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**Salem Education Foundation Announces 37 Awards to Support Classroom Innovation**

Today the Salem Education Foundation will hold an awards ceremony at Salem High School to honor 37 public school teachers and award over \$30K in grants to support new student learning opportunities.

Winners this year represent 10 public schools in Salem, including Salem Academy Charter School, and a wide variety of educational areas including history, archaeology, literature, marine biology, science, physical fitness and art. Each year SEF reviews proposals from teachers through a rigorous, blind process. This year the Foundation reviewed 59 proposals; 74% will receive funding.

Among those selected for funding are:

- *Thinking Locally*, a collaborative project between teachers at Salem High School (SHS) and Carlton Elementary School (CES), led by SHS teacher Jesse Stanisfield and CES teacher Kristin Rodgers. This project will bring 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students together with high school photography and graphic arts students as they work together to design, create and tend to a school-based garden. Elementary school students will grow vegetables and flowers and try their hand at business by selling the crops at a school-based “farmer’s market”. High school students will document the development of the project and create posters and other materials to describe and market the initiative. Upper level culinary arts students will use the crops from the market to cook a menu of locally grown projects, serving the meal as the culminating activity for the project.
- *Freshman Field Scientists! Monitoring Marine Invasive Species in Salem*, a project developed by Salem High School teacher Kristen Augulewicz. In this hand-on project, Salem High students will receive training in the field of marine biology and become certified SEANET volunteers to monitor and collect data about marine species and biological invaders in a marine area in Salem. Students will collect scientific data as part of their ongoing conservation research, which will be shared with the Tufts University Center for Conservation Medicine.
- *Enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dimension* is a project developed by Collins Middle School art teacher Spiradoula Politis. In this intriguing art experiential learning project, students in grades six through eight will have the opportunity to experiment with wire, fabric, wood and plaster as they learn additive, subtractive, and adhesive techniques, and work with armatures to create sculptures of substance. 8<sup>th</sup> graders will explore the process of creating installation pieces that will be displayed in various areas around Collins at the completion of this initiative.

The SEF was founded in 1986 and has since provided over \$480K in funds to support local public schools. These awards have been made possible by the generosity of Salem residents and businesses that have supported public education in Salem through various SEF fundraising initiatives.

"The grants that SEF provides for classroom innovation represent a true local investment in public education by those of us who live and own businesses in Salem. We all know that the district today is faced with tight budgets, new state mandates and students whose needs outweigh what schools can provide. By supporting SEF our community can help the school district better meet the needs of our teachers and students, and that's good for everyone," commented Mike Harrington, owner of the Hawthorne Hotel and SEF supporter.

In fact, in addition to the four named awards honoring individuals who positively impacted education in Salem, SEF now awards five partnership grants named for SEF supported for educational initiatives specific to: environmental sciences (Dominion Salem Harbor Station), health and fitness (Salem Academy Charter School "Reach the Beach"), history or literature (Hawthorne Hotel Award), exploring local history and national parks (National Park Service), and arts expansion (Peabody Essex Museum).

SEF has embarked on a period of expanded direction. With the recent appointment of Janine Matho as executive director of SEF, the Foundation will actively partner with the Salem Public Schools, the Salem Academy Charter School, and other community agencies to develop and fund new district-wide initiatives that will improve student achievement, promote effective teaching, and improve systems and structure.