

**For Immediate Release**

Contact:  
Chris Caldwell  
Christopher.Caldwell@orcc.doe.gov  
(804) 658-8367

**UCOR awards \$45,000 in STEM education mini-grants**

**Oak Ridge, Tenn., May 20, 2024** – Drones, a manufacturing simulator lab, and hands on meteorology are among the classroom projects United Cleanup Oak Ridge (UCOR) will fund through its 2024 mini-grants. UCOR awarded \$45,000 in mini-grants to fund 41 projects for East Tennessee K-12 teachers in 29 schools. The grants support projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as related classes.

With this year’s awards, UCOR has given a total of \$395,000 to fund STEM and STEM-related projects since 2012.

“STEM education is an important part of both our community outreach and our workforce development program. It’s exciting to read the grant proposals and see all of the projects teachers are doing to expose students to future STEM careers,” said UCOR Community and Education Outreach Coordinator Shannon Potter.

This year’s mini-grants went to elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools and included projects such as:

- ***Empowering Young Meteorologists*** (Burchfield Elementary, Scott County)  
This grant will help 2nd-grade students to become amateur meteorologists by through weather observation activities. That includes data recording of weather to track patterns and phenomena. In addition to sharpening observation skills, the project will focus on developing critical thinking skills.
- ***Special Delivery Drones*** (Gresham Middle, Knox County)  
This grant will enable middle-grade students to build takeoff/landing pads for drones using a 3D printer like a mini helipad. Then they will practice piloting the drones over student-built model houses and farms in an outside area of the school to learn about the impact weather/wind has on flight.
- ***Wild About Manufacturing*** (Oak Ridge High, Oak Ridge City)  
This grant will introduce students to the world of manufacturing using a mobile manufacturing lab. The lab will go to local STEM Nights and the high school students will demonstrate 3D printing, Computer Numerical Control machining, and laser cutting to elementary and middle school students. They will also hold an educator workshop to introduce the tools in the lab.

(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 2,200-plus cleanup workforce includes many STEM professionals: chemical operators, welders, engineers, industrial hygienists, nurses, project managers, radiation control technicians, and more.

The company accepted applications from teachers in February and March. A team of UCOR professionals reviewed the submissions (which were made anonymous for the review 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 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.

Photo attached: [dyllis\\_springs\\_kindergarten.jpg](#)

Caption: Kindergarten students build problem-solving, creativity, and spatial skills with Lego projects.

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## 2024 UCOR Mini-grant Recipients

### Anderson County (9)

- Amanda Adams, Claxton Elementary, *3D Scribing in the Classroom*
- Savannah Akers, Claxton Elementary, *Sliding into Learning with Spheros*
- Courtney Bass, Norwood Elementary, *Cultivating a STEM-Driven Kindergarten Classroom with the use of Bee Bots and 3D Printing*
- Zen Braden, Norwood Elementary, *Fitness Trackers*
- Christopher Enix, Lake City Middle, *Teaching Basic Engineering Principles Using Lego*
- Rebecca Ford, Clinton Middle, *Integrating STEM in the Middle School Classroom*
- Jana Payne, Claxton Elementary, *Spheros for Students*
- Jennifer Rodabaugh, Claxton Elementary, *Robotics-Time to Level Up*
- Carol Smith, Dutch Valley Elementary, *Let's Get Growing*

### Campbell County (1)

- Tiffany Logsdon, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *VR in the Classroom—Bringing Science to Life*

### Knox County (6)

- Vincent Dave, Jr., Gresham Middle, *Special Delivery Drones*
- Megan Goebel, Mill Creek Elementary, *STEM-ulate Innovation*
- Katie Lusk, Amherst Elementary, *Learning Through the Senses*
- Jessica McGhee, Karns High, *Coding with the TI-Innovator Hub and Rover*
- Annett Romer, Northshore Elementary, *Ozobot Goes on a Seesaw*
- Elizabeth Stewart, Farragut Primary, *Make it Move!*

### Maryville City (1)

- Michael Wise, Maryville Junior High, *Ready Graduate Program*

### Morgan County (3)

- Margie Branstetter, Petros Joyner School, *STEM Outdoor Learning*
- Erin Miller, Oakdale, *Career Exploration in a Box*
- Susanne Pemberton, Coalfield, *Root for Coding Fun!*

### Oak Ridge City Schools (4)

- Amelia Bell, Glenwood Elementary, *Let's Get Cooking! Linking Science, Math, and Literature Through Cooking Experiences*
- Lisa Buckner, Linden Elementary, *STEMovation: Empowering Minds Through Hands-On Exploration*
- Mark Buckner, Oak Ridge High, *Wild About Manufacturing*
- Janie Shanafield, Jefferson Middle, *Empowering Emerging Engineers*

### Roane County (4)

- Becky Efferson, Dyllis Springs Elementary, *STEM Makes Us BRIGHTER!*
- Carly Harrison, Dyllis Springs Elementary, *"Light It Up" in Kindergarten*
- Victoria Henley, Harriman Middle, *Make Our STEM Lab Functional!*

- Briley Johnson, Midtown Elementary, “Growing” a School Community

#### Scott County (4)

- Eric Blakley, Scott High, *Making Waves: A Classroom Saltwater Tank Ecosystem*
- Christy Blevins, Burchfield Elementary, *Empowering Young Meteorologists: Enhancing Weather Observation in 2nd Grade Classroom*
- Judy Carson, Huntsville Elementary, *Once Upon a Fairytale and More...*
- Paige Roark, Burchfield Elementary, *Can You Build It?*

#### Union County (2)

- Sarah Maness, Horace Maynard Middle, *Know, Sow, and We All Grow!*
- Jennifer Smith, Big Ridge Elementary, *Literacy in Science*

#### Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School (7)

- Rebecca Blanchard, *Enhancing Science Through Reading*
- Lev Gross-Comstock, *Illuminating Innovation: A STEAM Project for Chanukah 2024*
- Brooke Haskins, *The Joy of a Butterfly Garden*
- Brooke Haskins, *Space Explorers*
- Virginia Kessler, *Stitching with STEAM*
- Nikki Sawyers, *Kindergarten Makers Space*
- Jessica Vose, *Magnetism and Electricity*

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