Hopes Blossom at the Teacher Innovation Expo

This Annual Showcase of Outstanding IFT Grant Recipients is in its Fifth Year

On March 22, 2019, ten of California’s most creative and resourceful educators will gather with interested fellow CTA members in Garden Grove for a day focusing on possibilities.

The strength-based, student centered work accomplished by these ten IFT grant recipients will undoubtedly inspire Expo participants to consider their own educational dreams.

Each presenter will describe the inspiration for their project, the educational journey they were able to take with their students and the overall impact of the grant.

Expo participants will discover how strength-based principles, coupled with resources from CTA members’ voluntary dues contributions, can yield dynamic new opportunities for learning and student engagement.

The Teacher Innovation Expo personifies the IFT’s belief in the power of “strength-based teacher driven change.”

Students from Temecula Valley High School’s BioSustainability Club pose with some of the produce grown in their Aquaponics Greenhouse. They and other students helped construct and continue to actively maintain the greenhouse under the watchful eye of their science teacher, Toby Brannon. Toby will be one of the grant recipients featured at the 2019 Expo.

Also appearing will be the Lake Elsinore Middle School’s award-winning orchestra. Under the direction of band director and grant recipient Jeannine Dinger, these students epitomize the student-centered nature of the IFT grant projects.

In addition, the CTA Institute for Teaching would like to acknowledge and thank our 2019 Expo presenters: Stephanie Atwell & Daniel Reed (Fremont); Tara Kajtaniak (Fortuna); Rebecca Cihak (Rocklin) and Karen Levy (Pacific Grove); Lori Clock (La Mirada), Ashley Cooper (Thousand Oaks); Monique Flores (Anaheim); Brandy Haynes-Peters (Garden Grove) & Ryan Ruelas (Anaheim).

Deadline Looms for 2019-2020 IFT Grant Applications

We hope you are considering becoming a 2019-20 grant applicant. You will need to submit your on-line application by 11:59 p.m. on March 31st. Hopefully, then, your educational dreams can come true, as they did for more than fifty CTA members this year. IFT offers two types of grants- Educator Grants (up to $5,000) and Impact Grants (up to $20,000). This year, the IFT distributed over $600,000 for strength-based classroom projects and activities in our local school communities.
The Institute for Teaching is proud to be a part of the highly successful CTA New Educator Weekend. Hundreds of CTA members in their first three years of teaching attend these events, north and south, each year.

Teachers experience nearly two full days of professional development, opportunities to network with other new teachers and access to top educators in the state, as many sessions are led by experienced classroom teachers.

Quoting the program organizers, “Your experience at the New Educator Weekend is equal parts educational and transformational. You’ll learn new skills and find solutions to real-life challenges. You’ll leave the conference feeling inspired, motivated and with a knowledge of what you need to do to be even more successful on Monday morning in your classroom.”

Approximately two dozen educators from around the state attended IFT’s Saturday afternoon workshop, “Cultivating Creativity with Strength-Based Learning Environments.”

IFT Program Consultant, Dr. Anita Benitas (above), chats with new teachers about the work of the Institute for Teaching.

Three members of the IFT Board of Directors, Justin McGehee, Eric Enriquez and Michelle Ramos (left), are among the founding members of CTA’S New Educator Weekend planning process, where they bring a truly strength-based perspective.

Three Hanford Teachers are Having a Huge Impact at Jefferson Elementary

The Institute for Teaching staff paid an inspirational visit to Hanford in March to see three separate grant projects unfolding there for the students of Jefferson Charter Elementary, a STEM Dual immersion School. Teachers there have integrated the NGSS standards throughout all the grade levels.

Science teacher Juan Padilla (center) enhanced his sixth-grade program by purchasing well-equipped portable labs that are user-friendly, inspirational and will enable students to work through the design process.

Josefa Bustos Pelayo (top right) invested her grant funds in literature and started an upper grades “Sí se Puede!” multicultural Book Club that promotes positive values through reading, thinking, discussing, presenting and, finally, activism.

Science Olympiad students benefited from a hands-on program re-design by grant recipient Deborah Arnold (below right). Her project provides science materials for students to better prepare them for competitions, as well as to impact and inspire the school’s younger students.