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## **The U-46 Educational Foundation Awards Grants to Support Innovative Ideas**

*More than \$20K in Grants Given to Fund 20+ Projects*

**ELGIN** - Thanks to generous donors, the U-46 Educational Foundation will award U-46 teachers and staff with more than 20 grants to fund everything from a robot for coding to a Little Free Library, even a worm farm.

Michele Brodbeck, a special education paraeducator at Horizon Elementary School, hopes time with worms - who will live in the school library - will offer a lesson in environmental stewardship. Pre-K-6th graders at the school in Hanover Park will take part in feeding the worms food scraps in order to produce vermicompost. The grant will help Brodbeck purchase the clear worm bins, related reference and picture books, and a seed library so students can take seeds and grow their own plants at home.

Naturally, Brodbeck's long-term goal is to start a garden club for the school but she's happy to start at the beginning and "teach students the importance of living soil, how organisms recycle our waste, and what is compostable."

"U-46 teachers and staff are amazing people," said Foundation President E.C. "Bud" Wilson. "Even with all of the changes they are facing this year, they are still persevering. They are coming up with innovative ways of reaching students, and their students feed off their enthusiasm. We at the Foundation are honored to do whatever we can to support that positive energy."

A mock grocery store to promote self-regulation for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, online resources for math and science classes, and a

robot that students can take turns coding are among the projects supported through the more than \$20,000 in U-46 Educational Foundation grants.

Funding for several of these grants was provided by American Honda Financing Corporation in Elgin. Philanthropy is one of American Honda's core principles, and they are excited to fund innovative grants that will benefit the students and schools within their community.

Mary Lee, an Occupational Therapist in U-46, applied for a grant through the Foundation to purchase more assistive technology for students with specialized needs. Computer use among Lee's students is made easier through enlarged keyboards and adapted trackballs. However, Lee's students' challenges vary, and a device that is helpful for one student may not help another student. A variety of equipment is currently available to students through a state-wide lending library, but students sometimes must face a waiting list when specific types of devices are in high demand. With a grant from the Foundation, Lee will be able to better meet her students' needs by purchasing more devices and a variety of devices. Her students, who attend elementary to high schools across the District, will be able to test which device best helps them without a wait.

Through the grants, the Foundation, a charitable nonprofit 501(c)3 dedicated solely to supporting U-46 students, teachers, and schools, aims to expand opportunities for U-46 students beyond what is possible with tax dollars.

More information can be found on the Foundation website at [www.u-46.org/Foundation](http://www.u-46.org/Foundation).

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***About the U-46 Educational Foundation:*** Established in 2006, the U-46 Educational Foundation supports School District U-46's students, teachers, and schools by enhancing student learning and well-being. You can learn more by visiting our website: [www.u-46.org/Foundation](http://www.u-46.org/Foundation).