



Issue Twenty Four
August 2015

The Schools Fund Blog: More to Explore

The [Schools Fund Blog](#) has now been up and running for a month, and we've posted several articles. Check it out! Below are some of the stories you can find on the blog:



—[Teachers Reflect on 2014-2015](#)

[Classroom Grants](#): Berkeley teachers recount their Classroom Grant projects from 2014-15 school year.

—[Growing Connections Through the Berkeley Half Marathon](#): How fundraising from the Berkeley Half helped fund Growing Leaders at Willard.

—[The Power of Words: Our Experiences with LitPals](#): Schools Fund staff talk about volunteering with LitPals for the past two years.

—[Berkeley Teachers Let Them Play](#): Discussing play-based curriculum and how Berkeley preschool teachers have implemented these techniques in their classrooms.

Have an idea for a blog post? [Contact us](#) with suggestions any time. We hope you enjoy the new blog!

Recognizing Our Community Partners



One of our goals at the Schools Fund is to connect the incredible cultural and intellectual resources in our community to our schools. We've been making these connections for years with organizations like the Berkeley Symphony and Community Resources for Science. We're now highlighting our support for these community organizations and the programs they offer our students as "Community Partner" grants. These are typically ongoing grants we provide to local organizations every year for programs in our schools. The following organizations are receiving 2015-2016 Community Partner Grants:

—**Berkeley Symphony: Music in the Schools.** Music education is one of the hallmarks of a Berkeley public school education. For 22 years, the Berkeley Symphony's Music in the Schools program has enriched elementary schools with in-class lessons and school concerts that give students the opportunity to perform alongside symphony musicians. Starting last year, they've expanded into offering coaches to support music classes in middle schools. 2015-16 Community Partner Grant: \$20,000

—**Berkeley Repertory Theatre: Story Builders.** This year is the sixth year that we have worked with Berkeley Rep to bring this program that combines literacy and theatre into a 6-hour workshop spread over 3 weeks for elementary students. This year, for the first time, we are funding this program for every 3rd grade in the District. 2015-16 Community Partner Grant: \$16,340

—**Community Alliance for Learning: Writers Coach Connection.** The Schools Fund supports this program in our three middle schools. It brings trained coaches to work one-on-one with students on their writing assignments. Writers Coach Connection has a proven track record of strengthening students writing, reading and analytical skills with over 15

years in Berkeley schools. 2015-16 Community Partner Grant: \$10,000.

—**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL): BLAZES.** Did you know that scientists at LBNL are credited with confirming the Big Bang, explaining photosynthesis, and discovering why the dinosaurs went extinct? The Berkeley Lab Adventure Zone in Elementary Science (BLAZES) is a free program available to all 5th grade classes in the District. The Schools Fund pays for transportation to get the students to this amazing scientific research center in our own backyard. 2015-16 Community Partner Grant: \$7,140

—**Community Resources for Science: Supporting Science Teaching.** Founded by parents at Jefferson School in 1997 to increase teachers' skills in teaching science and to give students hands-on opportunities for science learning, CRS makes curricular resources and professional development available to all K-5 teachers in Berkeley to support their science teaching. CRS also brings scientist volunteers into classrooms. With the upcoming transition to the Next Generation Science Standards, the support provided by CRS is more important than ever! 2015-16 Community Partner Grant: \$7,050

2015-2016 Classroom Grant Application Deadline

Teachers: it's almost time to submit your applications for Classroom Grants! The application period will begin on September 2, and all applications must be submitted by 5pm on September 28. Please visit our [website](#) for further information—and check back there on August 30th for a link to the application.



Please note: we are using a new platform for Classroom Grants this year so all applicants will need to create a profile when applying.

Teacher Mini-Grant Available: Energy Saving Education



The City of Berkeley is providing 2-3 small grants of \$2,000–\$3,000 to K-12 BUSD teachers to help educate students on how to save energy. These grants are being provided as part of the City of Berkeley's participation in the [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#), which is a national contest designed to see which town can reduce its energy the most and engage its community in increasing energy efficiency over two years. The winning city will receive \$5 million. Funding for the teacher grants is provided by

PG&E.

Applications for an Energy Saving Education Grant will go through the Schools Fund [Classroom Grant](#) process, which is open from September 2 to September 28. Please reference specific questions from the [Energy Savings Grant RFP](#) in your application.

Changes in Berkeley Schools Volunteers (BSV)

This month we said farewell to Jill Coffey as she embarks on her next adventure (we'll miss you, Jill!), and we welcome Ariana Cohen as the Director of Berkeley Schools Volunteers. Ariana served as the Program Assistant for BSV for five years. This year BSV will focus on engaging with more community groups to recruit individuals and local businesses who wish to volunteer in Berkeley classrooms. We are particularly looking for volunteers to tutor elementary students in math and reading.



School starts soon, so now is the time to make room in your schedule to volunteer and make a difference in our schools! Learn more about volunteering with BSV [here](#) or contact [Ariana](#) directly about opportunities.

Donor Spotlight: Jim McGrath



This month's Donor Spotlight is Jim McGrath, a long-time Schools Fund donor and volunteer. Jim has volunteered in the 5th grade at LeConte Elementary since 2005. Moved by his hopes for the success of his students, in 2008, Jim established the LeConte Neighborhood scholarship

fund. Starting in 2013, every year, two students who attended LeConte and graduate from Berkeley High, are awarded scholarship funds towards college based on financial need and academic performance. Jim sets the standard for how one community member can make a huge difference for our students as a donor and volunteer!

Free Registration for the 2015 Berkeley Half Marathon for Schools Fund Team Runners

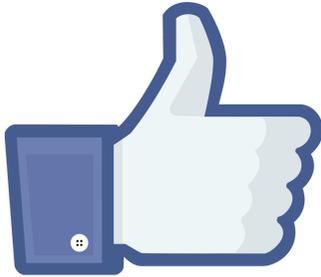
Time to start training for the [Berkeley Half Marathon](#)! The Half Marathon is happening on November 22, and again the Berkeley Public Schools Fund is an official charity. We love this event—it gets better every year! The new course last year was a big hit, and this year there's something for everyone: Half Marathon, Relay, 10k, and 5k (including a youth 5k).



This year we are able to offer FREE REGISTRATION to team members who commit to fundraising \$500 (but you need to jump in early to get free registration). Please click [here](#) to join our team or donate, and we'll get in touch with details. We're using EveryDayHero this year rather than Crowdrise as the fundraising platform, and we will only have one Schools Fund team rather than individual school teams.

Feel free to [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

Stay Up-to-Date this School Year with the Schools Fund!



Have you liked us on [Facebook](#) yet? Start the 2015-2016 school year off right by staying up-to-date with all things related to Berkeley schools! Our page features posts about exciting grant projects, opportunities to support our schools, fun videos and photos, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and articles about trends and developments in education.

Know someone who would enjoy the Schools Fund newsletter? Be sure to forward it to them and encourage them to sign up [here](#).

See You There: Solano Stroll

Solano Stroll will take place on Sunday, September 13 from 9am to 5pm. This huge community event takes over Solano Avenue with hundreds of vendors, live music and games! We'll be there all day so be sure to stop by and say hello!

