



# CUSF

Your Education Foundation Supporting K - 12 Public Schools in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

## A Simple Thank-You Goes a Long Way...

CUSF's new Thank My Teacher program offers community members a meaningful and convenient way to show their appreciation for Champaign and Urbana teachers who have made a difference in their lives. It's a simple idea: we'll send a hand-written thank-you note featuring student artwork to a teacher you appreciate.

Here's how the program works. Visit our website: [www.CUSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.CUSchoolsFoundation.org) and click on the Thank My Teacher logo link. Or, go directly to our CUSF Store at [www.IDEA-Store.org](http://www.IDEA-Store.org). You'll be able to choose greeting cards featuring Champaign-Urbana public school student artwork, along with a sentiment of your choice. Fill out the order form, add it to your cart, pay, and CUSF will send a handwritten note in the card you select to the Unit 116 or Unit 4 teacher you specify. To top it all off, at the end of the year, CUSF will publish an ad in the local newspaper thanking all the teachers to whom we have written throughout the year, their schools and PTSAs! LET'S MAKE THIS LIST LONG!

If you'd rather send a card yourself using our delightful cards, you can select from several blank card package options or packages of 6 limited edition note cards by watercolor artist Judy Ikenberry.

Proceeds from the sale of our cards will be shared between CUSF and the PTSA from the school where the artwork originated. We have been working with the art coordinators in each district to select images for you to enjoy! So not only will you thank your teachers with original art—you'll also be benefiting local PTSAs, your local Schools Foundation and your local schools. We hope to have a collection which represents each of our 23 schools as the year goes on and to add new ones all the time! Collect them all!

So, as you're beginning a new school year, keep CUSF's Thank My Teacher program in mind. It's a great way to thank our teachers for their hard work with our kids and to make a positive impact in our schools by supporting CUSF at the same time.

YOUR



at Work!



Todd Searing, Urbana Middle School, CUSF SPLASH GRANT Winner

shows students realistic situations and background knowledge.”

Mr. Searing says “the graphic novels and DVD stories all will help me create and maintain engagement in the events of the past. Getting students to truly look at real people, real decisions, and real results that make up American history allows an understanding of how studying history does apply to our lives today”. Student Hannah King agrees “I think using the graphic novel books will make learning a whole lot more interesting!” The combined impact of these resources put into the hands and minds of 7th graders is increased engagement. Searing says, “Interested students want to learn and take the pursuit of that learning into their own hands, allowing me to spend more time facilitating their efforts and less time trying to sell history as something that they should someday be interested in.” “I hope all schools will eventually do the stories instead of textbooks - its such a fun way to learn” according to student Bridget Mueller-Brennan.

Urbana Middle School Social Studies teacher Todd Searing recently applied for and was awarded a Splash Grant for his proposal called *Engaging in History*. Mr. Searing teaches 7th grade Social Studies and often has the problem that most Social Studies teachers have of making history engaging and relevant to students.

One solution to this dilemma is the use of historical graphic novels interwoven in the curriculum. Last year, Mr. Searing bought a sampling of graphic novels and put them into the hands of the students to read. These novels allowed him to use role-playing and other active student involvement activities to put the 7th graders “in the shoes” of everyday people during the eras that they study. Graphic novels provide a bridge between a popular media that kids are excited about and a school subject that they are not always excited about. This comment from student Sarah Follmer is typical of how many students feel “the graphic novels make social studies more interesting. Textbooks are dull and not very fun to read.”

With his Splash Grant money he is purchasing 86 copies of graphic novels covering all the major topics in the 7th grade social studies curriculum. He is also purchasing a 2-DVD set showcasing 39 different true stories of

individuals from the Civil War using primary sources. These individual stories will be added to a class activity asking students to make some of the choices faced by Americans their age in the 1860’s and then to write a journal about the consequences of those choices. Student Izzy Fitzpatrick feels that “using graphic novels to teach history

“Graphic novels provide a bridge between a popular media that kids are excited about and a school subject that they are not always excited about.”

1988-2008

20th Anniversary



CHAMPAIGN  
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Go to [www.CUSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.CUSchoolsFoundation.org) to DONATE on-line at our secure Give2Schools website!



*Students perform for a Unit 4 Board Meeting playing traditional world instruments in the Music Without Borders Ensemble project.*

On May 10th of this year students from South Side and Bottenfield Elementary schools put on a concert of World Music at the Spurlock Museum on the University of Illinois campus. Teachers Amber Owens and Karinsa Moline had the idea to implement a **Music Without Borders** ensemble as part of the after school enrichment program at their respective schools. They applied for and received a Master Grant providing \$1,076.00 from the Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation to put the program into action.

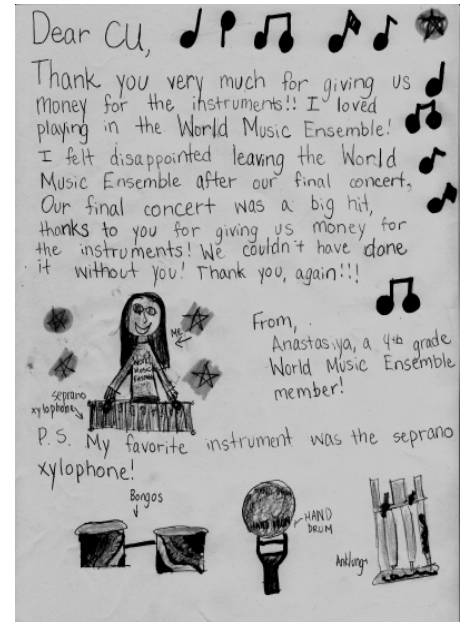
With the money they received from the Master Grant along with additional PTA funds they were able to purchase instruments from around the world and the accompanying music, books and CD's. The students spent many months after school listening to music from cultures around the world and learning how to play their new world music instruments. Some of the instruments included tubano drums, African

talking drums, agogo bells and percussion frog guiros. The ensemble performed at a PTA meeting and a Unit #4 Board of Education meeting before their grand finale concert at the Spurlock Museum Auditorium.

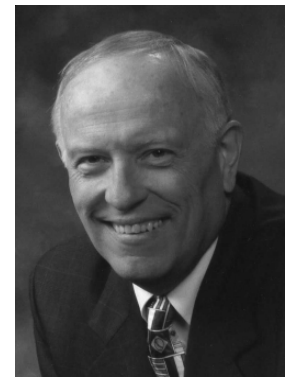
Amber Owens, who is the Music teacher at Bottenfield, said that "through performing the world music, our students were able to immerse themselves in these unique musical cultures, and the students in the ensemble became closer team members and friends over the course of the year. In particular, it was astounding to see the musical growth and teamwork amongst the schools when both South Side and Bottenfield students were able to rehearse and perform together!" Judging by the many sweet thank you notes that the Foundation received from the students it seems that the students truly enjoyed being a part of the Ensemble. Matthew from Bottenfield wrote in his note "Thank you for giving us money so we can buy cool instruments. I like them because they sound cool and you can change the sound".

The Music Without Borders ensemble was such a success that it is continuing this year with funding from the Foundation's new Splash Grant Program. Amber and Karinsa will be able to purchase more instruments and new music for this year. We wish them luck for another great year filled with music!

Thank you for your support!  
We love to have your feedback!  
Please call Gail Rost at  
217-384-4332 or email at  
info@CUSchoolsFoundation.org  
to tell us what you think!  
Want off the mailing list? Con-  
tact us and we will take care of it!



*Anastasiya's thank you note to the Foundation!*



*"Public education is the single most powerful antidote to elitism, and the most powerful bulwark of democracy. Abraham Lincoln recognized this when he equated victory in the Civil War in terms of ensuring the survival of "government of the people, by the people and for the people." CUSF has taken upon itself the task of ensuring that, in the greater Champaign-Urbana-Savoy community at least, public education is equipped to achieve excellence in education for all our children."*

*Phil Van Ness, CUSF 2008-2009 Board Chairman*

## Focus on Alumni: Champaign Central High School

The northwest corner of Central High School at New and University has a brand new look thanks to the hard work of the Central High School Alumni Association. The CHSAA has been working for two years to raise money for the Alumni Garden and the results are truly worth their efforts. The corner now boasts a new high-tech electronic marquee that announces upcoming school events for everyone to see as the drive down University Avenue. A very pleasing curved concrete path with new benches leads from the building's exit to the corner. Master Gardeners from the University of Illinois Extension Program assisted with the planning

and installation of a maroon and white garden to enhance the sign and path. Personalized concrete bricks, a fundraiser for the CHSAA, are embedded in the ground along the sidewalk. The bricks are a wonderful way to honor a recent or long-time graduate of Champaign Central High School. You can purchase a brick online at [www.ChampaignAlumni.com](http://www.ChampaignAlumni.com), Give2Schools.com (CUSF's secure on-line giving site or by mail through the Foundation. The continuing sales of these bricks will help pay for upcoming projects of the Alumni Association. If you live in the area and haven't seen the updated corner yet it is worth driving by for a look. If you come back for a visit, stop by!



Above: Champaign Central Alumni Bricks installed. Right: Central's electronic sign.

Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation  
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### CUSF Mission

To enrich its community, the Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation is committed to encouraging educational initiatives and facilitating excellence in education in the public elementary and secondary schools of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

*Including CUSF in your planned giving is a way to enjoy giving tomorrow, today.*

Have you made plans to support the Foundation in your will? Consider the impact that you can have on future generations of teachers and children by supporting our endowment through a bequest in your will. For more information, call the foundation at 217-384-4332 or contact your financial planner for more information.

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