

**For Immediate Release**

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**UCOR awards \$40,000 in STEM education mini-grants**

**Oak Ridge, Tenn., May 11, 2023** – United Cleanup Oak Ridge (UCOR) has awarded \$40,000 in mini-grants to East Tennessee teachers in 28 schools. The grants will fund K-12 school projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as related classes.

This is UCOR's first round of mini-grant awards under its new Oak Ridge Reservation Cleanup Contract with the Department of Energy. Under its previous contract—involving the cleanup of East Tennessee Technology Park—UCOR awarded \$310,000 in STEM mini-grants. UCOR is continuing the annual program to support teachers in a nine-county region who work to heighten student awareness of STEM and related fields.

"I am excited every year to see the types of projects teachers are doing in their classrooms to promote STEM learning," said UCOR Community Outreach and Workforce Development Coordinator Shannon Potter, "Getting and keeping students engaged in the STEM fields is important to UCOR's goal to build a pipeline of future cleanup workers."

This year, 36 UCOR mini-grants went to elementary, middle, junior high, and high school projects such as:

- ***Bringing the Weather to Us*** (Midtown Elementary, Roane County)  
This grant supports elementary student understanding of the local environment by allowing them to study weather on their own playground. They will create a weather station to observe, collect, and record data.
- ***As a MATTER of fact: let's investigate*** (Huntsville Middle, Scott County)  
This grant will enable fifth-grade students to conduct 12 different scientific investigations to identify and classify the three states of matter — observing, exploring, and measuring solids, liquids, and gases.
- ***From seed to plate: using ecosystem dynamics to teach social/emotional learning*** (Farragut High, Knox County)  
This grant helps bring STEM into social/emotional learning to enhance self and social awareness, decision making, and relationship building. The high school students will learn ecosystem dynamics through the lens of organic gardening (growing ingredients), ultimately learning to cook what they grow.

(A full list of projects follows the press release).

UCOR's environmental cleanup work relies heavily on workers in the STEM fields. The company's 2,100-plus cleanup workforce includes many STEM professionals: chemical operators, electricians, engineers, industrial hygienists, nurses, project managers, radiation control technicians, and more.

The company 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. More information about the UCOR mini-grant program is available from the UCOR website:

[ucor.com/minigrants/](http://ucor.com/minigrants/).

UCOR is the DOE Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management's lead environmental cleanup contractor. The company's 2,100+ workers are dedicated to safely reducing environmental risk on the Oak Ridge Reservation while helping DOE's Office of Science and the National Nuclear Security Administration continue their important missions. Learn more about the company at [UCOR.com](http://UCOR.com).

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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, contact program administrator Shannon Potter, [Shannon.Potter@orcc.doe.gov](mailto:Shannon.Potter@orcc.doe.gov), who can provide teacher contact information.

## 2023 UCOR Mini-grant Recipients

### Anderson County (2)

- Ashlyn Jarnigan, Claxton Elementary School, *STEM activities for ELL students and families*
- Shana Readle, Claxton Elementary School, *A Secondary-Inspired Approach to STEM Education*

### Campbell County (2)

- Tiffany Logsdon, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *Creating a STEAM-inspired classroom*
- Jessica Moore, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *Classroom Environment – Promoting brain stimulation during active learning*

### Clinton City (1)

- Lorrie Irwin, North Clinton Elementary School, *STEM-tacular Summer School*

### Knox County (11)

- Susan Ehrenclou, Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Outdoor Project-Based Learning Toolkit*
- Jessica Everitt, Hardin Valley Elementary School, *Forging our Future*
- Morgan Everett, Halls High School, *Red Nation Robotics*
- Timothy Green, Farragut High School, *From seed to plate: using ecosystem dynamics to teach social/emotional learning*
- Lev Gross-Comstock, Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Experiencing Sound Energy*
- Katie Lusk, Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Building Engineers Through Play*
- Katie Lusk, Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Detectives in the Woods*
- Dawn Stacy, Brickey-McCloud School, *Engineering Task Centers*
- Elizabeth Stewart, Farragut Primary School, *Hands On, Minds On: Robotics for Young Learners*
- Chasity VanBlaricum, Shannondale Elementary School, *"Code" The Places You Will Go*
- Miriam Esther Wilhelm and Louise Lindsay, Knoxville Jewish Day School, *Age old customs celebrated with modern technology*

### Loudon County (2)

- Jeana Gray, Fort Loudon Middle School, *Makers Making a Difference: Assistive Technology Makerspace*
- Haley Pope, North Middle School, *Starting a Makerspace: 3D Printer in the Library*

### Maryville City (1)

- Dr. Andrew Hebert, Maryville Junior High School, *Start Your Engines*

### Morgan County (4)

- Margie Branstetter, Petros Joyner School, *Growing Good Character with STEM*
- Charles Hutson, Sunbright School, *GPS Technology in Applied Sciences*
- Amy Jones, Sunbright School, *Robotics and Coding in Middle School*
- Erin Miller, Oakdale School, *STEM Buddies*

### Oak Ridge City Schools (4)

- Amelia Bell, Glenwood Elementary School, *Beyond the Water Cycle: The Power of Water in Our World*
- Lisa Buckner, Linden Elementary School, *Spiking Creativity with LEGO Spike Robots*
- Mark Buckner, Oak Ridge High School, *Creating the Next Generation of Manufacturing Innovators!*
- Janie Shanafield, Jefferson Middle School, *Build Bigger*

#### Roane County (6)

- Kevin Clinton, Midway Middle School, *Codrones*
- Becky Efferson, Dyllis Springs Elementary School, *Adding Boxlight to our STEM LAB*
- Becky Efferson, Dyllis Springs Elementary School, *STEM Based Learning Tubs*
- Carly Harrison, Dyllis Springs Elementary School, *Let's Start our Day in a STEM-tastic way!*
- Briley Johnson, Midtown Elementary School, *Bringing the Weather to Us*
- Jason Young, Roane County High School, *Adding beauty and pride to our school (Civil Engineering- School Landscaping Project)*

#### Scott County (1)

- Joy Perry, Huntsville Middle School, *As a MATTER of fact: let's investigate*

#### Union County (2)

- Sarah Maness, Horace Maynard Middle School, *Be Leaders with Bee Bots*
- Jennifer Smith, Big Ridge Elementary School, *Engineering with Robots*

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