



**BEZOS SCHOLARS PROGRAM @ THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
ANNOUNCES 2010-11 SCHOOL AWARD GRANTS**
*Public High School Student/Educator Teams, Inspired by the Aspen Ideas Festival,
Create Local Ideas Festivals Across the U.S.*

JANUARY 27, 2011, SEATTLE, WA—The Bezos Family Foundation today announced the 2010-11 School Award Grants for the Bezos Scholars Program @ the Aspen Institute. To date, the Foundation has offered \$1,000 seed grants to 54 first-time festivals and 23 continuation festivals. The scholars program was founded in 2005 and the first Local Ideas Festivals were launched in 2006.

Now, from coast to coast and points in between, public high school student/educator teams are creating dialog, increasing civic engagement and mobilizing their schools and communities around critical issues. Topics for the 2010-11 Local Ideas Festivals range from the arts, diversity, education, environment, leadership and literacy, to science and swimming safety for children.

“We know that attendance at the Aspen Ideas Festival can be life changing for the individual. When these scholars—both students and educators—return home to create Local Ideas Festivals, it may be life changing for schools and communities across the U.S.,” explains Jackie Bezos, president of the Bezos Family Foundation.

THE BACKGROUND

Every summer, Bezos Scholars @ the Aspen Institute—12 top high school juniors and 12 exceptional educators from public high schools across the U.S.—spend a week at the Aspen Ideas Festival, where they engage in seminars and informal scholars-only meetings with global leaders, journalists, entrepreneurs and creative artists. Past scholars have met with Sandra Day O’Connor, Colin Powell, Sylvia Earle, Wendy Kopp, Thomas Friedman and Arne Duncan, among many other notables. It’s a remarkable time of exploration and intellectual stimulation.

When they return home, the student/educator scholar teams, inspired by the Aspen Ideas Festival’s spirit of dialog and inquiry, create their own sustainable Local Ideas Festivals designed to transform their schools and communities.

Bezos Scholars—recipients of the prestigious, seven-day, all-expenses-paid scholarship—are encouraged to follow their passions while focusing on issues of relevance to their schools. Each student/educator scholar team can apply for \$1,000 School Award Grants to help them achieve their goals. As sustainability is vital, Continuation School Award Grants are available to alumni scholar schools for three years.

“My time at Aspen allowed me to understand the diverse work of education experts such as Sir Ken Robinson and Geoffrey Canada,” says Student Scholar Honghe Li of Chicago’s Northside College Preparatory High School. “It reminded us of the crushing cuts to public education that have swept Chicago both by magnitude and scale. We hope that our concentration on this local issue at a time of political significance in Chicago history may garner a better future for local students and begin a tradition of accountability toward education funding reform.”

“We chose to base our Local Ideas Festival on a theme of multiculturalism because the issues of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity are very relevant topics in our school, state and nation,” explains Student Scholar Michaela Pacheco Ceballos from Lincoln High School in Lincoln, NE. “Our school is the most culturally and ethnically diverse school in our district. Our goal is to help the LHS community begin to understand what this diversity means for our education, as students and as a community.”

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SNAPSHOTS OF SELECT ALUMNI FESTS

- **MORE THAN 1,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE THIRD ANNUAL GLOBAL IDEAS FESTIVAL** at the CREC Metropolitan Learning Center Magnet School (MLC) of Bloomfield, CT. The 2010 weeklong event showcased speakers, films, concerts, a poetry coffee house, silent auction, student art exhibits, workshops and a Battle of the Bands—all designed to celebrate Haiti. It also raised more than \$2,300 to help rebuild its partner school, L'Ecole le Bon Samaritain, in Haiti. That total bolsters the \$3,000 MLC previously raised and donated. The fourth annual event—now a self-sustaining festival—is already in the works.
- **A LITERACY FESTIVAL BROUGHT 250 SECOND GRADERS SCREAMING "I FEEL THE NEED TO READ!"** down the halls of Freedom High in Tampa, Florida. The festival spanned many months of offerings ranging from the whimsical and thoughtful to sublime. Free books were distributed to hundreds of second graders at Title 1 schools, and 250 second graders were brought to Freedom High for a full day of activities. An evening event involved all school groups—jazz band, theater department, glee club, cheerleaders, R.O.T.C. members—plus local leaders in education and community service clubs. Not only has the literacy festival changed Freedom High and area elementary schools, two more high schools joined the "I Feel the Need to Read" effort this year to reach hundreds more second graders at Title I schools.
- **GREELEY WEST HIGH SCHOOL'S SECOND ANNUAL ETHNICFEST, A WEEKLONG, SCHOOL-WIDE FESTIVAL**, focused on celebrating diversity through the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of more than 20 nations. Highlights included Chinese dragons, Korean and Spanish cuisine, world music and presentations including, "Not everyone who speaks Spanish is from Mexico," and "Dispelling the terrorist myth." The second annual "EthnicFest" is slated for January/February.

2010-11 RECIPIENTS OF BEZOS SCHOLARS SCHOOL AWARD GRANTS

"BREAKING THE SPELL: ONE STORY AT A TIME" (APRIL 8 & 9) will explore storytelling through the lens of culture and history. Features include a documentary screening, speakers, discussions, Haiku Poetry Slam, and more.

Marc Simon & Kyle Wallace (Communication Arts Teacher)

Central High School, Springfield, MO

"WATER WEEK" (MARCH 21-25) will explore the growing concern for water conservation in Seattle to promote understanding about the local community's relationship with water. The festival will feature education and outreach, speakers, personal actions for conservation and a fundraiser for Seattle nonprofit, Water 1st.

Molly Freed & Noah Zeichner (Social Studies Teacher)

Chief Sealth High School, Seattle, WA

"GREENOVATION YOUTH SUMMIT" (MARCH 2) is designed by environmentally conscious high school students and educators from eight schools in the Quad City area. The goal is to forge partnerships among schools and communities to create innovative environmental initiatives.

Jonathon O'Leary & Gail Heninger (Gifted & Talented Facilitator)

Davenport Central High School, Davenport, IA

"APRIL POOLS DAY" (APRIL 1) will increase public awareness of drowning as the state's leading cause of death for children by offering service learning regarding water safety and rescue, hands-on activities for children ages 5-9, a Public Service Announcement competition and CPR training.

Elisa Berson & Vivian Fiallo (College & Career Counselor)

Freedom High School, Tampa, FL

"E=MC²" (EQUALITY=MULTICULTURAL COLLABORATION) (FEBRUARY 5, 19 & 26), will bring together 55 sophomores from Lexington area high schools to explore "isms," through discussions, speakers, presentations and a service project.

Jonathan Karp & Zachary Matson (Chemistry Teacher)

Lafayette High School, Lexington, KY

"CREATEFEST" (MARCH 15 & 16) will serve at least 500 members of the Lawrence North community through a series of workshops, presentations and innovative activities that encourage and promote the value of creativity.

Rosemary Pritchett-Montavon & Heather Stockdell (Journalism & Spanish Teacher)

Lawrence North High School, Indianapolis, IN

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"MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL" (FEBRUARY 21-25) is designed to encourage interaction and discussion among diverse groups, empower minority students, and celebrate diversity through discussion panels, presentations on race and ethnicity and a keynote speech by Christopher Benson, an African-American professor, journalist and speechwriter.

Micaela Pacheco Ceballos & J.P. Caruso (Social Studies Chair)

Lincoln High School, Lincoln, NE

"GEORGIA ON MY MIND" (MULTIPLE EVENTS, FEBRUARY & APRIL) is designed to highlight four key issues: the dangers of texting while driving; childhood literacy; the impact of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (featuring a Georgia-based champion for research, Darius Weems); and conserving green space from urban sprawl.

Katherine Key & Mark Wilson (Principal)

Morgan County High School, Madison, GA

"FIRST ANNUAL CHICAGO IDEAS FESTIVAL" WILL HOST THE CHICAGO EDUCATION SUMMIT (MARCH 24) to address inequity in Chicago's public education system and student rights threatened by looming Chicago Public School (CPS) budget deficits. By initiating public dialogue among education experts, union representatives, CPS officials and mayoral hopefuls about a viable, 10-point Student Bill of Rights, the festival aims to increase the equity of public education in Chicago.

Honghe Li & Tim Devine (Social Sciences Chair)

Northside College Preparatory High School, Chicago, IL

"IMPACTATHON" (APRIL 29) will develop deep ties between students and their community through new community service initiatives, literacy partnerships and recycling program. The festival will bridge communities, promote organized inquiry and demonstrate the impact of community service to students and faculty.

Paul Elish & Jennifer Bourassa (English & Psychology Teacher)

Presque Isle High School, Presque Isle, ME

"WHAT OUR WORLD NEEDS NOW" (MARCH 26) is designed to empower and educate 10th-, 11th- and 12th-grade students to be engaged citizens, aware of the obstacles their generation will face in the future. Topics will include "How to be a Global Citizen," "Categorically Speaking: Labels in Society" and "The Future of Equitability in Education," and will include a TechExpo with professionals from local technology companies.

Miriam Million & Anne Artz (Science Chair/ASB Advisor)

The Preuss School, La Jolla, CA

"DARWIN'S DISCOVERY DAY: DISCOVERING THE FOCUS OF SCIENCE" (APRIL 20) will incorporate a series of science fairs to promote scientific thinking by connecting scientists of all ages and backgrounds. High school students will teach grade school children, and attend the Willamette University Student Scholarship Recognition Day to observe the kind of collegiate research they may soon conduct. Students from all grade levels and schools will present science at the Salem-Keizer Science Expo. The fest focal point is a reverse science fair, where elementary and middle school students will judge and score the research of university professors and government agencies. Notable speakers will reinforce the message: science is about discovery and we are all explorers.

Andy Zhang & Jason Niedermeyer (IB Biology Teacher)

South Salem High School, Salem, OR

2010 RECIPIENTS OF BEZOS SCHOLARS CONTINUATION GRANTS

FOURTH ANNUAL IDEAS FESTIVAL: "PASSION IN PROGRESS" (MARCH 25) combines workshops and speakers to explore innovative ideas for following passions, overcoming obstacles, staying positive and open-minded, and achieving goals.

Dana Hogan and 2009 Educator Scholar/English Chair Frank DiLeo

City Honors School, Buffalo, NY

2007 scholars Rebecca Bass and Principal William Kresse created the "Words of Art: Community Art, Ideas and Open Mic Festival";

Principal William Kresse led the second annual offering in 2008. 2009 scholars Jimmitti Teysir and English Chair Frank DiLeo created the first "Passion in Progress" festival.

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SECOND ANNUAL "I FEEL THE NEED TO READ" (DECEMBER 2010 – MARCH 2011) was created to combat low state literacy rates while celebrating words and reading through school-wide and community-wide activities for all ages: games, music and theater, book giveaways to almost 2,500 second graders, readings and a panel discussion for parents who want to promote a love of reading.

William Tillman and 2009 Educator Scholar/Assistant Principal Rosemary Owens

Freedom High School, Tampa, FL

2009 scholars Blake O'Connor and Assistant Principal Rosemary Owens created the first "I Feel the Need to Read" festival. Not only has the literacy festival changed Freedom High and area elementary schools, two more high schools joined the "I Feel the Need to Read" effort this year to reach hundreds more second graders at Title I schools. Additionally, O'Connor was selected to PARADE magazine's first "All-American Service Team," in part for his work in creating "I Feel the Need to Read."

SECOND ANNUAL "ETHNICFEST: THINK GLOBALLY/ACT LOCALLY" (JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 4) will celebrate diversity with a school-wide and community-wide dialog about and celebration of diversity. The fest will promote an exchange of ideas through speakers, discussions, entertainment, food and music.

Mitchell Cieminski and 2009 Educator Scholar/Social Studies Teacher Edie Reynolds

Greeley West High School, Greeley, CO

2009 scholars Lanna Giauque and Social Studies Teacher Edie Reynolds, plus Bryan Wright, created the first "EthnicFest."

"YOUTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK," a new organization, was created to give youth a voice and create leadership experience by partnering the often-overlooked resource of young people with area organizations.

Kelsey Wilson and 2009 Educator Scholar/Language Arts Teacher Christopher Bullmer

Kalamazoo Central High School, Kalamazoo, MI

2009 scholars Simon Boehme and Language Arts Teacher Christopher Bullmer created the new organization.

THE THIRD ANNUAL IDEAS FESTIVAL, "GO GREEN," (APRIL, MAY) will explore the drastic impact of America's carbon footprint, alternative energies, how to live a less wasteful life—individually and as a community—and ways to volunteer.

Michelle Yang and 2009 Educator Scholar/Guidance Counselor Troy Arneson

James Madison High School, Madison, WI

2008 scholars Hannah Postel and English Teacher Elizabeth Glaaser created the first "Apathy in Action" festival. 2009 scholars Valerie Shen and Guidance Counselor Troy Arneson created the second "Lend A Hand – Promoting Volunteerism" festival.

THIRD ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL FESTIVAL, "EVERGLADES SYMPOSIUM" (APRIL 4) seeks to educate and promote awareness of the Everglades ecosystem among middle school students. The symposium will explore the fragility and importance of the Everglades and its connection to greater world issues.

Miami Palmetto Senior High School, Pinecrest, FL

Daniel Brooks, 2008 Educator Scholar/Science Teacher Patricia Valois

2008 scholars Lucy Li and Science Teacher Patricia Valois created the first "Palmetto Environmental Symposium." Garret Weiss and Science Teacher Patricia Valois created the 2009 Environmental Festival.

SECOND ANNUAL "STUDENT ARTISTS FESTIVAL OF ST. AUGUSTINE," (APRIL 9) will celebrate, nurture and showcase students' talent and career dreams through discussions, performances and an arts competition through a St. John's County-wide effort. The festival offers a powerful opportunity for community partnerships and a scholarship.

Orion Morton and 2009 Educator Scholar/Science/Mathematics Teacher Brian Braddock

2009 scholars Yannick Trapman-O'Brien and Science/Mathematics Teacher Brian Braddock created the first festival.

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