



The Torch

April 2008

Call for Grant Proposals

Application forms for 2008-2009 grants are available online at www.nyackteachercenter.org or from the Policy Board representatives in your building.

It's that time again! Time to begin thinking about that project that you've wanted to do but didn't know how to fund; time to pick up an NTC grant application, write up your idea and submit it to the Teacher Center.

The NTC's grant programs are designed to help you meet your professional goals - developing a unique project that enhances your students' learning, sitting down with colleagues to discuss ways to improve instruction, creating or purchasing materials/equipment that will help you address a learning need, hiring a substitute so you can visit a program you'd like to learn more about - the possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

Curriculum MiniGrant proposals and **Professional Development MiniGrant** proposals are due by *Friday, May 18th*. These grants can be submitted by individuals or groups of teachers, and support projects that cost between \$25 and \$500.

Best Practices MaxiGrant proposals are due at the Center by *Friday, May 30th*. MaxiGrants support projects submitted by teams of three or more staff members, that will cost between \$500 and \$2500.

We strongly recommend applying for grants now. Another call for proposals will be announced in the fall *IF* there is money left. Some years there is enough money for a second round of grants, but often there isn't.

Not sure how to start? Call - 353-7060 - or email us - contactus@nyackteachercenter.org - we'll be happy to help.

Poster Maker & Laminator

We're pleased that so many of you are taking advantage of our wide-carriage printer and laminator and want to make sure that you get your materials back when you need them. Our media assistant who handles your requests only works on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, so we suggest that you follow these guidelines:

If at all possible, submit work **at least** one week before it is needed. We get backlogged sometimes and requests are processed in the order received.

For a poster:

- Let us know the desired length and width in inches, whether or not you want it laminated, and the number of copies you need.
- If possible, send the original by email to Tracey Cummings - tcummings@nyackteachercenter.org. Digital documents/images tend to print more clearly than scanned posters/images.
- Our scanner takes images up to 8 ½" x 11". (Be aware that scanned images tend to become pixilated as they are enlarged.)

Of course, you are always welcome to come to the Center to create and/or laminate materials yourself. Just call ahead to make sure the room is open and available.

Thanks to the support provided by building principals, instructional materials can be created free-of-charge for staff members. Personal materials can also be produced, but there is a fee to cover production costs.

Check Out Our New Website

Have you seen our new website? You can find it at www.nyackteachercenter.org. Parts of it are still "Under Construction", but it should all be active in a few weeks. Meanwhile, you will find grant applications as well as information about courses and resources available for loan.

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An Exciting Program Revisited

We are pleased to once again be sponsoring the very exciting Early Childhood Transitions Program. The program gives our kindergarten teachers an opportunity to come together with the preschool teachers whose students will be entering our district. We believe that providing opportunities for these teachers to share information and reflect together on how children learn and develop, will build a sense of community that can only benefit our children.

More than 50 people attended all or part of the kick-off event last May, which included an invitation from the district to spend the school day in the three elementary buildings, meeting with the principals and visiting the kindergarten classrooms. That afternoon, Helen Davies and Art Brown did a presentation on the robotics program being introduced in the kindergartens this year.

The meeting this past fall included a presentation on brain research by Valley Cottage Principal, Brenda Grier, and the winter meeting featured occupational therapist Tammy Belcher who discussed developmentally appropriate fine motor development. The last meeting of the year will be held on May 29th and Nancy Balban, a member of the Bank Street Graduate School faculty, will explore ways to support children as they transition from home to preschool and from preschool to the "big" school.

A team of early childhood professionals from the district and local preschools plan the programs, and we have already begun to discuss topics for next year. With the support of the district, we are planning several after-school meetings and a full-day conference. If you are interested in joining the planning committee, just come to the next meeting, which will be held at the Teacher Center on Thursday, May 15th at 4:00 PM.

Teachers Wanted

Do you have an idea for a course or workshop? Do you have some "tricks of the trade" to share? The NTC is seeking interested teachers to share their expertise. Call us (353-7060) or email us at contactus@nyackteachercenter.org if you have an idea for a course or a workshop. We can help you develop your ideas into a program proposal.

We are also looking for teachers who would be interested in facilitating a study group. We would like to provide more focused support for our new teachers during their third year in Nyack. We plan to offer them the opportunity to participate in a study group focused on a topic of interest, rather than attending monthly workshops.

Needs Assessment Survey

Are you one of the 132 staff members who filled out the Center's Needs Assessment Survey? If so, **THANK YOU.**

If you haven't yet filled it out, please take 5 minutes to do so before the end of April. We can't provide the programs and services you want unless you tell us about them.

We promised that Tracey Cummings and Joanne DeGregory would provide breakfast one morning for the school having the highest percentage of staff members responding by March 18th. Upper Nyack Elementary earned that treat. Congratulations!

Congratulations, too, to Anna Maria Giuffre, Marissa Guijarro, Erika Olsen and Laura Pakaln who will each be receiving a \$25 Barnes & Noble gift certificate.

There will be one more drawing at the end of April. Fill out the survey and you may be the winner!