

NEF GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Project Title: Hillside Reads: Massachusetts Children's Book Award

Amount of funding requested from NEF: \$1600

Applicant name(s) and association with school(s):

Elizabeth Vaccaro, Hillside School Media Specialist

Liz Hitron, Media Specialist at Newman and Hillside

School based partner (if applicant is not a Needham Public School employee):

n/a

School(s)/groups targeted for grant:

Hillside third, fourth and fifth graders.

Approx. # of students impacted: 200

Project Leader(s): Elizabeth Vaccaro

Grant Manager/Contact person: Elizabeth Vaccaro

Email Address: Elizabeth_Vaccaro@needham.k12.ma.us

Secretary/Bookkeeper with access to Town's financial system (usually one of the school secretaries or Department secretaries.)

Margie Mearls, Elementary Media Secretary

Abstract of Grant:

The grant would allow Hillside students to participate in the Massachusetts State Children's Book Awards, a program sponsored by Salem State College.

(<http://www.salemstate.edu/education/mcba>). Fourth and fifth grade students who read at least five of the twenty-four pre selected books are entitled to join students across the state to vote for their favorites.

This year there are two media specialists at Hillside, Liz Hitron, who teaches the fifth grade and two fourth grades this year, has had experience with the Mass. Children's Book Award at a previous school. Elizabeth Vaccaro, who teaches one fourth grade and the other grade levels, wants to continue to play an active role in developing reading interests of the fourth and fifth graders she taught last year. This grant would support Hillside's educational goal #1 in the school improvement plan, to increase the number of children scoring in the proficient and advanced levels of the ELA portions of the MCAS. Two of the strategies involve the media center, improving the fiction collection and increasing the circulation. Participating in the Book Award program would support both these initiatives.

To discuss the books, Elizabeth Vaccaro would plan biweekly discussion groups during lunch and also a discussion bag. Although only fourth and fifth graders would be able to cast an official ballot, the third graders would be able to read and discuss the books and would vote informally within the Hillside community.

Benefits

Many students have trouble choosing good fiction books to read. The goal of reading at least five from an appealing group of books will help the students who do best with clearly defined goals and those who like the social aspect of reading the same book as their peers. This program is designed to get children excited about reading at the age when recreational reading starts to drop off. Needham students have not participated in the Massachusetts Children's Book Award in recent years. Hillside's participation can be a model for the other media specialists to use in future years.

Details of Proposed Project

The educational goal is to improve students' reading. This grant would support Hillside's educational goal #1 in the school improvement plan, to increase the number of children scoring in the proficient and advanced levels of the ELA portions of the MCAS. Two of the strategies involve the media center - improving the fiction collection, and increasing the circulation. Participating in the Book Award program would support both these initiatives.

The media specialists will be in charge of the program. We will dedicate a shelf of books in the display area to the contest books, and we will announce the program to all students and staff in the newsletter, on the media center website, and in media classes. Teachers could choose to read aloud one of the books to their classes to help students reach the goal of at least five books by March.

Students will have their names on index cards near the shelf of books. Each time they read a book they will record the title on their card and a brief note rating the book. Media specialists will check for honesty and understanding in informal conversations.

Biweekly, students will have a chance to talk about one or two titles during a lunch group discussion. These discussions will be light, informal, and fun. They will be led by Elizabeth Vaccaro and will be scheduled to allow each grade level to have a chance to talk about books at least once a month, at least three schedules for each grade. The students will gather their opinions to be entered on the Hillside Reading blog.

In addition, students can comment on any book on the blog. (All blog entries will be reviewed by a media specialist before they are posted. Students may not use last names.)

Proposed Schedule

Schools must be registered by December 30th to participate in the Massachusetts Student Book Award. The ballots must be postmarked by March 7, 2008. We would launch the program as soon as we had the books available, within two weeks of funding.

Specific Methods of Evaluation

The purpose of the program is to get students excited about reading and evaluating books. The biggest measure of success will be the number of children who read at least five books and are able to vote and the number of students who participate in the blog and in the discussion groups.

One goal of the project is to increase circulation in the Hillside media center. I would include in the report the circulation records of this year compared to the records of previous years during November through February.

Budget

Project Title: Hillside Reads

Total Project Budget: \$1600

Total NEF Funds Requested: \$1600

<u>Expense Category</u>	<u>Detailed description of Expense</u> (use separate sheet if necessary)	<u>Amount(s) Requested from NEF</u>	<u>Amount(s) Requested from Other Sources</u>	<u>Total Project Funding</u>
<u>Stipends</u>				
<u>Materials</u>		\$1600		
<u>Equipment</u>				
<u>Fees</u>				
<u>Other (Specify)</u>				
<u>Total</u>				\$1600

Detailed Materials List
(use additional sheets as necessary)

Peter and the Starcatchers	10	7.99	79.90
Shark Life: True Stories about the Shark and the Sea	10	6.99	69.90
The Penderwicks	10	6.50	65.00
The World According to Humphrey	10	5.99	59.90
The Last Holiday Concert	10	5.99	59.90
Sing a Song of Tuna Fish	10	5.99	59.90
The Legend of Spud Murphy	10	4.99	49.90
The Big House	10	6.99	69.90
Lionboy	10	7.99	79.90
The People of Sparks	10	5.99	59.90
Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery	10	6.99	69.90
A Writing Kind of Day	10	9.95	99.50
Eager	10	6.50	65.00
Ghosthunters and the Totally Moldy Baroness!	10	4.99	49.90
The Liberation of Gabriel King	10	6.99	69.90
Princess Academy	10	7.95	79.50
Ida B. . . and her Plans to Maximize Fun	10	5.99	59.90
Leon and the Champion Chip	10	6.99	69.90
Worth	10	5.99	59.90
A Dog's Life	10	5.99	59.90
Stink and the INcredible Super-galactic Jawbreaker	10	4.99	49.90
Project Mulberry	10	6.50	65.00
The Lightning Thief	10	7.99	79.90
Listening for Lions	10	5.99	59.90
Total	240		