

Montana Professional Teaching Foundation

news



Your gift can help us raise \$30,000!

One of the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation's biggest fans has once again promised to help raise tax deductible dollars for MPTF.

In fact, our fan has promised to contribute \$2 (up to \$30,000) for every \$1 other folks contribute before the end of this tax year, December 31, 2015.

Please help us meet this donor's challenge! **Donation form enclosed.** All gifts to MPTF are tax deductible.

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Karen Cox Grants open doors for Montana students

From dogs and calculus to helping struggling readers, the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation's Karen Cox Memorial Grants help teachers across Montana launch innovative projects and buy basic classroom supplies.

Named for the late Billings teacher Karen Cox, the grants help educators who reach into their own pockets to pay for classroom supplies and other needs.

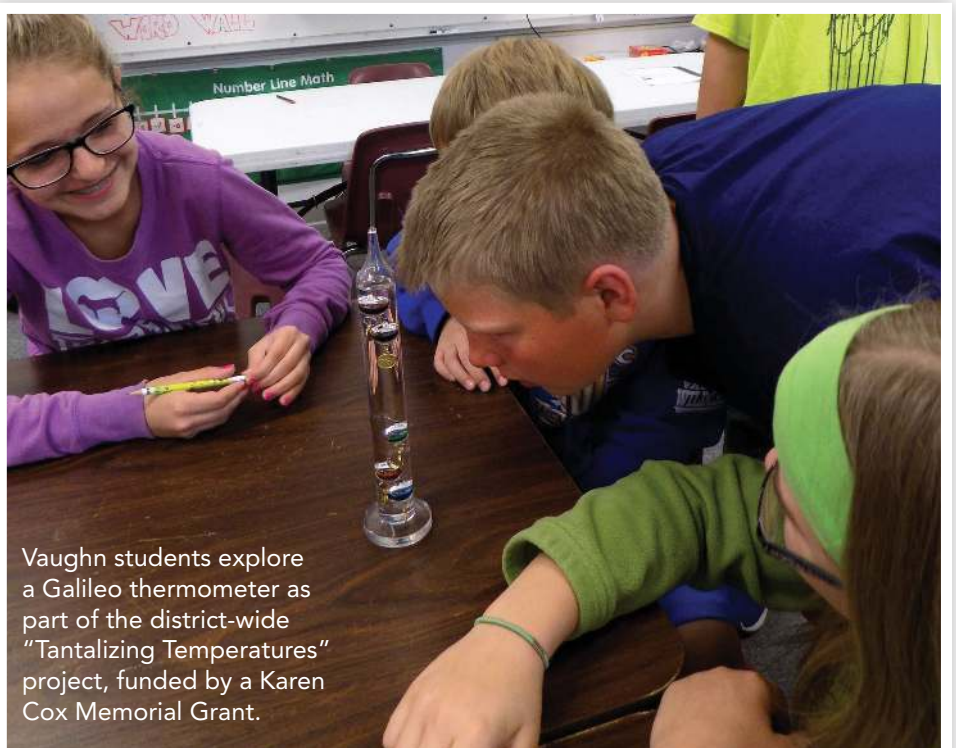
Funds are not intended to replace school funding, but to open doors for students that would stay closed without a little financial help.

The grants are small (\$500 maximum) but mighty. In many cases, the grants purchase materials that schools can use for years.

Here's a sampling of projects funded by grants in 2015:

Salish culture and earth science: Rebecca McGillivray of Hamilton Middle School used her grant to bring tribal elder Tim Ryan to teach students about traditional and contemporary uses of rocks and minerals. Nearly 150 students learned about geology, archeology, and indigenous culture.

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Vaughn students explore a Galileo thermometer as part of the district-wide "Tantalizing Temperatures" project, funded by a Karen Cox Memorial Grant.

TEACHER of the YEAR

Pushing back the classroom walls

The Montana Teacher of the Year program is one of the main ways the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation honors and promotes great teaching in Montana.

At our annual Montana Teacher of the Year Celebration October 15 in Billings, we honored 2016 Montana Teacher of the Year Jessica Anderson and finalists.

Anderson teaches earth science, chemistry, and physics at Powell County High School in Deer Lodge and oceanography through the Montana Digital Academy.

She believes in "pushing back the classroom walls," using games, technology, and on-site, real-world science to engage students.

Her students don't just learn science, they become scientists. For example, they work with the Clark Fork Coalition to analyze stream quality of the Clark Fork River, plant vegetation, and help discover new bacteriophages. Because they're out working in their own "back yard," they develop a personal connection with science.

Anderson's lesson plans go be-



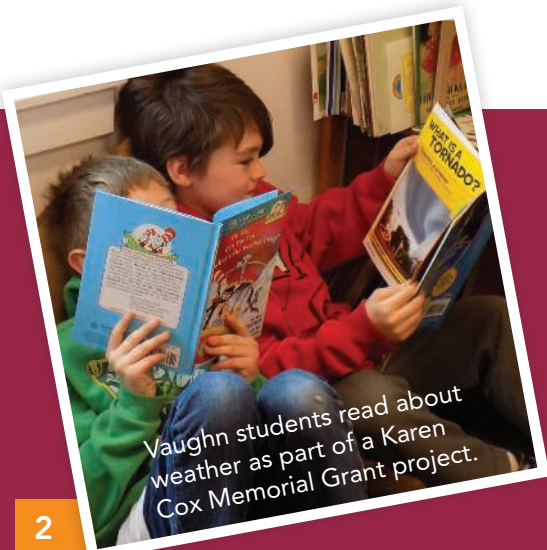
Finalist Derek Strahn, Teacher of the Year Jessica Anderson, and finalist Shelly Stanton at the Teacher of the Year Celebration Oct. 15. All are MEA-MFT members.

yond her classroom walls, too. She shares them with teachers around Montana and the world through online communities like BetterLesson. Her students collaborate with students from across the world on real-life topics like hydraulic fracturing. She is also a co-founder and moderator of #MTedchat on Twitter, helping Montana educators connect,

share, and challenge each other.

Finalists in this year's Montana Teacher of the Year program are Shelly Stanton, technology integration and business teacher in the Billings schools, and Derek Strahn, social studies teacher at Bozeman High School.

Congratulations to Jessica Anderson and finalists!



Vaughn students read about weather as part of a Karen Cox Memorial Grant project.

Our mission & programs at MPTF

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF) was created by MEA-MFT in 1996 to promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning in Montana. We do this through the following programs:

- Montana Teacher of the Year
 - National Board Certification Assistance
 - Karen Cox Memorial Grants
 - Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics & Science Teaching
 - Jim McGarvey Scholarship for Union Leadership in Public Education & Service
- The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible.

KAREN COX GRANTS

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Teaching weather: Yvette Jordan of Vaughn School District helped create "Tantalizing Temperatures," a district-wide project that taught students about weather through math, reading, and writing. Her grant purchased materials for the project.

Reaching struggling readers: Gail Grossman of Riverside Middle School in Billings purchased *Scholastic Action*, a bimonthly magazine filled with articles designed to engage struggling middle school readers.

Humans & horses: Jeanne Cline of Custer County High School sent several students to the Pivotal Movements Equine Therapy Center in Miles City with her grant. "The goal is for students in the Emotional Education Program to develop healthy social and emotional skills," she said.

Dogs and calculus: Birch Fett of Hamilton High School bought five TI-84 calculators for calculus class for the project "Do Dogs Know Calculus?" The project took calculus outside the classroom (and recruited Fett's two Labrador retrievers).

Playing to learn: Children learn by playing, and kindergarten teacher Molly Kast of Rattlesnake Elementary in Missoula spent a lot of her own money to buy educational games and activities for her students. She needed more resources but couldn't afford them. Her grant helped her buy math games, costumes and props, and much more.

To apply for a grant: Contact Donna Graveley for application information: dgraveley@mea-mft.org. **Grant deadline: December 2 of each year.**

MPTF Board

Chair: Eric Feaver
MEA-MFT President, Helena

Melanie Charlson
MEA-MFT Vice President, Missoula

Denise Juneau, Superintendent
Montana Office of Public Instruction
Helena

Kirk Miller, Executive Director
School Administrators of Montana
Helena

Lance Melton, Executive Director
Montana School Boards Association
Helena

Anne Keith
Classroom Teacher, Bozeman

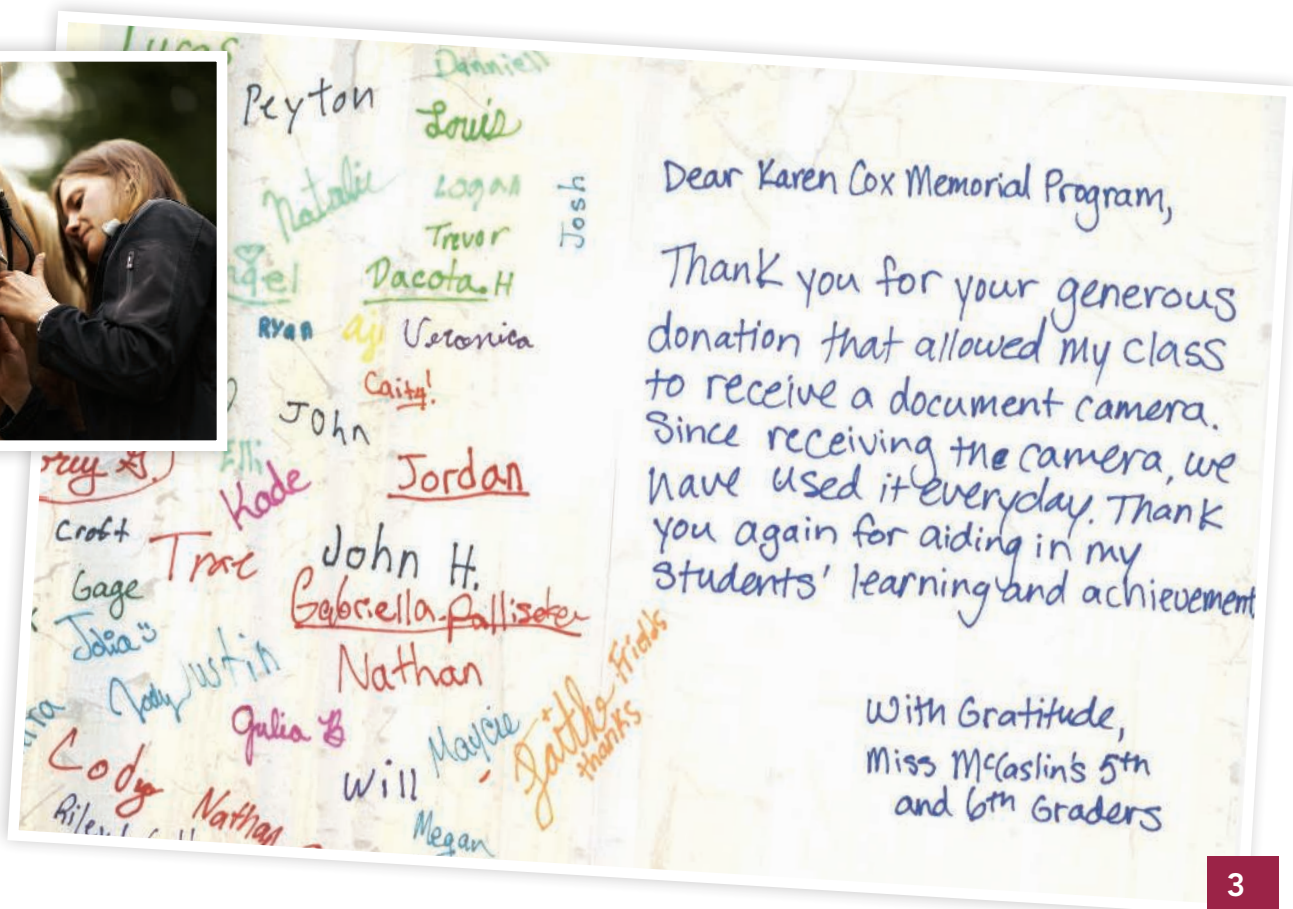
Melissa Romano
Classroom Teacher, Helena

Amanda Curtis
Classroom Teacher, Butte

Mike Frank, President, Blue Cross
Blue Shield of Montana, Helena



Above: Learning healthy social skills with the help of four-legged friends in Miles City. Right: Card from Thompson Falls grant recipients.



More teachers earn National Board Certification

Eight more Montana teachers joined the ranks of the nation's top teachers in 2014 and 2015 by achieving National Board Certification (NBC).

NBC is the highest level of certification a U.S. teacher can earn. Achieving it is no easy feat. The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation helps by guiding teachers through the complex process, with the aid of our 16 trained facilitators.

The real winners are Montana's students. Montana's NBC teachers uniformly say that pursuing the certification is the best thing that has ever happened for their teaching practice. Plus, NBC teachers tend to become leaders, inspiring better teaching statewide.

Montana's newest National Board Certified teachers include the following:

- Craig Beals, Billings
- Georgia LaForge, Bozeman
- Kelsi Luhnnow, Seeley Lake
- Sharon Teague, Seeley Lake
- Anika McCauley, Boulder
- Christine O'Shea, Bozeman
- Nichole Sullivan, Boulder
- Nathan Talafuse, Billings

Montana now has 148 NBC teachers.

Want to know more about NBC? Contact Marco Ferro: mferro@mea-mft.org.



Anika McCauley and Cam Warfle of Boulder, two of our newest NBC teachers, at a local celebration. (Warfle earned her certificate in 2013.)

Presidential math & science teachers

Congratulations to Montana's latest two winners of the prestigious Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) — Dan Bartsch of Billings and David McDonald of Sidney.

PAEMST is the nation's highest honor for U.S. mathematics and science teachers. In Montana, the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation sponsors and administers the award program.

Teachers selected as presidential awardees receive a \$10,000 award and a trip to Washington, D.C. for recognition and professional development events.

Nominate now for the next PAEMST awards! The 2016 awards will honor math and science teachers working in grades K-6. Nominations close April 1, 2016. To nominate or apply, visit paemst.org.

Thank you!

To all our donors, our heartfelt thanks for making the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation's work possible!

How you can help

There are several ways you can help support the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation's mission:

- 1. Make a donation.** Donation form & envelope are enclosed. All donations are tax deductible.
- 2. Help us meet the \$30,000 challenge!** Make your donation by December 31, 2015, and our anonymous benefactor will contribute two dollars for every one dollar other folks contribute, up to \$30,000. Just use the enclosed donation form.
- 3. Consider a planned gift:** As you think about spe-

cial gifts for family and friends, please remember MPTF. Montana taxpayers who make a qualifying planned gift to the MPTF endowment may be able to take a 40 percent credit against their Montana income tax liability. Businesses can make an outright gift (as opposed to a planned gift) and may be eligible for a 20 percent credit on their Montana taxes. For more information on planned gifts, call Cathy Novak at the MPTF office (406.447.1479).

