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May 13, 2010

Dear Illinois Retired Teacher's Association Foundation,

I am writing to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for having been awarding two of your grants last fall. The grant money that you have provided has made a positive impact on my students and my classroom.

The grant money provided for Reader's Workshop in my classroom allowed me to purchase hands-on and interactive literacy games and activities that led to high student engagement and enjoyment. I was also able to purchase a variety of high interest fiction and nonfiction books at a variety of reading levels. Students were excited about the new books and encouraged to have books available that were at their reading levels. Headphones were also purchased for use at the listening workstation to replace older headphones that were no longer usable. Finally, this grant provided funds to purchase several bean bag chairs and a floor lamp to go in the classroom library which made the classroom library more welcoming and inviting for students. This grant helped to create an engaging classroom environment where students were given choices about their learning and allowed to work at their own levels. Through Reader's Workshop students are able to participate in cooperative learning, get their needs met by being instructed at their own levels, and develop a love of reading and writing that will foster life-longer learners. This grant also correlated to numerous state, district and school goals regarding literacy.

The grant money provided for a large nutrition and health unit was also very beneficial to my classroom. I used the funds to purchase nonfiction text about the human body, nutrition, exercise, and being healthy. As my class read each book we created a PowerPoint presentation to share what we had learned. I am enclosing a copy of this presentation so that you can see just how much they learned! Grant money was also used to purchase a bulletin board that included photographs of food from all of the food groups. We used these photographs in hands-on and interactive ways by having groups of students sort the foods according to food groups and had students use the photographs to create healthy meals. Many students had never tasted a variety of fruits and vegetables, so money was used to purchase fruits and vegetables for taste testing; we later graphed our favorites and incorporated a math lesson with the taste testing. Students worked in cooperative groups to use grocery ads to create posters representing each food group and examples

of healthy meals. Finally, a portion of the grant money was used to take the class on a field trip to the Hult Health Education Center in Peoria where we listened to two presentations about being healthy and taking good care of our bodies. This grant allowed me to do a unit that focused on teaching students to respect their bodies. The unit was interactive and hands-on and the students had fun learning about proper nutrition, exercise, and how their body works. My goal is for my students to live longer, healthier lives and to decrease the shocking number of obese and overweight children in our country. I do feel that my students learned a great deal and have knowledge that they can use to make healthy choices throughout their lives.

Again, I thank you sincerely for the generosity of your two grants. I feel that both provided my students with materials and experiences that have very positively impacted their learning. I appreciate your support of classroom teachers and the students of our community.

Sincerely,

Kathleen W DuBois

Kathleen DuBois
First Grade Teacher
Dirksen Primary School
Pekin, IL.

Enclosures:

- 1- Student thank you
- 2- IRTAF grant forms
- 3- Summary of spending
- 4- Photographs from classroom
- 5- Health unit Powerpoint presentation
- 6- All receipts