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## Educational Mini Grant Awards Announced by the Door County Community Foundation

January 14, 2026 – Sturgeon Bay, WI

The Door County Community Foundation is excited to announce that the Educational Mini Grant program has awarded 11 grants totaling \$6,498 to schools throughout Door County for the 2025-2026 school year.

The Educational Mini Grants provided by the Max and Gayle Laird Educational Fund, a component Fund of the Door County Community Foundation, assist school personnel seeking ways to improve and enhance the educational experience of Door County students. Projects are intended to engage students in activities that are innovative, creative, supplemental to the regular school curriculum, and that are not currently funded through school budgets.

The four Door County school districts receiving grants for the current school year include Gibraltar, Sevastopol, Southern Door, Sturgeon Bay, as well as St. Peter's Lutheran School. Awards were given to support the following projects:

- Door County school librarians will host author Bethany Barton for one-day visits at each district, inspiring literacy and STEM learning through presentations, classroom visits, and book signings.
- Students in grades 3–5 will join an after-school running club at Peninsula State Park to promote fitness, teamwork, and goal setting, tracking progress with the Run Club App.
- Fifteen special education students and five staff will attend an overnight Trees For Tomorrow program to explore nature, do hands-on science, and build teamwork and independence.
- A digital microscope will allow K–8 students to view specimens on a large screen, benefiting about 90 students across multiple classrooms.
- Classroom sets of novels for sixth graders will promote literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and equity, ensuring all students can participate in shared reading and discussions.
- Students in a video game design class will use handheld emulators to explore gaming history, collaborate on projects, and play classic games from the 1950s–1990s.
- High-quality microphones will support English and journalism students in creating podcasts, interviews, and broadcasts, strengthening communication, research, and multimedia storytelling skills across multiple courses.





- New “hook books” series will update third-grade classroom libraries, helping all students find engaging, level-appropriate reads.
- Students will be provided with essential hygiene items to ensure they have access to the basic supplies they need.
- Middle school students will use new art supplies in an after-school Art Club.
- 4K students will explore STEM concepts through new light table and hands-on materials that support curiosity, problem-solving, creativity, and collaborative learning through play.

Max and Gayle Laird, both former educators, generously established the Max and Gayle Laird Educational Fund to support school programming throughout Door County. In perpetuity, the Laird family will help fund creative and collaborative programming provided by teachers, lunchroom staff, educational aids, club leaders, and other school personnel to enhance educational opportunities for area students.

To learn more about applying for an Educational Mini Grant or establishing a Fund at the Door County Community Foundation, please contact the Philanthropic Services Team at (920) 746-1786 or [donorservices@givedoorcounty.org](mailto:donorservices@givedoorcounty.org).

The Door County Community Foundation, Inc. is a collection of separate charitable funds set up by individuals, families, non-profit organizations, private foundations and businesses that are managed, invested and disbursed for the current and future good of Door County. The Community Foundation was launched in 1999, currently administers more than \$65 million in assets, and distributes more than \$7 million to charities every year.

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