The Time Has Come  
IFT Grant Application Period is Open  
All CTA Members are Eligible for 2019-2020 IFT Grants

It’s grant application time and all CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to $5,000) or an Impact grant (up to $20,000) for the 2019-2020 school year. The application deadline is March 31st.

This is a competitive grant program and grant applications are evaluated by the IFT Grant Selection Committee, made up of five educators from around the state and an IFT staff consultant. These educators represent various grade levels and are experienced in the strength-based approach.

A link to the on-line grant application is available under the Grant tab on the IFT website (www.teacherdrivenchange.org). The selection committee will meet in May and will use the seven-factor IFT Strength-based Matrix (pictured right) as the lens to evaluate the grant proposals. Their grant recommendations will be presented to the IFT Board of Directors in June for formal approval. All grant checks will be mailed in late July/early August for use in the upcoming school year. The local Association serves as the fiscal agent on behalf of the grant recipient. This increases accountability and insures that the individual member incurs no tax liability.

In the IFT, we consider it to be our union’s responsibility to invest in our profession. In the first nine years of this program, IFT received over 800 grant applications. The 312 funded grants represent an acceptance rate of almost 40%. We are proud that the IFT grant program has awarded over $3.5 million in grants to CTA members in the nine years since the program began.

North Orange County Think Tank Embraces Early Educator Support in Region 4

Members of the Fullerton-based Teacher Think Tank have offered new teachers (in years 1-5) an opportunity to receive support as they navigate their way through the early years of their teaching career.

The North Orange County Teacher Think Tank created a cohort of nearly 50 Early Career Educators to participate in a year-long journey in an effort to engage and support our newest union colleagues. As experienced educators, these Think Tank members understand the importance of providing encouragement and support to our early career educators.

The group met together in December at the CTA New Educator Weekend in San Diego as part of a series of get-togethers in the 2018-19 school year. The group’s goals are to provide networks for success, as well as experiences that will expose the group to a Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change approach to education and learning.

NOCTT Members (from left), Karin Barone, Al Rabanera, Robert Bassett, Michelle Ramos and Jenny Hitchcock.
CTA Members are Sharing Their Passions with Their Students
These educators are using grant funds from fellow members this year to provide strength-based education

The Power of Chess- by Claude Clermont,
United Educators San Francisco
The Fall Chess Tournament was well underway when we realized a palpable difference. Calm. Oh sure, the intense competition, some sharp elbows and hurt feelings after a loss were clearly evident. But there was a fair degree of civility and cooperation in the air. It was actually pleasant - a welcome respite from the corrosive hostility that permeates competitive matches.

There were plenty of surprises though, and exhilarating matches with intense and creative mental excursions. Well, to put it in context, we’re about five thousand miles away from the 2018 World Chess Championship and a long way to Fabiano Caruana (A chess prodigy, he became a grandmaster at the age of 14 years, 11 months and 20 days—the youngest grandmaster in the history of both Italy and the United States at the time.) But, it’s a first step. We’re encouraged, and we are thankful.

Welcome to NCLUSD Musical Theatre-
by Hardy Reeves, Newman-Crows Landing TA
Our group hit the floor running this year. Pictured are our student leaders that range from fourth grade to twelfth grade. We are not looking at just creating an older group of leaders, but a group that is going to grow with our program and help train future leaders as well.

This year, we have been able to create Tuesday night tap. The directors picked students that had demonstrated potential leadership skills over the past few seasons, to become our “Newsies Tappers”.

For ten weeks, these students gave up their Tuesday nights from 6:00 to 11:00 pm to learn how to tap, but also to go over some of the soft skills needed to be a leader. How to listen, how to speak with students they were having difficulty with, and other essential skills that are needed to move the student leadership piece of our program forward.

The students started taking on these leadership roles. This allowed us to have new conversations and start teaching the leaders how to navigate conversations and not come across as bossy or confrontational in their speech, but how to actually lead the other students on stage to get the desired outcomes.

What has occurred, though, is a new building of relationships in the area. The leaders have started asking for activities that they create for the group. They are not afraid to go to a group of students in the room and interact with them, rather than staying with their groups. If they see a student sitting by themselves, we know that one of the leaders will be there shortly, checking in on them and trying to get them to laugh.

Our unspoken goal has always been to create a theatre family and we are starting to see that grow larger than it has ever in the past. Having this extra time, that is not rushed or having to be carved out has truly enhanced our program.

The CTA Institute for Teaching (IFT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
IFT supports strength-based teacher driven change in school communities across California.
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