



Forward Together Award

Boosts School Projects

How you can support your brightest staff | *Mel Grau*

This is what can happen when you reward educators' visions with a few thousand dollars:

- Produce a music video with local heroes celebrating literacy.
- Pioneer green energy by installing solar panels at school.
- Transform the long bus ride home into an adventure with new books and new friends.

With the WEA Trust Forward Together Award, hundreds of Wisconsin students experienced what happens when their educators are given an extra boost to make their passion projects a reality.

In 2014, over 150 Wisconsin school projects were nominated for the inaugural Forward Together Award. The Trust partnered with a panel of education experts to select three winners who defined vision,

passion and drive in their school districts.

Driving Literacy Southern Door County School District

"When parents put their four-year-old on the bus for the first time, they are mighty concerned about what they will learn," says Southern Door bus driver Ted Chadoir. "On the bus, I teach courteousness, patience, manners and kindness. It's not part of my job description to teach them literacy, but now it's my passion to help."

Chadoir started his Books for the Bus program by simply placing a cardboard box full of his daughter's old books on his bus. He encouraged children to choose a book when they boarded the bus and sit quietly to read. When he saw how reading

created a calm, safe and productive environment for students — some who rode the bus for nearly an hour to school — he knew he was on to something.

Soon, Chadoir established a mentorship program on his bus, pairing older students with younger students to help them read. He partnered with the district reading specialist to find more books and began expanding the program to other buses in his fleet. He found a local seamstress to make slip covers for bus seats that would hold the books, ensuring student safety.

The Forward Together Award helped make the program expansion possible. Now, all 18 buses in Chadoir's fleet have Books for the Bus, and each bus has slip covers on their seats.

"As a support staff person, you



More than 150 Wisconsin school projects were nominated for the inaugural Forward Together Award.



What's Your Vision?

WEA Trust is currently accepting nominations for the second annual Forward Together Award, a trio of \$3,000 educational grants to support Wisconsin school projects. Educators and administrators who define vision, passion and drive in their school districts are eligible to win.

To enter, go to WeaTrust.com/ForwardTogether.



don't come to the job thinking 'I'm going to be an educator,'" says Chaudoir. "But soon you realize that everything you say, everything you do, really matters."

Reading Music Verona Area School District

As a UW Marching Band flugelhorn veteran and Verona Area School District elementary school teacher, Kyle Walsh loves incorporating music into his classroom. By the time he applied for the Forward Together Award, he had already made two music videos that focused on math and kindness.

Walsh envisioned something bigger — he wanted to invite UW student athletes, band members,

teachers, and people throughout Wisconsin to celebrate literacy in a new music video called "If You Want to be a Reader." Set to the tune "If You Want to be a Badger," this song would teach students that reading is everywhere.

"Children. Literacy. Community. What better way to bring the three together than the Little Free Library Movement?" posited Walsh in his application. In addition to the music video, Walsh would use the Forward Together Award to purchase a Little Free Library for his school.

Today, Walsh's music video has 6,500 views on YouTube and features Bucky Badger, Barry Alvarez, UW athletes and dozens of community members reading and singing with his students. His Little Free Library welcomes families to bring this literacy buzz home — so much that it's now running low on books.

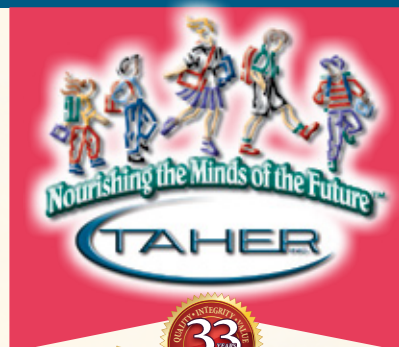
With 33 Years Of Experience, and 250 Public School Clients, Taher Can Professionally Manage Your Program Better Than Ever



*Chef
Inspired
Meals*

*Staff
Development
& Training*

*Optimum
Financial
Results*



*Committed To Serving
Fresh Wholesome Food*

www.taher.com
tel. 952-945-0505
sales@taher.com

tinyurl.com/TaherFacebook
 twitter.com/taherfood4life



Verona Area School District elementary school teacher and Forward Together Award recipient **Kyle Walsh** loves to incorporate music into his classroom.

“Sounds like a problem, to be running out of books. But when you think of why we’re running out, it’s because children and families are taking them and reading them. That’s the whole point!” says Walsh.

Reusable Energy Juda School District

The students should run the show. That’s what Juda High School teacher Scott Anderson passionately believes is essential to effective learning. It was also the basis of his students’ Forward Together Award proposal for a green energy project.

“By giving students a project they own — one that has an immediate impact here and a bigger impact

globally — they can pick up so many skills,” says Anderson.

With the Forward Together Award, Anderson’s students planned to add 12 solar panels to their school, bringing on-site green power generation to 8.75 percent. Students designed the project, from engineering and design to outreach and promotion. Anderson’s students even presented their work at the 2014 State Education Convention.

“Not only do we want to reduce our energy in-house, but we want to show other schools and other communities that this is possible. If we can do it, so can you,” says Anderson. ■

Mel Grau is a marketing communications coordinator for WEA Trust.



Supporting your health plan requires a strong footing

Self-fund with The Alliance® to gain a solution shaped by employers’ needs.

With The Alliance, you’ll always get the support you need to make better decisions about health benefits.

Learn more about how self-funding can help your school district.

**Call Calvin Rigbsy at
800.223.4139 x 6643
or your agent about
The Alliance.**

For a free case study visit:
the-alliance.org/transparency

THE ALLIANCE 