Teacher Successful in Securing "Unsung Heroes Award"

We are excited to announce that Howe Elementary School Math and Reading Interventionist Teacher Melissa Miller has secured a $2,000 grant as part of a program that awards K-12 educators nationwide! The "Unsung Heroes Award" honors teachers for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and their ability to positively influence the children they teach.

Mrs. Miller's innovative idea is to create an Outdoor Learning Center at the Mead Elementary School location which will provide students and community members from all socioeconomic backgrounds opportunities for enrichment in a screen-free outdoor learning environment. The Center will help to address the nature deficit and social-emotional needs facing both children and adults today. Students who utilize the future multi-sensory Outdoor Learning Center will participate in outdoor education and general curriculum lessons.

The Center will also provide a space for community programming, and it will be the first of its kind in the Wisconsin Rapids community. Each area of the Center will incorporate multi-sensory learning with music, movement, gardening, climbing, building, gathering, recycling, and nature art. Fundraising efforts to complete the project are on-going, and volunteers are expected to begin removing blacktop to begin project installation very soon!

More about the Voya Unsung Heroes program…since 1996, the program has awarded more than $5 million to help our nation's educators turn innovative teaching ideas into reality. Selected from a group of more than 650 applicants, Mrs. Miller is one of 100 winners across the country who will receive this award to help fund and bring her program to life. In addition, she will now compete with other finalists for one of the top three prizes — an additional $5,000, $10,000 or $25,000 from Voya Financial!

To learn more about this year's winning projects, as well as those from previous years, visit the Voya Unsung Heroes webpage. Applications for the 2020 Voya Unsung Heroes awards are currently being accepted through their website until April 30.

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