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The TRF Newsletter

New Year, Same Mission.

It's 2012 and here at The Riordan Foundation our New Year's resolution is the same: get educational resources into Los Angeles classrooms and into the hands of students. Come take a look at our current programs!

Spring Cycle of Technology Grants Announced: LOIs Due Feb. 24th

In an attempt to reach more schools, The Riordan Foundation and Rx for Reading will offer a second cycle of the Interactive Whiteboard, Computers in the Classroom, and Professional Development Grants for the spring. These grants provide matching funds for important educational technology resources to cash-strapped schools and are by invitation only.

To receive an invitation to apply for the Interactive Whiteboard and Computers in the Classroom Grants, schools need to go to www.riordanfoundation.org and fill out an Online Letter of Inquiry by February 24th. To determine if the school is a good fit for our programs, we will conduct an initial site visit to meet with the principal and lead applicants. Invited schools will receive application materials on March 20th. Applications are due by April 20th at midnight.

The Professional Development Grant assists past grantees in maximizing the benefits of their original Riordan Foundation Grants. By providing funds for further training, this program assures that participating teachers continue to grow in their use of technology in the classroom. Eligible schools received applications by email, and must turn in those documents by March 2nd.

Above: IKEA volunteers at our January 31st reading session at La Fayette Park Primary Center (see article on page 2).

Spring 2012 Calendar

February 24th: Online LOIs due for Interactive Whiteboard and CIC grants

March 2nd: PD Applications due

March 20th: Interactive Whiteboard and CIC Applications distributed

Late March: Annual TRF Board Meeting

April 20th: Interactive Whiteboard and CIC Applications due

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ESPN Zone EdTech Networking Event: Hopefully the First of Many

On December 14, 2011, The Riordan Foundation hosted its first Educational Technology Networking event at the ESPN Zone at LA Live. We invited teachers, friends, and consultants to join us for a night of fun and collaborative learning. As part of the evening's events, guests were challenged to venture beyond their core group of colleagues and learn new technology and teaching strategies from their peers.

Not only did participants learn from peers who were present, but also from individuals on Twitter. Teachers used Twitter to pose questions about technology to educators around the world. Within five minutes of posting, one participant received a response to her query from a teacher in another state!

The night was full of energy and excitement. "[The event] showed teachers that someone cares," stated Beverley Royster, a former LAUSD teacher and longtime friend of The Riordan Foundation. "With the recent doom and gloom of budget cuts facing teachers today, it was nice to focus on empowering teachers with resources."

Of the resources highlighted, donorschoose.org generated the most excitement among teachers. The site connects teachers who request funding for classroom projects with donors who wish to contribute. Through the site, one teacher hopes to secure an iPad for her class in order to reach non-traditional learners.

This event was the first in what we hope will be an ongoing program of networking events for teachers. If you'd like to participate in future events, visit our Facebook page: facebook.com/riordanfoundation.

Above: Teachers check in to the event at ESPN Zone using iPads.

IKEA Carson and Rx for Reading Partner to Build New Classroom Library

On January 31st, eight volunteers from IKEA Carson joined Rx for Reading staff at La Fayette Park Primary Center for a special day of reading and fun. As one of the top three applicants for the Recreational Reading Mini-Grant (RRMG), Ms. Der's kindergarten class received the special prize of a classroom library makeover.

The students' excitement was palpable as the IKEA volunteers started to unload furniture and toys, and they could hardly sit still after seeing the boxes of brand new books from Barnes & Noble. As some members of the IKEA Carson team started work on the library, others spread out through the school to read to all six kindergarten classes at La Fayette Park Primary Center. The students listened, their excitement barely contained, as the volunteers recounted the tales of literary figures such as Clifford the Big Red Dog, Olivia the Mouse, and The Rainbow Fish.

We want to publicly thank IKEA Carson and the individuals who participated in this wonderful event. The generous donation of furniture and plush toys was only eclipsed by the personal contribution of time spent spreading a love of reading to Los Angeles students. We also want to thank La Fayette Primary Center for welcoming us and Ms. Der for her dedication to her students.

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