



Greetings, Texas Retired Teachers Foundation Liaisons, Representatives and Friends!

Welcome to the May 2010 issue of *The Ledger*.

Read inside about Texas teachers who have created unique projects that encourage their students to learn math and reading!

Learn more about how to receive help from the Foundation's newest charitable program, "A Helping Hand."



TRTF appreciates your feedback. Please let us know if the newsletter is helpful to you as a representative of the foundation. Send feedback to info@trtf.org

In This Issue . . .

"A Helping Hand" Continues to Grow	Page 2
TRTF Talking Points 2010	Page 2
Austin Can! Academy Teachers Receive Grant.	Page 3
San Antonio Teacher Honored	Page 4
Memorial Day Facts & Trivia	Page 4

Quick Announcement!

TRTF elected officers during its Annual Meeting on April 13. Tom Pritchard will continue to serve as your Board President. Dr. William "Corky" Pence was elected Vice-President. La Vonne Rogers will now serve as board Secretary/Treasurer. Our next meeting will be held July 6 at 1:00 pm at the Austin Airport Hilton.



The TRTF Ledger

May 14, 2010

The latest news and updates from the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation!

Page 2



“A Helping Hand” Continues to Grow

As you may have read in the April issue of *The Ledger*, the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation successfully launched its newest charitable program “A Helping Hand” in four districts this year (8, 12, 18, and 20). “A Helping Hand” provides aid to public education retirees in critical need.

TRTF awarded its first grant from the program to Helen Jo Crump, a lovely woman who needed to replace the worn tires on her 1990 vehicle.

TRTF is pleased to announce that it has awarded its second grant from “A Helping Hand.” \$500 was given to a retiree in need of emergency dental care in District 17. Although the details of this grant are confidential, the recipient is thankful for the assistance.

As the program continues to grow, adjustments to the application process are being made. TRTF plans to launch “A Helping Hand” statewide in the fall of 2010. The current pilot program allows the Foundation to assess the efficiency of the program and make improvements as needed.

If you are a local unit president or foundation representative in districts 8, 12, 17, or 20, you should receive updated materials as they become available. If you have any questions or need training on the program, please contact Cindee Sharp at 512-476-1622 x102.

Thank you to everyone who helps make the program possible! “A Helping Hand” would not succeed without the dedication of time from so many volunteers across the state.

Looking for Talking Points to share with your local TRTA members during local unit meetings?

Please send an email to Cindee Sharp at info@trtf.org or contact her at 1-800-880-1650 x 102 to request a copy.



NOTE: Talking points have been updated as of April 2010.

They are also available in the **Training Guide**. The most updated version of the Training Guide is now available online through www.trtf.org on the Resources page.

Are you in need of assistance? Do you know someone who is?

For additional information on how to apply for a grant through “A Helping Hand,” please contact your Local Unit Foundation Representative or President.

You may also send an email to help@trtf.org or call 1-800-880-1650 and ask for Cindee.



Austin Can! Academy Teachers Receive Grant

Recently, TRTF awarded ten \$500 grants to public school teachers in Texas for innovative classroom programs. Board member La Vonne Rogers and Foundation Specialist Cindee Sharp were able to deliver one such grant to two teachers at Austin Can! Academy High School earlier this month.

Mansoor Kapasi and Sam Wolloch teach algebra and geometry courses at Austin Can! Academy in Austin, Texas. Both teachers use three-dimensional origami projects to engage students in hands-on learning about complex topics such as properties of angles, perimeter, and volume.



L to r: Mansoor Kapasi, Sam Wolloch, Cindee Sharp, La Vonne Rogers, Dr. Joe E. Gonzales.



Origami projects created by students.

Not only do the creations enhance understanding of figures such as cubes, double-pyramids, and octahedrons, they are also artistic. The beautiful projects created by students are on display, covering their teachers' classrooms with vibrant hues and filling the room with inspiration.

Austin Can! Academy is a unique school designed to assist students who have struggled with school in the past and lead them to graduation. School principal Dr. Joe E. Gonzales is passionate about sharing the accomplishments of his students and providing them with various avenues to meet success, such as night-time courses.

90% of the school's students have dropped out of school at least once, with the average number of times being four per student. Many arrive at the school with a reading level of third grade or lower. Most work full-time jobs. Many have children. 85% qualify for a free or reduced lunch.

As Mansoor and Sam say, the students inspire the staff because "despite their circumstances and against all odds, they come to school every day making an effort to obtain their high school diploma."

TRTF is proud to present a grant for \$500 to Mansoor and Sam. The funds will purchase 23,000 sheets of origami paper, allowing every math student an opportunity to be participate in this unique learning project and explore his or her creativity.

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Mansoor and Sam in the classroom.





The TRTF Ledger

May 14, 2010

The latest news and updates from the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation!

Page 4

San Antonio Teacher Honored

TRTF also had an opportunity this month to visit Josephine Rodriguez, an English and Language Arts teacher at Lamar Elementary School in San Antonio. She received a \$500 classroom assistance grant from the Foundation.

The students at Lamar Elementary are lively and curious, though many (95%) are economically disadvantaged. 32% have limited English proficiency. Ms. Rodriguez’s project, “Hands on Phonics,” aims to improve the reading skills of her first grade pupils.

As Josephine says, this program will enable students to “manipulate letters and sounds,” ultimately improving their vocabulary and increasing their confidence. Instilling a love for reading in her students, she feels, will create a lifelong appreciation for learning.

Trustee member Barbara Soto presented a certificate to Ms. Rodriguez and her class on May 12.



Teacher Josephine Rodriguez and Barbara Soto

Fun Memorial Day Trivia!

Red Poppies are the official flowers of Memorial Day. In 1915, inspired by the poem “In Flanders Fields,” Moina Michael replied with her own poem.

*“We cherish too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.”*

She then came up with an idea of wearing red poppies on Memorial day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873.

The Indianapolis 500 has been held on Memorial Day weekend since 1911.

Flags are flown a half-staff until noon on Memorial Day, then raised to the top of the staff.

Americans consume an estimated seven billion hot dogs between Memorial Day and Labor Day!



First grade students at Lamar Elementary School in San Antonio pose with their teacher.

Have you visited the TRTF website lately?

Go to www.trtf.org for updates, including pictures from the 57th Annual TRTA Convention and detailed information about our 2010 scholarship and grant winners! You can also download older issues of *The Ledger* from the Resources page!