140,823 in grants to eight Missouri school districts for projects designed to get students directly involved in their rural communities through school-based research, service and entrepreneurial ideas.

The competitive grant cycle is designed for projects that promote the Rural Schools Partnership's mission of connecting schools and communities through the principles of place-based education.

The grants are made possible by the Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation Place-Based Education Grantmaking Program of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks in partnership with Commerce Trust. The Rural Schools Partnership is a CFO initiative.

The eight grants were awarded to:

- Leeton R-X: \$20,000 for the School-Based Enterprise Bulldog Express, which will expand the student-run community grocery at a larger location and add a coffee shop/deli, which will allow more students to participate in the project in rural Johnson County.
- Chadwick: \$19,989 for a project to study the edible and medicinal benefits of Ozark Mountain herbs and build an outdoor classroom.
- Sherwood-Cass: \$20,000 for "The Sherwood Forest," a campus Master Treescape and Beautification Plan that will foster training in the area's agricultural industry and build carbon-credit awareness.
- Fairview: \$19,534 for a water-awareness project to train middle-school students about freshwater quality and mentor lower-elementary teachers to teach younger students. The project will culminate with a community-wide "Fresh Water Awareness Festival."
- Stockton: \$16,700 for a "Tiger Community Pride" project to build a pavilion, and a vegetable/flower garden, including research on Missouri wildflowers and their benefits.
- St. James Youth Empowerment Project: \$20,000 to start Firehouse Coffee, a student community engagement center in a 2,500-square-foot donated firehouse that also will host summer concerts to generate revenue for the YEP fund.

- Glenwood: \$4,600 for "Grow Our Strengths," a project to build raised beds to grow produce to use in the school kitchen and donate to the community food pantry, along with learning to compost school kitchen waste.
- Dora: \$20,000 for "Dora Digital Story Telling," where students will complete a "digital story" based on a community inquiry project that analyzes an aspect of the Ozarks, such as the Civil War, historic mills, Native American traditions or personal histories. The video documentaries will be shown at a student film festival.

The recipients of the Coover place-based grants attended the Rural Schools Partnership's recent rural education conference in Thomasville, Mo., where the speakers included representatives from the Rural Learning Center in Miner County, S.D. In challenging the high-school students to become "change agents" for their own communities, they explained the remarkable impact students made in Miner County, which has undergone a revitalization to become a national training center for the wind industry.

"Community change is not about the community as an entity," said Jim Beddow, senior consultant for the Rural Learning Center. "It's about the people in that community. We need some transformational leaders to rise up out of these young people who are inspired by this Rural Schools Partnership."

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