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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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UCOR Awards \$30,000 in Mini-Grants for Area School STEM Projects

Oak Ridge, Tenn., May 3, 2021 – Students in 30 schools across the region will benefit from \$30,000 in mini-grants that UCOR is awarding to fund science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) projects. UCOR annually awards these mini-grants to help teachers heighten students' awareness of technical fields.

This year, entries were submitted from a nine-county region. Grants were awarded for 40 projects with titles such as *The Science Behind a Coffee Shop*, *Ozobots*, *Develop Computational Thinking!*, and *Elementary Coding and Robotics*, *Break the Cycle* (a full list follows the press release). UCOR has awarded close to \$230,000 in mini-grants to local schools since 2012.

Award recipient Donna Tompkins, 4th grade science teacher at Oneida Elementary School, also has an after school STEM club for 4th and 5th grade students. In the "May the Force be With You" project, her students will build and modify sail cars for the best speed and distance by experimenting with different types of sails and wheels.

"I want to get my students interested in STEM at an early age and to learn how to design, build, test, and improve their designs," Tompkins said. "This building, testing, and design modifying will take place through teamwork, a skill I feel is very valuable for success in the real world."

Saran Maness, a special education teacher at Horace Maynard Middle School, said that the mini-grant will help her achieve her goal to provide her 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students access to STEM materials that fit their needs and abilities. "My goal is to get them interested in new opportunities, focus on teamwork, and experience open-ended exploration," she said. "Our STEM for ALL program will create the space with the appropriate materials to allow everyone to explore STEM and open their eyes to future endeavors."

"Our STEM mini-grants program supports our workforce development program and is an important way we support the communities in which we live and work," said UCOR President and CEO Ken Rueter. As a chemical engineer, Rueter noted that UCOR's work to turn decades-old environmental hazards into reusable land requires a workforce with a large number of STEM professionals.

UCOR's cleanup workforce includes engineers, industrial hygienists, nurses, project managers, chemical operators, electricians, and more.

“We need workers from multiple disciplines to maintain the kind of trained, skilled workforce needed to successfully advance DOE’s charge to complete environmental cleanup across the Oak Ridge Reservation,” Rueter said.

UCOR accepted applications from teachers in March. A team of UCOR professionals reviewed the submissions (which were made anonymous for the process) before making grant awards.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A complete list of grant winners by county follows for your information and use. If you would like to interview one of the recipients, Shannon Potter, Shannon.Potter@orcc.doe.gov, can provide you contact information.

Anderson County (2)

- Ligia Boundy, Clinton Middle School, *Math Learning with IXL*
- Sue Byrd, with Sally Suttle, Grand Oaks Elementary School, *No Child Left Inside*

Blount County (6)

- Mark Anderson, Porter Elementary School, Panther STEM Lab
- Jeff Coggin, with MSgt. Rob Davis, Heritage High School, *AFJROTC Model Rocketry*
- Joel Jackson, with Misti Heath, Montvale Elementary School, *Building Our Understanding of Forces and Motion*
- Renee Powell, Lanier Elementary School, *Elementary Coding and Robotics, Break the Cycle*
- Shane Rewis, Heritage High School, *Vernier Products*
- Cassie Williams, Porter Elementary School, *STEM: Launching Student Leaders*

Campbell County (2)

- Angie Baird, White Oak Elementary School, *Full "STEAM" AHEAD*
- Tiffany Logsdon, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *Classroom Environment – Fostering Creativity and Collaboration*

Knox County (6)

- Jami Aylor, Bearden High School, *The Functions of Management with Legos*
- Timothy Cathcart, Bearden High School, *Smart Home System*
- Timothy Cathcart, with student Kevin Bridges, Bearden High School, *Battery Backups*
- Fran Julien, Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School, *The Science Behind a Coffee Shop*
- Katie Lusk, Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Kindergarten Creates – Makerspace*
- Miriam Esther Wilhelm, Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School, *STEAM Out Hunger*

Loudon County (1)

- Stefanie Crawford, North Middle School, *The Physics of Archery*

Maryville City Schools (1)

- Andrew Hebert, Maryville Junior High School, *VEX V5*

Morgan County (8)

- Margie Branstetter, Petros Joyner School, *Float It, Sink It!*
- Molly Carroll, with Kim Neskaug and Dr. Rachael Rudnitzki Peery, Central Elementary School, *Adventures in Coding*
- Kelli Harvey, with Melissa Poland, Petros Joyner Elementary School, *Gardening 101*
- Lisa Hooks, Central Middle School, *Closing the Gap*
- Amy Jones, Sunbright Middle School, *Engineering with STEM*
- Erin Miller, Oakdale School, *BioBlitz*
- Susanne Pemberton, Coalfield School, *Ozobots to Develop Computational Thinking*
- Melissa Poland, Petros Joyner School, *Let's Put Our Learning in Motion!*

Oak Ridge City Schools (1)

- Lisa Buckner, Linden Elementary School, *Forging Ahead with Making and a Glowforge*

Oneida Special School District (2)

- Donna Tompkins, Oneida Elementary School, *May the Force Be with You*
- Gretchen Stephens, Oneida Middle School, *Green & Clean*

Roane County (6)

- Pete Goepfert, Midtown Education Center, *RCS Solar Racers*
- Taylor Griffith, Bowers Elementary School, *Building Success*
- Katie McKee, with Kevin Clinton, Midway Middle School, *Problem Solving and Persistence – Coding with Cubelets*
- Amy Haney, Oliver Springs High School, *Micro: Bit Robotics*
- April Plemons, Calvary Baptist School, *Biology Science Fair*
- Sarah Rose, Kingston Elementary School, *Collaborative Technology Center*

Scott County (2)

- Michelle Massengale, with Anita Harness, Fairview Elementary School, *Growing Young Einsteins*
- Joy Perry, Huntsville Middle School, *5 For 5*

Union County (3)

- Aileen Beeler, with Hayley Sexton, Kaitlin Suffridge, and Matthew Edwards, *Union County High School, Time and the Elements*
- Paula Deaver, Horace Maynard Middle School, *All Things Small*
- Sarah Maness, Horace Maynard Middle School, *STEM for ALL*