

Students and grants awarded at last night's school board meeting

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
January 18 2017 9:28 AM



ALTON - Several students and teachers from the **Alton School District** were awarded at the Tuesday, Jan. 17 meeting of the **Alton Board of Education**.

Several awards for scholarship and utmost good conduct were given to students by the district and community organizations, and teachers were awarded grants through the **Guardians of Education Program**. That program took donations from the community and utilized those funds to give grants to district teachers for special classroom projects. This year, Guardians of Education was able to grant just under \$25,000 to district projects. Since 2001, Guardians of Education has given an estimated \$175,000 from the community to the district.

This year, the Guardians of Education announced the grants at its annual breakfast, held Tuesday morning at **North Elementary School**. Teachers, staff and members of the

community who donated were in attendance to see the chosen teachers receive the news. Checks for each grant were given at the meeting by **Guardians of Education Executive Director Ryan Bemis**. The grants awarded are as follows:

- \$5,500 for **Natalie Gordon** and **Bridget Lyles** for **Weather Bug STEM Curriculum** for the entire district.
- \$683.61 for **Amy Lombardi** for **Hour of Code** for West, East and North Elementary Schools.
- \$1,822.50 for **Angie Laaker** for **It's a Zoo in Here** for **Alton High School**.
- \$395.48 for **Robert Miller** for **2,184 Ways to Learn** for **Alton Middle School**.
- \$191.13 for **Shannon Stanton** for **Meet the World's Greatest Artists** for **West Elementary School**.
- \$2,195 for **Lexa Browning-Needham** for **Illuminating History** for **Alton High School**.
- \$1,393.99 for **Greg Adams** for **Building a Greenhouse** for **West Elementary School**.
- \$2,000 for **Barb Jacks** and **Carrie Schildroth** for **Books - Priceless!** for **Alton Middle School**.
- \$2,000 for **Lexa Browning-Needham** for **Direct Garment Printing** for **Alton High School**.
- \$780 for **Thora Buls** for **Let's All Play Our Drum** for **East Elementary School**.
- \$1,797.92 for **Julia Spencer** and **Amy Mellenthen** for **Get Centered** for **Lewis and Clark Elementary School**.
- \$937.21 for **Leveled Infor Books** for **Chris Jones** for **Eunice Smith Elementary School**.
- \$3,320 for **Cross Curricular Social Science** for **Melissa Crader** and **Amy Smith** for **Alton Middle School**.
- \$1,700 for **Cracking the SAT** for **Dorothy Mosby** for **Alton High School**.

"We had \$42,000 in requests this year, and were able to give just under \$25,000 this year," Bemis said. "That's not a bad number, but we would like that to be higher."

The final total of grants given to the district by Guardians of Education was \$24,717.75 for 2016.

Several students were given awards for good conduct and scholarship at the meeting as well. **Ryan Howard** and **Alphonso Fletcher** of North Elementary School were given the "**Making a Good Choice Award**" after the two discovered a wallet at the playground of their school, which contained a woman's driver's license, credit cards, house key and three \$100 bills she was going to use for holiday shopping.

Howard and Fletcher delivered the wallet to the school office, which tried in vain to contact the woman. Eventually, the **Madison County Sheriff's Office** was able to locate the woman, who rewarded the two boys' honesty with \$25 cash each.

Lalaine Marie James of Alton High School was awarded the "**Exceptional Service Award**" for her service to community member, **Frances Knight**, who took ill. James tended to her needs, went grocery shopping for her and spent several weekend evenings with the woman, while her friends were out having fun. A \$30 Visa gift card came with that award.

January's **Rotary Student of the Month, Olivia Freeman**, a senior at Alton High School. Freeman is class president and also chaired the homecoming and prom committees. She said she is going onto **St. Louis University** to study business administration and hopes to attain a law degree.

Two Optimist Students of the Month were also chosen. **Middle School Optimist Student of the Month Shannon Malone** donated a gift card to 5A's animal shelter. **Elementary School Optimist Student of the Month Haylea Greenberg** donated her gift card to **St. Jude's** for the purpose of childhood cancer research.

After awards were distributed, most of the crowd assembled dispersed and the Alton Board of Education took care of several items, including accepting the resignation of **Dr. Russel Teppen** from his position as Principal of Alton High School to an assistant principal of Alton Middle School. According to the motion, Teppen resigned his position for "personal reasons."

The district also nominated **Alton School District Financial Director Christopher Norman** to create a tentative budget for the upcoming school year. Norman was also unanimously approved to be the district's ambassador to the **Mississippi Valley Intergovernmental Cooperative Board of Directors**.

Norman then addressed the board regarding accepting bids for tax anticipation warrants against the 2016 tax levy. Norman told the board the state currently owes the district as much as \$4 million. Payments from general state aid are currently being delivered to the district without proration, but categorical payments are becoming more than six months late. Those payments reimburse the district for transportation, early childhood education and special education. The board unanimously approved the motion to accept bids.

The board also unanimously approved the district receiving a purchasing card for rebates as well as the beginning stages of health/life/safety funds to do needed renovations at **Mark Twain Elementary School**.

The meeting concluded with a closed session for the board to discuss the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body. No action was taken.

A motion to issue \$5.5 million in school fire prevention and safety bonds for the district.