



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

13,000 Worcester Public Schools Students Receive Gift of Cultural Engagement

Worcester, MA – The George I. Alden Trust and the Stoddard Charitable Trust have granted the gift of cultural engagement to more than 13,000 students in the Worcester Public Schools. The awards totaling more than \$ 150,000 have been made to the Worcester Educational Development Foundation, Inc. (WEDF). The grant funding was initiated in 2012 as part of a five year pledge in honor of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the George I. Alden Trust.

WEDF facilitates and serves as the fiscal agent for the work of local cultural institutions and the school department to develop and implement grade-level experiences that allow students to visit the rich cultural resources of the Worcester area and connect their knowledge to classroom curriculum. The Education Subcommittee of the Worcester Cultural Commission advises and evaluates program development and execution.

This year's program serves grades 1-6 and high school students.

- Grade 1 students are introduced to local history by visiting the Worcester Historical Museum.
- Grade 2 students explore the secret gardens of Tower Hill Botanic Garden and expand their knowledge of science, mathematics and literacy.
- Grade 3 students learn what life was like before modern technology by a journey through Old Sturbridge Village.
- Grade 4 students expand their art and language knowledge at the Worcester Art Museum where they learn to understand sculpture and design.
- Grade 5 students visit historic Mechanics Hall and attend a concert.
- Grade 6 students investigate natural resources at the EcoTarium and Broad Meadow Brook.
- High School students attend a performance of *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts and are able to have a lively exchange of ideas with a cast after the performance.

Funds from the Alden and Stoddard Trusts offset program costs for the institutions and pay for all transportation that is provided at a reduced rate from Durham Bus Company. All of the institutions provide additional in-kind support.

The seeds of this program were sown 25 years ago by the Worcester Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative at the former Alliance for Education. The program morphed into a separate entity, Culture LEAP. Most recently after the dissolution of Culture LEAP, the Education Subcommittee and WEDF have worked collaboratively with the foundations, the schools, and institutions to ensure the continuation of these important opportunities for students.

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