



GUILFORD FUND FOR EDUCATION

Investing in Guilford Youth since 2006



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Mission

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Guilford Fund For Education (GFFE) is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that gives educators and students an avenue to explore, experiment, and bring fresh educational ideas and experiences to youth by funding proposals which fall outside of an organization's budget.

Organization

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GFFE was created in 2006 when the founders recognized the need for funding of creative and innovative learning experiences – these projects were proposed by teachers and fell outside of the Board of Education budget. As a partner to Guilford Public Schools (GPS), and other nonprofit organizations that work with the young people of our town, we connect with educators and open doors to novel learning paths and ingenuity in the classroom.

Why?

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Educators are the difference-makers in our children's lives but they often do not have the money to bring their creative ideas to life– this is where GFFE comes in. GFFE creates possibilities! GFFE knows learning takes place in many venues which is why we support GPS as well as educators servicing youth through other community non-profits. We also seek to encourage and deepen a community-wide enthusiasm for excellence in education, and involve residents in supporting Guilford youth through long-standing events such as Bee Ball, Kids' Spelling Bee, Adult Spelling Bee and STAR Awards.

How?

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GFFE raises funds to provide grants to educators for ideas that fall outside of their budget, providing the funding to explore new concepts, enhance existing curriculum and strengthen the learning process. The projects we fund wouldn't be realized otherwise. Projects funded by GFFE may be integrated into future GPS budgets, or those of the non-profits we support, once the idea has proven successful.

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WHO WE HELP



We all remember the teacher in our lives that went above and beyond to create curiosity and enthusiasm in their students. More often than not, educators have endless ideas but are hampered by budget constraints. GFFE frees educators from these funding constraints that impede innovation. The beneficiaries of the grant monies are educators within Guilford Public Schools or local non-profits, as well as students who collaborate with their teacher on special projects. Ultimately, we invest in Guilford youth through these grants – after all, they are the future leaders and citizens of Guilford and our world.

GFFE funds ideas within GPS that align with the district’s vision and curriculum goals. We also support non-profit educational organizations in town such as Guilford Youth and Family Services, Guilford Center for Children, and Guilford Performing Arts Festival to name a few. **In the first 16 years of our existence, GFFE provided over \$470,000 covering 167 grants.** Our grant recipients are educators of all kinds; classroom teachers, non-profit daycare providers, artistic directors, PTO members, and GPS students. GFFE seeks to empower people in education to think outside the box and to funnel their passion and vitality into transforming the landscape of learning.

Our grants tend to fall into the following categories, although we are open to all subject matters:

- > **ENGINEERING, MATH (STEM)**
- > **HUMANITIES**
- > **VISUAL OR PERFORMING ARTS**
- > **CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
- > **SPECIAL EDUCATION**
- > **PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**
- > **OPEN TO ALL OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

We give money to the difference-makers!

Our mission is simple, GFFE exists to make the impossible possible.



We provide funding for ideas that would otherwise not be explored. We accept grant applications from the educators and students, and we partner with the applicants in the process to get them the funding they need. The typical grant size is between \$1000–\$5000 per project, though we've funded much larger grants and encourage grants of all sizes. The grant application is less extensive for requests for funding that are under \$1000. In addition, GFFE partners with GPS on larger partnership grants, concepts that originate with educators but specifically align with district programming goals.

While GFFE is independent of GPS and the Board of Education, the GFFE Board of Directors maintains a close working relationship with both bodies – open and dynamic communication is our collective goal. For grants originating from GPS employees or students, district approval is required to ensure alignment with GPS goals as well as support for implementation.

From our inception, individuals and small businesses have generously donated, supported, and sponsored our events. Our Annual Appeal to individuals, our event registrations, and recognizing our educators with STAR Awards has sustained GFFE. The generosity of caring donors who understand the value of GFFE's mission has allowed us to support educators for 16 years. As needs grow, particularly requests for larger projects, GFFE is developing additional sources of funding such as the GHS alumni network, private foundations, businesses and corporations.

GFFE knows that when our educators feel supported, they in turn are better able to support our students and the enthusiasm for learning grows – benefitting our entire community.



GFFE made the impossible possible, bringing these amazing ideas to life!

- > **THE WITNESS STONES ORIGINATING AT ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL**
- > **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM EXPLORATORY PHASE AT GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL**
- > **ROBOTICS AT ADAMS AND BALDWIN MIDDLE SCHOOLS**
- > **FLAMENCO IN THE CLASSROOM AT MELISSA JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
- > **JUST MERCY AND EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE SPEAKER AT GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL**
- > **THE POLLINATOR GARDEN AT GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL**
- > **CALVIN LEETE STUDENT COUNCIL GARDEN (STUDENT-ORIGINATED PROJECT)**
- > **BOOK AMBASSADOR PROGRAM AT AW COX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
- > **GUILFORD LAKES TOY LIBRARY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GUILFORD FREE LIBRARY**
- > **MELISSA JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CIRCUS OF LEARNING**
- > **GUILFORD PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL STUDENT WORKSHOPS**
- > **SEVERAL PANDEMIC-RELATED GRANTS OF \$1000 OR LESS TO ADDRESS URGENT NEEDS**
- > **MAKERSPACES IN ALL FOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN 2022-THE LARGEST GRANT IN GFFE HISTORY!**

GFFE IN THE GUILFORD COMMUNITY

GFFE's lengthy history of community fundraising events has provided GFFE name recognition in the Guilford community – residents have heard of GFFE through our Kid & Adult Spelling Bees, Family Trivia Bee, STAR Awards, and Bee Ball – and we have benefited in both our fundraising and recruitment of volunteers through these happenings. In 2022 GFFE created two scholarship awards for graduating seniors at Guilford High School. We look forward to providing these awards for years to come.

GFFE Community Outreach:

- > **KID SPELLING BEE:** FEATURING 3RD TO 6TH GRADERS AT THE GUILFORD FAIR
- > **ADULT SPELLING BEE:** ADULT COMMUNITY TEAMS COMPETING AND DRESSING IN BEE-THEMED GARB TO SUPPORT OUR FOCUS ON EDUCATION
- > **FAMILY TRIVIA BEE:** FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIVIA FOR ALL AGES TO ENGAGE OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN OUR GOALS OF LEARNING AND FUN
- > **STAR AWARDS:** CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION FOR OUR EDUCATORS SPONSORED BY PARENTS AND PRESENTED TWICE A YEAR
- > **BEE BALL:** 3-ON-3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT TO ENGAGE KIDS IN GRADES 3 THROUGH 7 WITH FUN COMPETITION
- > **SCHOLARSHIPS:** AWARDS GIVEN TO DESERVING GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS





Join us in supporting Guilford's amazing teachers and other educators

by considering giving a one-time, monthly, or yearly gift to GFFE, or becoming an annual or event sponsor as part of the GFFE Sponsorship Program.

While events are a great way to engage with the community, the pandemic demonstrated that many channels are necessary for raising funds, so we are seeking alternate sources. Generous individual donors and business partners like yourselves will ensure that GFFE can continue to provide support to the difference-makers in our children's lives.

A typical grant distribution goal for GFFE was \$25,000 per year prior to the pandemic. GFFE is aiming to raise this to \$50,000, on average, to reflect the increase in need and to support more requests coming for larger, longer-term strategic GPS partnership funding. Donor support is needed to meet this target. For instance, in 2022 GFFE funded the development of MakerSpaces in all four Guilford Elementary Schools for a total of \$80,000.

All new funds will go to support near term grants, strategic partnership grants, and scholarships, with a small percentage covering minimal operating costs. A portion of donations will only be directed to the investment account if 1) funds cannot be used in the short term due to lack of a project pipeline and the finance committee determines it is best to hold these funds in an interest-bearing account, or 2) the Investment Fund falls below the Board-approved threshold.

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HOW WE ARE EVOLVING



There has never been a more important time to support our educators. GFFE is committed to meeting our students and teachers where they are. Factors including the pandemic, increased social and emotional needs of our students, addressing diversity and equity, and a fast changing technology environment are forcing educators to think differently and we want to support them as they evolve education to meet the needs of their students.”

— NICOLE SCHLAGHECK, CHAIR OF THE GFFE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



When the early days of the pandemic shut down our schools, GFFE did not know what the future would hold. What needs would educators have? Would they have the capacity to apply for grants? Would the incredible demands on teachers dim their creative spark? It turns out that when schools resumed in the fall of 2020 there was an increase in classroom/virtual learning needs and a tremendous effort on the part of educators to inspire their students to learn in spite of Covid's obstacles.

The 2020-21 school year resulted in GFFE's largest grant fulfillment year! Then 2022 brought our largest single-project grant with the MakerSpace partnership in GPS. By shifting to address the immediate needs of our educators, and partnering with educators to help them bring fresh ideas into the grants process, we learned that we could successfully continue our mission even in troublesome times. We are thrilled to continue to support our educators, partnering with GPS and educational nonprofits, to ensure Guilford youth have access to the learning opportunities they deserve.

GFFE is committed to getting to YES when educators apply to GFFE with their creative ideas. We want to make applying for funding straight forward and we want to be clear about qualifying criteria. We assign a facilitator to all applicants to work in partnership through the finalization of the grant. We look forward to continuing this work for years to come and to be considered the first answer an educator or student has when asking, "How do I get funding for this idea?"

HOW TO SUPPORT US

Please join us in supporting Guilford's amazing teachers, students and other educators by giving a one-time, monthly, or yearly gift to GFFE, or becoming part of our **Sponsorship Program**. Donations can be made directly at **GFFE.org** (powered by Paypal) or via check sent to:



Guilford Fund for Education
800 Village Walk, #269
Guilford, CT 06437

GFFE can also work with you directly to facilitate wire transfer for large gifts/bequests. Please contact us at information@gffe.org to discuss.

The Guilford Fund for Education is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Does your organization have a Matching Gifts Program?

Once you have donated to GFFE, please follow the process from your organization and double the impact of your giving! Contact information@gffe.org if you need any assistance setting up GFFE as a non-profit recipient in your organization.