

MAY 12, 2022



READY, SET TO BLOOM! CAMPAIGN PLAN

PLANTING SEEDS OF AWARENESS IN PREPARATION FOR A HARVEST OF INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

PRESENTED BY: MELANIE JOHNSON

Melanie Johnson

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Project Pitch

The project I propose falls under the umbrella of strategic communications. It is a public relations/integrated marketing campaign for the McMinnville Education Foundation, which plays an important part in the education of McMinnville school students—but few people and businesses know that. The goal of the campaign will be to bring awareness to the community about MEF and the mini grants it awards to educators, which cover the cost of enriching educational materials, programs and activities not funded by the school district. The campaign is needed because the organization depends on donations for those grants. Raising awareness in the community about its work will lead to increased financial support for the organization. My motivation for choosing this project is two-fold. First, I believe that financing enrichment activities for children, particularly those from low to middle income families that cannot afford the extra educational trips and experiences that those with more money can afford, is a worthwhile project. Second, I see the project for MEF as a fantastic way to gain real life experience in public relations and fundraising that will better prepare me for work with nonprofit organizations in the future.

Situation Analysis

Mission and Goals

The mission of McMinnville Education Foundation is to “expand the range of educational opportunities available to students and to encourage excellence, innovation and creativity in McMinnville School District 40.”

The impetus for creating the foundation in 1998 was that, like other districts in the state, the McMinnville School District was having to cut back its budget. The founders of MEF thought that having a foundation was a way to fill in some of the gaps that resulted in areas like art and science. They wanted an organization that would cover all the schools, not just elementary, middle or high schools.

To support its mission, MEF has two goals: to raise awareness of what it is doing and raise funds for mini grants and other educational programs, such as the Artist in Residence Program, Science Experiences and Battle of the Books. Year after year, its purpose has been to supplement and enrich the education of McMinnville school students at all levels, from kindergarten through graduation. The foundation does this by providing mini grants of up to \$1,000 to teachers. Since 2000, the organization has awarded more than \$500,000 in mini grants to teachers, the organization’s website says. Each grant serves the group’s mission by making “teacher-innovated ideas” a reality.

For more than 23 years the MEF board has stayed true to its mission by coordinating with the school district and providing funds for enriching educational materials and experiences that fall outside the district’s budget. MEF’s mission has become more important over time as they have watched the district have to stop funding things it did in the past due to lack of funds.

The foundation receives funding from a variety of sources for its mini grants and other programs. During the 2020/2021 year, contributions from the community amounted to approximately \$30,000, board member Carol McCulley said in an email. A little over half of those donations were generated by an end of the year fundraising letter; online PayPal donations; and teacher's own payroll deductions, which amounted to about \$2,000, she said. It also received a \$500 grant and \$1,100 from memorials and raised approximately \$10,400 by selling donated cases of wine and holding an outdoor Chalk the Walk event, McCulley said. The organization also has a \$650,000 endowment that it takes about 5% out of each year, she said.

The foundation's mini grants were a godsend to teachers when Covid-19 forced the district to shutter its doors. The grants provided a way for many teachers to get needed learning supplies into the hands of children studying remotely at home. This shows the organization's determination and willingness to help provide an excellent education to all students even if it looks a little different some years.

External Environment

"McMinnville is a community that makes the welfare and educational needs of its children a priority," the About page on the MEF website says. The city has many parks and playgrounds as well as a community center and city-owned swimming pool. In recent years, residents have approved bonds to provide funding for the school district to remodel schools and upgrade technology across the district. The town's priority of supporting all things related to children is also seen in the way it gives to other local nonprofits that serve children and their families.

However, Covid-19 hit the community hard from March 2020 to March 2022. Businesses in the McMinnville area, especially smaller businesses that had to close for a time while the larger

big-box stores were allowed to remain open, were also affected by the pandemic. Fewer sales meant locally owned businesses could not donate as much money to nonprofits as they had in the past.

In addition, most of the community's yearly public events were cancelled due to limitations on the size of gatherings, and people were unhappy with the mask mandates and being required to get vaccinated to keep their jobs. Covid fatigue set in, and nonprofits were unable to conduct business as usual to bring a ray of hope to the community. This impacted MEF, perhaps more so than other organizations, because even before the pandemic began, board members were trying to come up with a replacement for a highly successful yearly fashion show that they were no longer able to put on. While the organization was able to raise money in 2021 with its Mixed Sale of Wine in December and two outdoor fundraising events, including Chalk the Walk in August and Runtoberfest in October, it could not host its special yearly mini grant reception that it used to invite recipients, other teachers, principals and donors to. Even though the reception is not a fundraiser it is a very important part of how MEF operates, because it is one way it connects with and strengthens its relationship with donors, which can affect whether and/or how much they donate in the future. That, combined with not having the fashion show, likely contributed to a notable drop in donations compared to 2019.

Now that the worst of the pandemic seems to have passed, large fundraising events are starting to be held again, such as Yamhill County Gospel Rescue Mission's Night for the Mission on March 5, which Yamhill County's News-Register reported was attended by more than 200 people. About \$55,000 was raised at the event, the mission's director Kaye Sawyer told the newspaper. The McMinnville Food & Wine Classic also made a return this year, and other organizations are in the planning process for their own events as well.

However, while such public events are still popular, giving habits have changed since MEF was founded over 20 years ago. There is a new generation of civic-minded people whose way of life is much different than that of their parents and grandparents. Busy young mothers and fathers, with sporting events and other activities taking up their time, do not attend fundraisers in the large numbers their older counterparts did in the past—and due to the recent pandemic, those advanced in years may still avoid larger gatherings for the time being. Many of the younger generation do not read the newspaper; they get their news online. And when it comes to giving, they might pass up a flyer, but they will pause to read an engaging social media post about what an organization is doing while they scroll through their newsfeed.

Organization Analysis

The main characteristic that sets MEF apart from other educational nonprofits is that its mini grants are awarded to teachers in all fields of study, unlike other organizations with a narrow focus on just music, art, band, sports, STEM or another area. This means the foundation helps provide funding for all different types of programs and learning opportunities that adults remember having as kids that school districts can no longer fund, board member Jen Davies explained in a Zoom meeting. Those include a district art program and science experiences on and off site for all elementary school students. Both are run by the district but backed financially by MEF, she said.

Because of the broad reach that MEF has in enriching students' education in all areas of study, it might seem that it is not in competition with other nonprofits that raise money for school activities. Nevertheless, it really does compete for donations with all other nonprofits in McMinnville in that donors interested in helping children must make a choice about where they donate their money. They not only have to choose from among educational nonprofits, but also

from other organizations that have a slightly different mission including A Family Place, which supports at-risk families; the See Ya Later Foundation, which in the past held free and low-cost music and sports camps and a fishing derby for children; and Campfire Columbia, which has replaced Kids on the Block but still has the same focus on before and after-school activities. Like MEF, those organizations struggled to raise money during the pandemic.

But in addition to not being able to hold normal fundraising events, the foundation went through the pandemic without a strong online presence, which reduced its visibility in the community and put them at a disadvantage compared to other nonprofits in McMinnville, such as See Ya Later Foundation and A Family Place, which both have updated websites and stay connected with donors and potential donors by regularly posting on social media. On Facebook alone, See Ya Later has 4,067 followers and A Family Place has 2,320 followers. In comparison, as several board members noted, MEF's website is outdated as is its Facebook page, which has just 881 followers and only posts to promote fundraising events, leaving large gaps of time between its communications with donors and potential donors.

Regardless, MEF has many other wonderful strengths that serve it well, such as its "working board" who have in the past been willing to put in long hours when that is what it takes to have a successful fundraising event. And there is every reason to believe that they will continue to generously give of their time, because they believe strongly in MEF's mission.

The board is resourceful and can obtain discounted printing at local businesses. It also has some partner businesses, including Nector Graphics, owned by Andrea LaRue, who has designed items for MEF fundraisers in the past. Another internal resource is a younger board member, Jen Davies, who is active in Memorial Elementary School's PTA and is knowledgeable about social media.

However, while the board has successfully drawn in younger members, it is by and large made up of committed volunteers who have given their money and time to the nonprofit for many years, some since the organization's founding, and they may not be as familiar with the important ways social media can be used to raise awareness and funds in 2022 or how to use them. And that could be a threat to MEF's continued fundraising success if there are not enough volunteers to maintain a standing online campaign that includes posting stories to raise awareness about its work, in addition to promoting events, so it can regularly connect with current and potential donors. However, it is completely doable and not a lot of work. All it would take is for a couple of board members to volunteer to help out. They could be provided with an easy guide to follow with steps and ideas for online stories.

Opportunity Statement

While indoor and outdoor events, as well as flyers and brochures placed strategically in businesses and attorney's lobbies, all still play an important role in fundraising, and continuing to use them is important, you have an opportunity to become more relevant to the "phone first" people who communicate on their phones via social media and get even their local news online.

Giving the organization's website a facelift and promoting MEF's mission in earnest through social media will fit your description of what your Linfield Senior Project handout said you would like to do, which is "make the McMinnville Education Foundation a household name and clearly define the difference between what [you] provide versus what the district provides in order to increase donations to support MEF-funded programs." A constant flow of information online will not only bring awareness and draw new donors but will strengthen your relationship with current donors as you share stories about how mini grants, funded by their

donations, are enriching McMinnville students' education. In addition, an online campaign will draw in donations that are not solely reliant on in-person events.

Most people agree that the world as we once knew it has changed. Developing and implementing an online communications plan can provide a way to draw in new supporters and keep current ones abreast of the foundation's work no matter what the future holds.

Target Audience

The target audience for an awareness and fundraising campaign includes parents of children in the McMinnville School District of all ages and income levels; grandparents and other older folks; and businesspeople, particularly young professionals who are civic minded and concerned about the quality of education children receive in McMinnville.

Because these people genuinely care about the community, they will be interested in learning about MEF. Once they become aware of what your organization is doing to help kids—and what MEF needs from the community—they will step up to help meet that need and continue to do so as they are updated through stories about how grant money is being used.

An opinion leader who we might enlist to help with the campaign is superintendent Debbie Brocket, whom the MEF board has said is supportive of its work. Overall, people in the community seem happy with the new superintendent. She has reached out continually to parents since she took the helm at the district, asking for their feedback and sending out a bulletin regularly to keep them updated about what is happening in the district. People are eager to learn more about her, so they might be more inclined to listen to her as a spokesperson for MEF.

Campaign Plan

Introduction

As reported in the Situation Analysis, McMinnville Education Foundation would like to become a household name. An awareness campaign will help your organization make measurable progress toward that end. As individuals and businesses become aware of what your organization is doing to help McMinnville students—and what MEF needs from those in the community—they will step up to help meet that need and continue to do so as they are regularly updated about how their donations are being used.

Goal

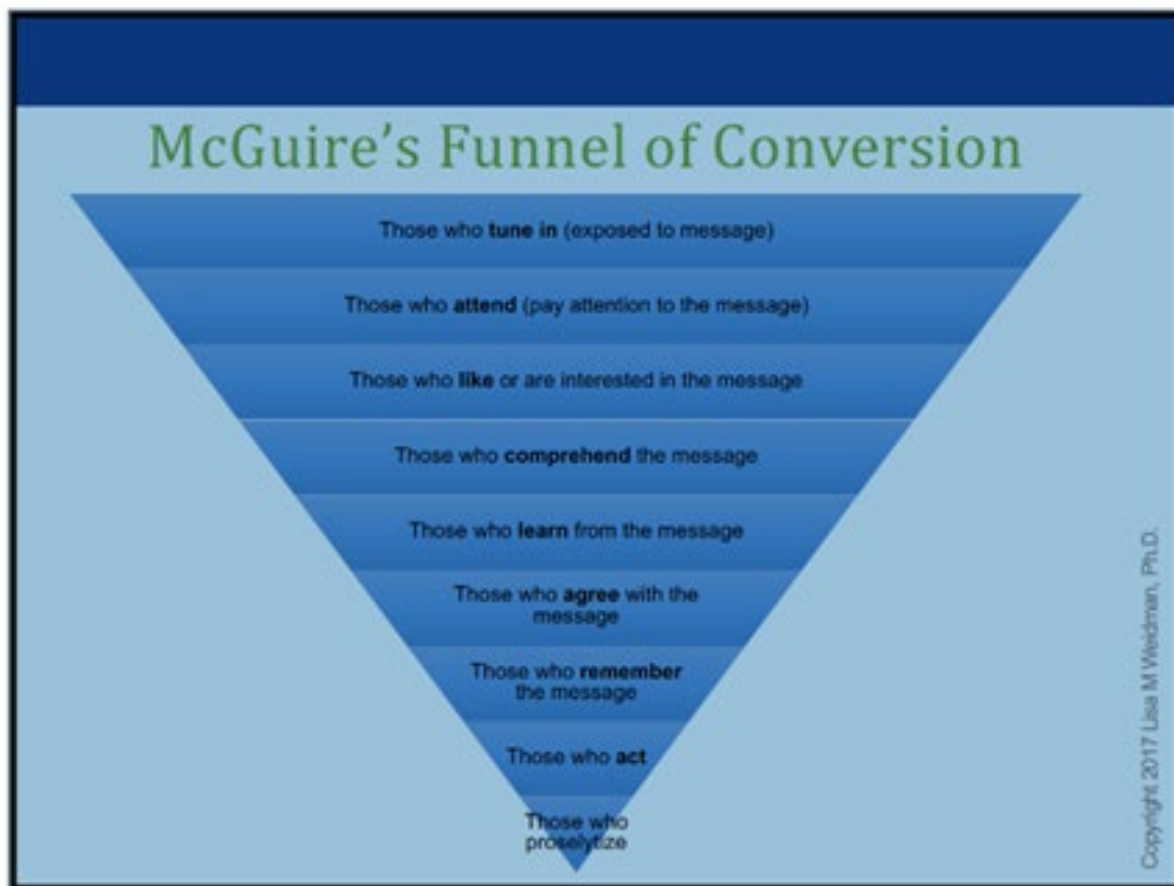
The goal of the Ready, Set to Bloom! campaign is to raise awareness and interest in what MEF does, in order to make measurable progress toward making MEF a household name in McMinnville, which will over the long-term result in new donors.

The target audience are those identified in the Situation Analysis, which includes parents of children in the McMinnville School District of all ages and income levels; grandparents and other older people; and businesspeople, particularly young professionals who are civic minded and concerned about the quality of education children receive in McMinnville.

Objective

The campaign's objective is to bring awareness to at least 180 individuals over a six-month period about what MEF is doing to “encourage excellence, innovation and creativity” in McMinnville Education District 40 by providing funding for enriching educational opportunities beyond what the school district's budget provides.

The theory used to structure the campaign is McGuire's Funnel of Conversion, which explains the progression that takes place when a person is presented with a message that is new to them. Dr. Lisa Weidman, Journalism and Media Studies professor at Linfield University, demonstrates it effectively in her image of an inverted pyramid with nine levels. Starting at the broad end of the figure and descending downward, the funnel identifies those who “*tune in, attend, like, comprehend, learn, agree, remember, act and proselytize* (Weidman, 2017).” As you can see in the chart below, fewer and fewer people move towards conversion as the funnel narrows.



Used with permission.

While the focus of this campaign is awareness, not conversion, McGuire's funnel is a useful tool in understanding how the following strategies and their tactics lay the foundation needed to increase financial support for MEF's programs.

Strategy A

The campaign has two strategies. The first is to use shared media, which is information and content posted on social media to raise awareness of MEF. Blogs, Twitter and Facebook are three examples of shared media. It differs from traditional print media in that it provides a way to have ongoing two-way conversations with an audience. Information can be easily shared, followed, liked or commented on by others. It is an inexpensive, and often free, way to present information and build relationships with people. I will train you to use it to tell about your organization's work and present information that is related to education in some way and of interest to your audience. Doing the latter presents an organization as a type of expert in its field and increases the likelihood of gaining followers online (Scott, 2021).

Tactic 1: Blog

The first tactic to raise awareness is a blog, which MEF will start posting to in May. I recommend posting the first and third week of every month. Each post will highlight a program or activity funded in part or full by MEF. Information for these posts will come from Grant Application Forms, Grant Completion Forms and other types of feedback, such as conversations with teachers and others who used MEF monies. Each blogpost will include at least one photo. If there is not one available, then the writer will use copyright free stock photos from sources like Pixabay, UnSplash and Pexels.

Posting on a consistent ongoing basis will be vital to successfully raising awareness. You will not get the response you want without doing so. To make it easier, there will be a signup sheet provided for board members to choose which months of the year they would like to write a post and what area or subject they want to cover. A list of helpful tips for writing online will be available as well.

Gaining followers for a blog takes time. Like starting up a new business, it will take patience to keep at it the first year. To help things along, board members, teachers and other volunteers passionate about MEF's mission will be encouraged to invite people to check out the new blog.

The blog's effectiveness will be measured by the number of people who subscribe to it from the launching of the campaign in mid-May to mid-November and by viewing the number of visitors to the site during the same periods of time using Google Analytics, which can easily be added to your WordPress website. It is free and user friendly.

Tactic 2: Social Media

The second shared media tactic involves using Facebook and Twitter. We will begin by giving your Facebook page a fresh look by updating the cover photo and adding more information to the About section. At that time, I will delete any duplicate posts, so visitors to the page will not get bored and leave if they go back and scroll through previous posts.

The campaign calls for creating a Twitter account for your organization because, like Facebook, it is used widely by those in your target audience. We will use the same header there as we used on Facebook to make your brand recognizable across the two platforms.

Starting in May, MEF will post at least one time each week on both pages. On weeks when there is a new blogpost, the posts will be a link to it with a very brief teaser or comment. There

will be a list of resources and suggestions that writers can refer to for other post ideas, along with the tips for writing online content created for blogposts. Again, like the blog posts, posting regularly is key to getting the response you want.

The social media pages and posts will be promoted several ways. Those that link to a blogpost, will be “sponsored” at least one week each month. “Sponsoring” a post or “promoting” one on Twitter is an inexpensive way to advertise, and Facebook allows you to define the audience you want to see your posts, making it money well spent. In addition, board members and other volunteers can ask their family and friends to visit one of the social media pages to see what MEF is about. We will ask those who already follow the page to do the same. Another way to promote the pages is by having the author of a blog post send a link to it to their family and friends via Facebook, Twitter or even email.

To evaluate how effective Twitter and Facebook are in raising awareness, you will note the number of new followers and likes your pages get from mid-May through mid-November. Looking at Facebook Insights and Twitter Analytics, which both track engagement, will supply additional helpful information.

Strategy B

The second strategy is to use owned media to raise awareness among those who are unfamiliar with what MEF does and do not use shared media. It is also a second way to reach those who do. Owned media are self-published materials that an organization or business has complete control over from creation to distribution, unlike earned media, where a writer decides what to write and an editor decides what to print. Newsletters, brochures, flyers for events and other print materials are owned media.

Tactic 3 Flyer

The first type of owned media in the campaign is a tiny flyer, a little smaller than a quarter sheet of printer paper, which will be used from mid-May through mid-August. Volunteers will attach it to a small packet of wildflower seeds. The flyer will say something along the lines of this: “Like a field of wildflowers, each child has a beauty all their own. To learn how you can help kids bloom, follow McMinnville Education Foundation on Facebook and Twitter.” Along with planting instructions, the brochure will have a QR code that readers can scan to visit your social media pages. The little flyer will also say something like: “*MEF is a 503c nonprofit providing funds for enriching educational opportunities for McMinnville students beyond what the school district provides.” It will also have a list of programs and activities that you help fund.

The seed packets and attached flyers will be placed in baskets with a “Take one” sign on the front. Board members—and volunteers who are knowledgeable about MEF—will drop baskets off at businesses and offices that have financially or otherwise supported the organization in the past. Other places to leave baskets are at businesses owned by young professionals, places that provide financial services or attorney’s offices that give legal advice to those creating wills and living trusts. Other drop-off points include gyms, doctor’s offices, community buildings, such as the community center, library and senior center.

Those delivering the baskets will let the receiver know that MEF will post a list on its social media pages telling people where they can pick up a packet. They will also point out that taking a basket is a wonderful way to let people know that the business/organization is community minded and cares about McMinnville’s children.

At the first of July, those who dropped off baskets will go back and see if they need to be refilled. Then when they pick up the baskets in mid-August, they will ask to leave a rack of brochures, which is the second owned media tactic.

Awareness can be hard to measure. So, MEF will determine the effectiveness of this tactic by noting the number of seed packets that were taken from mid-May to mid-August. For the sake of evaluation, you can assume that everyone who took a packet read the flyer.

While not part of this campaign, MEF might consider doing something similar again in November and December but using a small ornament, like a miniature wrapped gift ornament, attached to a flyer encouraging people to consider a financial gift to MEF when they do their end of the year giving.

Tactic 4 Brochure

The next tactic, which will be used from mid-August to mid-November is an “evergreen” brochure. Evergreen means a piece of media only contains content that will not become outdated over time. The brochure will have a QR code in it that people can quickly scan with their phones that will take them directly to your website and/or social media pages.

The brochure will be chock full of information about what you do, why you do it, what it looks like, ways community members can help and a list of corporate donors. While perusing the brochure, readers will learn about the labels that MEF puts in books it pays for. That way, when people see one, they will recognize your name. It will also contain information about all the other things your organization helps fund including mini grants, Battle of the Books, Artist-in-Residence and Science Experiences. There will be a mention of living trusts, wills and corporate sponsorship opportunities as well.

Board members or other volunteers who are knowledgeable about MEF will deliver brochures, along with a display rack, to businesses and organizations in town. Suggestions for drop-off points are the same as those for the baskets with the seed packets and flyers. I recommend that twelve volunteers each take responsibility for six drop-off sites.

After school begins in the fall, board members, as well as other representatives familiar with your organization and its work, will reach out to parents in the district by going to a PTA meeting at each school. There, they will distribute brochures to those in attendance and answer any questions. The representative will also ask about social media pages that are related to the school. That way MEF can follow them and link to them when they present information that might be of interest to your audience.

It is imperative to keep an accurate count of where and how many brochures are distributed for two reasons. The first is so you can go back and refill the racks and the second is so you will know how many were taken. That number is important since you will use it to measure the tactic's effectiveness by assuming that each person who took a brochure read it.

Tactic 5 Survey

The last tactic for the campaign is a two-question survey that will be included in print and online forms for events. The first question is: How did you hear about this event? A list of options will follow that participants can choose from to answer the question. The second question is: Did you know that McMinnville Education Foundation is on Facebook and Twitter?" This will not only reveal where people hear about your events, but it will make people aware of your social media pages.

This tactic is not designed to raise awareness, since it is assumed that those signing up for an event are already aware of your organization. However, the tactic is included in the campaign because it will be helpful for you to note how people hear about your events, so you know how to tailor your marketing strategy accordingly in the future.

Evaluation

The overall effectiveness of the Ready, Set to Bloom! campaign will be determined by adding together the findings that resulted from evaluating each tactic's efficacy. If, over the course of six months, 180 or more people and/or businesses in your target audience engaged with one of the tactics used in the campaign, it will be determined that the campaign's objective has been met and that the organization has made measurable progress toward its goal to make MEF a household name.

Follow Up

After the end of the campaign, board members and the volunteers will return to all the places where they left brochures and/or baskets to ask business owners and managers if they have any questions about MEF. At that time, they will talk to them about the opportunity to become a corporate sponsor.

The brochures will need to be refilled on an ongoing basis. You will also need to continue to post on the blog and your social media pages on a regular basis to keep growing awareness about MEF

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McMinnville Education Foundation Blog Screenshot



TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022

MHS Literature Teachers Make Reading a Ball



McMinnville High School's English Language Arts teachers came up with a novel way to make a study of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* a ball for ninth grade students this year. Literally.

The team thought a unit study that included an 1800's style ball would be a wonderful way for students to gain a better understanding of the complex characters in the book. It would in effect provide a way for students to experience the world depicted in Austin's story.

The district bought 175 copies of the book but lacked funding for the dance. However, the resourceful teachers found a way to make it happen, with a little help from the nonprofit McMinnville Education Foundation.

The ball provided a way for students to experience the world in Austin's story.

SEARCH THIS BLOG

ABOUT MEF



McMinnville Education Foundation

McMinnville Education Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 that funds enriching educational opportunities for students in McMinnville School District 40 beyond what the district's budget allows.

[View my complete profile](#)

MHS Literature Teachers Make Reading a Ball

McMinnville High School's English Language Arts teachers came up with a novel way to make a study of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*...



<https://mef97128.blogspot.com/>

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The ball provided students a way to experience the world in Austin's story.

To prepare for the event, teachers asked students to choose a character to focus on as they began reading the book, explaining the class would be having a ball and they would attend it playing the role of that character.

Students would need to become familiar with how their character interacted with others, what tones and mannerisms they used, things they often said or might have said, as well as their actions and beliefs, the teachers said.

...if students connected with a character, those who aren't big readers might enjoy reading the rest of the book.

Instructors taught time-period dances to add to the fun. There was a buzz among students as they dreamed of ways they could contribute to the activity. Some students went thrifting for 18th century attire. Others dove deep into the text so they could be as authentic as possible.

The themed ball took place during class time when students were halfway through the book. This was by design. The team wanted students to know their characters well before they got to the significant character changes that take place later in the book. They knew if a student connected with a character, that even those who aren't big readers would likely enjoy reading the rest of the book.

Thanks to the re-usability of the props, future ninth grade students will get to have a ball while learning about literature as well.

At the ball, teachers circulated among the "guests" asking prepared questions and assessing students' learning by evaluating their responses. The highest marks went to those who best showed they understood their character by their answers and their interactions with others.

A mini grant of \$780 from [McMinnville Education Foundation](#) was used to buy reusable items for the ball including top hats, teacups, wigs, canes, fans, candelabra, an ivory tablecloth, ballroom tapestry, battery-operated candles, laminated invitations and more.

Thanks to the re-usability of the props, future ninth grade students will get to have a ball while learning about literature as well.

To learn more about MEF visit our website mac40kids.org



MEF Blog Post Sign-up Form

Please sign up for two posts. You will need to sign up for one topic/date and submit before you sign up for a second topic/date.

Refer to the list of the 2021/2022 grant recipients' applications and grant completion forms for detailed information about the topic.

[Sign in to Google](#) to save your progress. [Learn more](#)

* Required

Email *

Name *

Select a topic for your blog post *

- ☐ Kickstart to Math
- ☐ Building Engineers with Blocks and "Blockly"
- ☐ Mathematician Manipulatives
- ☐ Setting the Stage for Speech/Language Therapy

- ☐ Drumming Fitness
- ☐ Starting a New Chapter
- ☐ Calming Corner
- ☐ Creating Life-long Readers
- ☐ Digi-Blocks and Fraction Fun
- ☐ Fine Motor Skills Activity Bins
- ☐ Outdoor Amplification
- ☐ Extensions and Remediation in Light of the Pandemic
- ☐ Graphic Novels for All!
- ☐ Creating an Inclusive School Culture: Tribal Flags & Trilingual Signs and Banners
- ☐ Edible Education
- ☐ Expanding 3D printing opportunities in STEM
- ☐ Music Theory
- ☐ Project Activate Culture, Creativity & Community
- ☐ Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio
- ☐ Hands on Learning for All
- ☐ Deca-what? Developing Number Sense Through Games with DecaDecks
- ☐ LRC2 Classroom Library Makeover
- ☐ Building Healthy Habits
- ☐ Science Experiences
- ☐ Battle of the Books
- ☐ Artist in Residence
- ☐ Reading in the Comfort of Our Classroom

Select the week your blog post will be published. *

- ☐ June Week 1
- ☐ June Week 3
- ☐ July Week 1
- ☐ July Week 3
- ☐ August Week 1
- ☐ August Week 3
- ☐ September Week 1
- ☐ September Week 3
- ☐ October Week 1
- ☐ October Week 2
- ☐ November Week 1
- ☐ November Week 3
- ☐ December Week 1
- ☐ December Week 3
- ☐ January Week 1
- ☐ January Week 3
- ☐ February Week 1
- ☐ February Week 3
- ☐ March Week 1
- ☐ March Week 3
- ☐ April Week 1
- ☐ May Week 1
- ☐ May Week 3



Other:

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provided.

Submit



Page 1 of 1

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Forms

McMinnville Education Foundation
Online Writing and Style Guide

*Please refer to McMinnville Education Foundation's [blog](#) and the Facebook [post](#) about the end of the year wine sale to see these guidelines in action.

The purpose of this style guide is to share tips that will help your organization have a cohesive look and feel to its blog and Facebook posts. This is especially important for blog posts because there will be multiple writers. This document is also meant to familiarize board members with the particularities of online writing.

General Guidelines

1. Plan to post on the blog at least two times a month. Post the links to each on Facebook.
2. Sponsor both blog posts on Facebook to increase your audience size.
3. On the weeks when there isn't a blogpost, post a link on Facebook to an article or event. See the Post Ideas and Resources page for ideas.
4. Read and reply to comments on the blog and Facebook posts quickly.
5. If someone asks a question and you do not know the answer, acknowledge the post and say, "Thank you for reaching out (or posting), I will find out and get back to you."

Blog Posts

1. It is highly recommended that you create your post in Word.
2. The star of each post should be teachers, students or a program—not your organization.
3. Include at least one photo(s) of what you are writing about in each post. If none are available, find one that ties into your topic on [pixabay.com](#), [unsplash.com](#) or [pexels.com](#), which have thousands of photos to choose from.
4. Each post should tell a story, not be a sales pitch for MEF.
5. Tell readers what the story is about in the first paragraph.
6. Include who, what, when, where, why and how.
7. For consistency, all writers should use the same friendly, smart, casual, helpful, cheerful and upbeat "voice."
8. Keep it light and use plain English. Avoid educational jargon that readers may not be familiar with unless you are going to explain its meaning.
9. Include names of teachers.
10. Use facts and figures to add credibility to posts but keep it to a minimum. Posts should be like a feature story —not a hard news story.
11. Include quotes and/or anecdotes in each story. Contact teachers for these.
12. Use humor or a joke when fitting.
13. After your story is complete, give your post a title. Clever titles are okay if they clearly communicate the content of the post. Viewers tend to click away if they see a title and then read a story that has nothing to do with it.
14. Share your blog post with your family, friends, co-workers, etc.

Grammar

1. Use correct grammar and conventional punctuation but keep it informal. Due to the casualness of blogs, it is okay—even encouraged—to use contractions like don't, isn't, aren't, etc.
2. Forget what you learned about advanced writing. Use simple noun/verb sentence structure, active verbs and active voice as much as possible. It makes posts more interesting to read.
3. Proofread your work before you post it. Use the review feature in Word and follow up with reading it aloud. The ear will often catch what the eye glosses over. If writing is an area of struggle for you, you can still tell a great story--just ask someone else to proofread what you write.

Formatting

1. For blog posts, aim for at least 250 words but not more than 600.
2. Omit needless words. Aim for sentences of 20 words or less.
3. Keep paragraphs short. Poynter Institute defines short as one or two sentences long.
4. Online readers skim rather than read every word. Break up stretches of text with images, “pull-quotes,” numbers or bullet points. To create a pull-quote in a blog post, retype a key phrase or quotation from the post, highlight it and then click on the quotation mark up on the right side of the tool bar at the top of the page. Then bold it and make the text a couple sizes larger than the rest of the text on the page.
5. Add labels to each blog post so people searching for a particular topic or event can find it. Click on the “separate labels by commas” on the righthand of the screen. Type right over the gray text. Type in a related label(s) or select one or more from the dropdown.
6. End each post with the following text centered at the bottom of the post: To learn more about MEF visit our website mac40kids.org (Copy and paste the words from the last sentence or from the initial post.)

Steps for Posting to Blogger

1. Log in to Mac Ed Foundation at mef97128@gmail.com
2. Click on the Google apps icon, which is by the purple M in the righthand corner of the screen. Look for nine dots arranged in a square.
3. Scroll down to the orange Blogger icon and click on it.
4. Click on the orange New Post button on the left.
5. Click on TT in the tool bar at the top and set the font size to large. Large size is easy to read on both a desktop and a cell phone.
6. Click on the small black square with two white triangles on it in the tool bar to insert an image.
7. Select an image from your computer, upload it and then click the blue Select button. Repeat to insert more images later in your post.

8. Click on the image in the post to set it to align left, right or center. After you write the post, you can move the photo to make the text appear alongside it. You can also adjust the size by clicking on the image.
9. Write your post or copy and paste the one you created in Word.
10. Type in labels for your post right on top of the gray words “Separate labels by commas” and/or select labels from the dropdown.
11. Click on the orange Publish button at the top right-hand corner of the screen.
12. If you need to go back and make changes to your post later, go back to the page where you clicked on the New Post button and click on the post you want to change from the list of posts in the middle of the page.
13. Make the changes.
14. Click the orange Update button up in the corner where the Publish button was when you originally posted the story.

Facebook Posts

Steps for posting on Facebook

1. Click on “Create post.”
2. If you are posting an image or images, click on the Photo/video icon and follow the directions. You can upload as many photos as you like. Then proceed to step six.
3. Please note: You cannot post both an image and a link to a webpage in one post. But you can add photos in the comment area after the webpage link is posted.
4. To post a link to a webpage, highlight and copy the web address for the webpage you want to link to and paste it into the text box. At this point, an image from the site will appear. People will click on the image to go to the site.
5. Place your cursor at the end of the web address and backspace until its gone.
6. Add a short bit of descriptive text.
7. Insert hashtags below the text. See the Hashtags section for more on that.
8. Click the blue “Post” button.
9. To post photos on a post that has a website link, upload the photos in the comment section.

Formatting Facebook Announcements

1. Use correct grammar and punctuation. One explanation point is more powerful than two or three.
2. Use minimal text, leave enough blank space so that the message will really stand out.
3. Keep the background simple. Messages get lost in bold graphics and/or busy backgrounds.
4. Use dark font on a light background. Light fonts on dark backgrounds are difficult to read.
5. Check to see if your image can be read on a phone since that’s where a large part of your audience will view it.

Hashtags

1. Hashtags are used on Facebook posts so the post will come up on a list when people search for the terms.
2. Here are specifics on their usage:
 - a. The tags should be related to the content of the post. The wording below can be used for both Facebook and blog posts. For blog posts, just omit the # sign.
 - b. There are no spaces in a hashtag.
 - c. Possible hashtags:
 - i. #McminnvilleOregon
Put this on every post. Please note: There is no comma.
 - ii. #McMinnvilleEducationFoundation
 - iii. #visitmcminnville
 - iv. #news-register
Use if you are writing or posting about something that the newspaper might write a story about.
 - v. #McMinnvilleCommunityCenter
Use this if you are posting about a local activity.
 - vi. Hashtag school mascots #MHSGrizzlies
 - vii. #schoolname
 - viii. #teachername
 - ix. #battleofthebooks
 - x. #scienceexperiences
 - xi. #teacherminigrants
 - xii. #namebusinessesnamedinlinkofpost
 - xiii. #mcminnvillepubliclibrary
 - xiv. #Mcminnvilleparksandrecreation
 - xv. #Mcminnvilleaquaticcenter

Facebook Page Screenshots

Below is the new header for MEF's Facebook page. It is followed by the initial post I made as an example to show how brief a post with a link can be. Facebook generated the text based on the "6 BOTTLES" image from the organization's website.



**McMinnville Education Foundation**

Published by Melanie Johnson · April 26 at 5:47 PM · 🌐

Cheers to the end of the school year. Let's celebrate summer!
Support McMinnville Education Foundation, one case at a time!
[#mcminnvilleoregon](#) [#yamhillvalley](#) [#MHS](#) [#MHSGrizzlies](#)



A top-down view of various school supplies (pencils, pens, eraser, paper clips, paper) scattered on a dark wooden surface. The text "6 BOTTLES" is written in a large, white, serif font across the center.

MCMINNVILLE-EDUCATION-FOUNDATION.SQUARE.SITE

6-Bottle Mixed Case of Wine | McMinnville Education Foundation
A curated collection of six bottles of wine from local winemakers throughout the valley...

627
People reached

48
Engagements

—
Distribution score

Boost post

<https://www.facebook.com/McMinnvilleEducationFoundation>

Ideas and Resources for Shared Media Posts

To successfully raise awareness about your organization, it is important that you post consistently on MEF's blog and Facebook page.

On the first and third week of each month, post on the blog about one of the programs you help fund and then post a sponsored link to it on Facebook.

On the second and fourth week of each month, post a link or a bit of news on Facebook. The following list has a plethora of ideas followed by a list of resources.

An important part of raising awareness on social media is inviting local Facebook friends to visit and "like" MEF's page. When new people join the board, ask them to do the same.

Lastly, always be sure to hashtag the Yamhill County's News-Register (#News-Register) when you post about a MEF fundraising event, learning experience or program. Doing so may catch an editor's eye and lead to a news article, which will bring more awareness to the community about what your organization does. See more on hashtags in the Online Writing and Style Guide.

Post Ideas

The following ideas can be used for a one or two sentence Facebook post with a photo or link to more information about the topic—or be the subject of an extra blogpost on the second or fourth week of the month, which you can then link to on Facebook.

Always add a caption or comment when you share a link. If the link does not generate a photo and you do not have one you can use, download a stock photo from Pixabay.com, unsplash.com or pexels.com and use that.

1. A list of locations where people can pick up a free seed packet
2. Upcoming fundraisers
3. Request for volunteers
4. Photos from teachers, MEF classes, activities or events
5. The preparation process for an event to build up excitement about it
6. Results/follow up of/on a fundraising event
7. Thank community for support
8. If MEF is mentioned in the news, post about it
9. An Artist-In-Residence lesson
10. Ask people to share their favorite school memory (Board members should take the lead in this.)
11. Science Experience lessons
12. Teacher Features about individual teachers in the district
13. Library events for children
14. Upcoming school and community events, such as students' concerts, awards, wins
15. Awards a school or educator in the district receives
16. Congratulations to student(s), teams, clubs for achievements
17. Local PTAs and what they are up to
18. The History of MEF
19. Parks and Recreation events
20. Community Center events

21. Articles on your website
22. Ask a teacher for a fun learning experiences children can do at home
23. Ask a teacher to serve as a guest blogger or send you a photo you can post on Facebook
24. Ask each board member for a couple of sentences about why they got involved with MEF, what their role is with the organization, what line of work they are/were in
25. Post board member's answers with a photo of their own children when they were small
26. School concerts
27. Local educational enrichment activities
28. A thank you to a business or individual that has made a substantial donation with a link to their website or Facebook page with #businessname
29. A paragraph from your newsletter about Mini Grants, Artist-In-Residence, Science Experiences or Battle of the Books
30. A paragraph from the brochure
31. Introduce a new member of the board
32. A goodbye to a board member who is stepping down after years of faithful service
33. Tell about a donor's business and why the owner supports MEF and include link to their website or social media page
34. Post Teacher Feature stories about a teacher in the district w/photo
35. Links to articles on why art, science or reading is important for children's development
36. List of Oregon museums or link to lists with a comment on what the post is
37. Links to your updated website
38. List of grants awarded during the 2022/2023 school year
39. New article on your website
40. Info about local educational activities that the city or another organization in town is doing
41. MEF mentions in the newspaper or district publications on social media or elsewhere
42. When school is not in session, post links to websites with simple science experiments and art or other activities that readers can do with children at home
43. Links to articles or virtual seminars about living trusts
44. Art galleries
45. Museums

Please see the next page for a list of resources.

Resources

1. School liaison for MEF
2. MEF documents including copies of science and art lesson plans and photos
3. MEF annual report
4. MEF website
5. School social media pages
6. Yamhill County's News-Register
 - a. Tip: Google school names, mascot names, club names weekly or have a board member who subscribes to the paper check it weekly for mention of anything that would be great for a post
 - b. If the story is not behind a paywall, post a comment with a link to it. If it is behind a paywall, just post a brief summary, such as "The News-Register reports that Mac High's graduation rate is one of the highest in the state Kudos to the teachers and administrators that create an environment where students can soar."
7. News-Register Facebook page
8. McMinnville School District's Facebook page
9. Individual McMinnville Schools' Facebook pages
10. McMinnville School District website
11. Individual schools' websites
12. McMinnville Public Library's Facebook page
13. McMinnville Public Library's website
14. School Superintendent's "Brockett Bulletin"
15. McMinnville's Parks and Recreation web page
16. PTA social media pages
17. Bulletin boards in public buildings
18. Teachers who received grants in the past
19. Grant Completion forms

School Break Ideas

During school breaks, consider making a few extra posts on Facebook to a specific family friendly activity on one of the following websites. While such posts are not directly related to MEF, that's okay. Social media as a public relations tool is about connecting with people. It's about starting a two-way conversation with your target audience and providing them with content that is important to them. Such posts will be helpful to parents who do not want their kids playing on electronics all day. Encourage people to try out an activity and post a picture of it in the comment section.

1. Link to a [Family Fun Magazine](#) article about various activities to do at home
2. Link to a [Science Fun for Everyone](#) article about a simple at-home science idea
3. Link to [Artful Parent](#) activity

Text of Small Flyer



Like a field of wildflowers, each child has a beauty all their own.

To learn how you can help kids bloom,
look for McMinnville Education
Foundation on Facebook or visit our
website.

MEF is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit providing mini-grants for
McMinnville teachers, and funding for districtwide Artist-in-
Residence, Battle of the Books and Science Experiences
programs.

Wildflower Seed Planting Instructions

Choose a site with 6+ hours of sun.
Remove existing growth & loosen soil.
Scatter seed across prepared area.

Do not cover with soil.
Step lightly on the seeded area.
Water lightly as needed.

In 4-6 weeks seedlings will appear.
In spring, your wildflowers will bloom!



Visit
MEF Online
mac40kids.org
mef97128.blogspot.com



Completed Flyer with Seed Packet





Like a field of wildflowers, each child has a beauty all their own.

To learn how you can help kids bloom, look for McMinnville Education Foundation on Facebook or visit our website and blog.

MEF is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit providing mini-grants for McMinnville teachers, and funding for districtwide Artist-in-Residence, Battle of the Books and Science Experiences programs.

Blog



mef97128.blogspot.com

Website



mac40kids.org

Visit MEF online

Brochure and Insert

The campaign calls for an “evergreen” brochure that the foundation can use for many years. However, the list of the organization’s sponsors changes from year to year, so I included that information on an insert that can be removed and replaced with a current list as needed.



Science Experiences



Science Experiences are hands-on field research activities for children in grades K through eight. The outings, which are an important extension of the school's curriculum, provide opportunities for students to experience and marvel in the scientific wonder of the world outside the classroom.

Topics vary each year but, in the past, have included studying plants and animals at Miller Woods, sound and light energy at Booth Bend Conference Center, robotics, motion and forces at Evergreen Space Museum, patterns of the earth's changing features at Metsker Park, and physical and chemical changes and interactions of earth's major systems at Haskins Creek Water treatment plant. MEF partners yearly with Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District to provide an outdoor laboratory at Miller Woods.

While some schools' PTAs can cover the cost for such experiences, others cannot. With MEF's help children at every grade school and middle school in the district can take part.



Visit our website for more
information about MEF



mac40kids.org



McMinnville Education Foundation
800 NE Lafayette Ave.
McMinnville, OR 97128

Blog
mef97128.blogspot.com

Email
info@mac40kids.org



MEF is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit that funds enriching educational opportunities for McMinnville students beyond what the district's budget provides.

About MEF



The McMinnville community has always made the educational needs of its children a priority. Building on that tradition, McMinnville Education Foundation was founded in 1998 to encourage excellence, innovation and creativity in the town's schools by providing financial support for enriching educational opportunities such as Battle of the Books, Science Experiences, Artist-In-Residence and Teacher Mini Grant programs.



Teacher Mini Grants

The mini grant program supplies funds for teachers at all levels to encourage them to develop programs that enhance students' general education. To apply, teachers fill out an application that requires a summary and description of what they are requesting money for, the rationale for the project and what their educational objective is.

Past grants have been used to purchase yoga balls and drumsticks for drumming fitness, props for an 1800s style ball in a unit study about Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*, books and musical instruments for classrooms, subscriptions to magazines for foreign language classes, materials for living history activities, science tools for conducting more in-depth experiments—and a 3-D printer used for creating prosthetic hands to donate to those in need. Other grant money has paid for field trips to museums and colleges.



Battle of the Books

Battle of the Books is a nationwide voluntary reading program for students in grades three through 12. Its purpose is to provide an incentive for students to read good books. The books assigned vary according to the reading level of the student.

Some children excitedly start reading the books over the summer break.

At the beginning of the school year, coaches form participants into teams of four. Each group decides how to divide the reading up. Later in the year, teams go to battle by answering trivia-like questions about what they read. Winning teams can go on to compete at district, regional and state level contests.



Funding

MEF raises funds in a variety of ways. There are one large, and several small fundraising events held each year. We send out newsletters in the fall asking for donations. Those who respond send in checks or donate online at our website. MEF also uses proceeds from an endowment set up in 1998, which generous donors have added to over the years.

Partnerships with businesses and voluntary payroll deductions from district employees are another source of funding.

Ways You Can Help

MEF has an ongoing need for the community's help in funding these educational programs. Corporate sponsors, business donations and gifts of any size—even just five or \$10 a month—all help cover the cost of learning experiences that students would not otherwise have.

Donors can choose how they would like their money used, whether for Battle of the Books, Science Experiences, Artist-in-Residence, Teacher's Mini Grants or the general fund.

And if you are doing estate planning, such as creating a living trust or will, please consider MEF in your charitable giving.

You can help us get word out about the enriching educational programs MEF helps fund.

Just follow McMinnville Education Foundation on Facebook and share the page with friends.



Artist-in-Residence

While classroom teachers do art projects with their students, few have art backgrounds, so instruction is limited. That's where the Artist-In-Residence program comes in.

Under trained artists, students learn about art theory, color relations, vision tension and negative space.

Over the years, students have studied and tried their hand at pottery and tile making, watercolor, pastels, drawing/sketching, and collage.

They have also learned about Totem poles and symbolism, puppet making, Asian print making and fiber arts including felting, as well as African drumming, storytelling and theatre.

In addition to buying supplies for the program, MEF funds professional development, so classroom teachers can build on what students learn in the program.



CREATED BY



MELANIE
JAYNE JOHNSON

CONTACT INFO



MELANIEJAYNEJOHNSON.COM