

Foundation grants to aid development of 5 projects

By **Ayesha McAdams-Mahmoud**
The Herald

FORT MILL — Before last summer, the 3-year-old Foundation for Fort Mill Schools was a board of directors that administered yearly academic scholarships.

But in June, the board hired Jill Lauber, the foundation's first executive director, and has since started new fundraising efforts and a grant program for district schools to make its activities more public.

"We want the community to know that we support them," Lauber said. "Now we have a face and a name and an office."

This fall, the foundation received 10 applications from teachers for five \$500 grants — one for each of the district's elementary schools, to be awarded the week of Nov. 27. The following winners were announced last week:

■ "The Decades Project" from Michelle Arden of Fort Mill Elementary, in which fifth-grade students create a movie about the arts, events and more in one decade of the 20th century.

■ "Just Right Reading Books" from Carol Claypool of Gold Hill Elementary, which targets equalized literacy levels for first-graders.

■ "Media Literacy Connection" from Nicole Ayers, Susan Bates and Lindsey Campbell of Orchard Park Elementary, in which fourth-graders conduct a media study.

■ "Readers Theater" from Jessy Belue of Riverview Elementary, in which first-graders will script puppet shows to bring books to life.

■ "Video Lessons" from Robbie Sluder of Springfield Elementary, in which students will create digital lessons for other students.

The winners were selected by district officials Chuck Epps, Ann Bogan and Marty McGinn.

Next spring, the foundation will award similar \$500 grants to teachers in each of the district's three middle schools, Fort Mill High School and the district's alternative school, the Fort Mill Academy.

The elementary school grant recipients are excited about the new opportunity.

"It's a really good idea," said Jessy Belue, a first-grade teacher at Riverview Elementary. "It's hard to get everything you need for your class without it."

Belue will use the grant to purchase books that her students will turn into scripts and later create puppets to stage productions throughout the school. Belue said she won't encourage her students to memorize the script, but instead to become better readers.

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