

Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation will receive \$95,000 grant

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GODFREY – The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation (MJCHF) will receive a \$95,000 grant from the National Recreation Foundation to fund water recreation through the Swarovski Waterschool USA: Mississippi River and urban gardening efforts through the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville STEM Center in 2019.

“We are appreciative of the confidence expressed in the MJCHF by the National Recreation Foundation and Board Member Elsie McCabe Thompson in support of our primary mission of humanities-inspired leadership,” said MJCHF President Mannie Jackson. “Both the Lewis and Clark Swarovski Waterschool and the SIUE STEM Center emphasize humanities-inspired leadership development through recreation and team building collaboration.”

“It is wonderful for the NRF to recognize the work of the MJCHF in enhancing the role of recreation as a tool in developing humanities-inspired leaders among typically underserved young people,” McCabe Thompson said.

One focus of the NRF grant is on water recreation efforts through the Swarovski Waterschool, headquartered at Lewis and Clark Community College’s National Great Rivers Research and Education Center.

“This funding enables us to use recreational activities, such as paddling the Mississippi River, to provide our Swarovski Waterschool students a real and tangible connection to the aquatic resources in their communities,” said Natalie Marioni, Director of Environmental Education at L&C NGRREC. “Our goal is to pair these on-the-water experiences with watershed education and community engagement activities to foster a stewardship ethic in students, ultimately leading to young community members who value and will make decisions to benefit our aquatic resources for everyone.”

The program targets primarily fifth and sixth grade students in L&C’s District, and reached more than 70 students in its first year in 2017.

“It is great to see the MJCH® Foundation facilitate collaboration between two of our great regional institutions of higher education—SIUE and Lewis and Clark—for the purpose of humanities associated recreation and STEM activities,” said L&C President and MJCHF Board Member Dale Chapman. “This program has great potential and will serve as a national model for others to emulate.”

Another focus of the grant is on the development and operation of an outdoor urban gardening program, which will target fourth through sixth graders in Alton, Collinsville, Madison and Venice.

The project will be run through the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities’ Alma Aitch STEM Center, in conjunction with the SIUE STEM Center, which has run an urban gardening project for the past two years. Last year, the center’s efforts reached around 60 students.

“We’re so excited to receive these funds to advance educational and recreational opportunities for youth in the region,” said Dr. Sharon Locke, Director of the SIUE STEM Center. “This grant enables us to partner with the Swarovski Waterschool to enhance activities for all students for this year. For example, students will observe pollinators in gardens compared to native prairies, walk through forests to explore different soils, and build a rain garden to benefit water quality where they live.”

Both projects will aim to expand their reach through the grant.

For more information on this grant and related projects, contact Marioni at (618) 468-2783 or nmarioni@lc.edu.

To learn more about the MJCHF, visit www.mjchf.org. To learn about the Swarovski Waterschool USA: Mississippi River, visit www.ngrrrec.org/swarovski_waterschool.