



392 W. Fallbrook,
Suite 101
Fresno, California
93711-6150
phone: 559.447.8350
fax: 559.447.9184
grapesfromcalifornia.com

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 13, 2015

Contact: Jeff Klitz
jeff@grapesfromcalifornia.com

Grape Commission Awards Education Grants

Twenty-Two Grants Awarded to Educators in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Tulare Counties

Fresno, CA – Schools in the table grape growing regions of California’s San Joaquin and Coachella valleys are benefiting from grants awarded this academic year.

In total, 36 education grants worth up to \$750 were awarded by the California Table Grape Commission on behalf of California’s table grape growers and will reach over 4,000 students. Twenty-two of the grants were awarded to educators in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Tulare counties, with projects to be completed this spring.

“California’s table grape growers have been supporting local education for years,” said Kathleen Nave, president of the commission. “This program is one of the ways table grape growers give back to the communities in which they live and work.”

Examples of the projects in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Tulare counties include raised garden boxes for children with special needs, creating scripts and videos to learn about the Civil War, building robotics, growing grapes, and modern microscopy and cell metabolism.

Here are the grant recipients from those counties and their projects by school district:

Clovis Unified School District

- Emily Zabzdyr, [Reagan Elementary School](#). Elementary school students will study science, math and engineering while designing and building models in an after-school program utilizing Lego bricks.

Coalinga-Huron Unified School District

- April Wheaton, [Coalinga High School](#). Grant funds will be used to purchase up-to-date health and wellness resources for the high school library, which serves approximately 1,200 students.
- Darcie Elliott, [Coalinga Middle School](#). Eighth grade students will use problem solving skills, creative thinking, cooperative learning and engineering and design skills to build two vessels that meet a specific set of criteria.

Dinuba Unified School District

- Adam Guidi, Washington Intermediate School. Middle school students in the “Drone Club” will use a quadcopter, purchased with grant funds, to gather in-flight video data regarding the effects of California’s drought on campus vegetation and crops surrounding the school. They will then analyze the data and deliver presentations on their findings.

Exeter Unified School District

- Caitlin Scaife, Rocky Hill Elementary School. Raised garden boxes will be added to the school garden so that students with special needs, including those in wheelchairs, will be able to participate in gardening practices and hands-on learning with the other students.

Fresno Unified School District

- Kyle Wiebe, Edison High School. High school students will use science, technology, engineering and math to design, prototype, construct and refine a fully functioning robot to compete in a robotics competition.
- Bridget Beal, Sequoia Middle School. Middle school students will learn about the Civil War and then compose scripts and record mock interviews talking about life during the Civil War using newly purchased flip video cameras.

Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District

- Barbara McPherson, Lincoln Elementary School. Second and third grade students will participate in planning and tending to a school garden. Lessons in science, math, reading and writing will be taught through this project, as students research plant needs and life cycles, figure measurements and probability, follow directions, keep records and more.
- Garrett Smothers, Rafer Johnson Junior High School. Middle school students will use video recording and editing to film media projects in a journalism and media class. They will develop scripts, perform character personalities and edit videos.
- Karla Walls, Rafer Johnson Junior High School. Grant funds will allow the school to purchase a digital microscope and study kits for use with 7th grade science lessons.

Laton Unified School District

- Johnny Lopes, Laton High School. Funding will allow the school to purchase a CNC routing table, which will be used to teach high school students about computer aided design, manufacturing, graphing, constructing and billing.

Madera Unified School District

- Christina Riche, John Adams Elementary School. Sixth grade students will research colleges and universities and put on a fair for other students, acting as the college representatives. They will perform online research, learn to write letters requesting information and create display boards to be used during verbal presentations.
- Donell Clark, Lincoln Elementary School. After school lessons on water conservation, third and sixth grade students will help to install a drip irrigation system in their school garden. Students will learn about the physical, chemical and microbiological changes that occur with crops, and research the methods to

process and transform foods for preserving. Students will also take a tour of the Fresno State Farm.

- Cindy Florez, Nishimoto Elementary School. Fourth grade students will dress up and play characters from the 1800's. They will participate in pioneer activities such as panning for "gold," making and churning butter, square dancing, making wax candles and making corn husk dolls.

Porterville Unified School District

- Carolyn Arthur, Monte Vista Elementary School. New wireless headphones will enhance reading time for first grade students. Each student will listen to audio books selected for his/her reading level and answer questions that gauge comprehension. The headphones also have microphones, which will be used to record students reading aloud for teacher evaluation.
- Rebecca Haley, Porterville High School. High school students will utilize new sewing machines to make quilts, practicing their math and measuring skills. Their next set of quilts will be donated to local charities and/or hospitals.
- Jon Innis, Monte Vista Elementary School. Fifth grade students will learn about photosynthesis, composting and pollination through a science-rich musical play about gardening. Funds will be used to purchase sound equipment, a script, music and props.

Reef Sunset Unified School District

- Silvia Maldonado, Kettleman City Elementary School. Recording microphones, digital microscopes and rekenreks (calculating racks) will be utilized to teach lessons to first grade students in the areas of language arts, science and math.

Terra Bella Union School District

- Juan Martinez, Carl Smith Middle School. Students will study the effects the drought is having on agriculture in California and then perform research to determine which plants are best suited to grow in their region. They will then incorporate drought tolerant plants into their garden as well as a drip irrigation system set to regulate the watering cycle according to the needs of each plant grouping.

Tulare City School District

- Dustin McNearney, Los Tules Middle School. Students will be given a certain amount of acreage and will need to come up with a projected budget to grow grapes. They will use Chromebooks to look at grape pricing, average yield, interest rates, labor costs and the weather, and write synopses/present their findings. Critical thinking and problem solving skills will be tested as they are given different scenarios (such as a well running dry or new state labor regulations) and made to come up with solutions.
- Salvador Juarez, Los Tules Middle School. Eighth grade students will study gravity, laws of motion, engineering design process and more through a balloon drop investigation, where balloons will be dropped from 25 feet above the ground. They will write hypotheses, perform tests, and write processes and conclusions. Students will use a Chrome Notebook to present their findings.

Tulare Joint Union High School District

- Michael Conn, Mission Oak High School. Grant funds will allow the school to purchase wheels, motors, fasteners and more for their robotics club. Students will then build robots and participate in robotics competitions.

The Innovation in Teaching education grant program was created in 1993 to support innovative educational projects in the table grape growing regions of California's San Joaquin and Coachella valleys.

For more information, go to www.grapesfromcalifornia.com/EducationGrants.php.

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