

## Teaching to the Latest Technology

*Foundation Provides \$22,000 for a New Car for Danville High School Auto Shop*

Technology isn't standing still, especially in the automotive industry. What began as a simple "wish" provided to the Danville Public School Foundation became a transformative opportunity for students in the Automotive Technology program at Danville High School.

DHS Automotive Technology teacher, Michael Ladd, never expected that his classroom wish to replace the 2000 Buick in his auto shop could become a reality. "At the Danville Public School Foundation, I have learned that teachers always have a wish list for their classrooms," said DPSF Executive Director Stephanie Yates. "I have also learned they are often hesitant to ask for what they need. If teachers don't submit ideas to DPSF, then we need to get creative in collecting them."

*"By training on the exact technology currently entering dealership service bays, our graduates will be much better prepared to enter the work force or tech school."  
Michael Ladd, DHS Automotive Technology*

At the start of the school year, during District 118's Teacher Institute Day at Danville High School, the Foundation set up a Wish Table to gather ideas. In exchange for a Hershey bar, teachers and teaching assistants were invited to share their classroom wishes. Many innovative ideas became real-life classroom projects from wishes collected that day – one of those being a request for a new vehicle for Mr. Ladd's Automotive Technology classes.

After reviewing submissions, DPSF followed up with many teachers, including Mr. Ladd, encouraging them to complete an online endowment request. The Foundation worked



Delivery of new car on May 4, 2026 to Danville High School. Pictured from left to right are: Matt Spady, Toyota Sales Professional; Stephanie Yates, Executive Director DPSF; Dustin Sheahan, Toyota Sales Manager; Gabriel Hawley, student; Isiah Madden, student; Roy Anderson, student; Bob Richard, Support Specialist DPSF; Dawson Stack, student; Alexandria Browning, student; and Michael Ladd, DHS Automotive Technology Teacher.

closely with Mr. Ladd to determine what type of vehicle best aligned with teaching requirements. Initially, a 2023 Toyota Corolla LE was identified as an ideal option to upskill students on modern automotive systems, including fuel management, computer networking, and electronic safety features. Mr. Ladd stated, "The addition of the 2024 Toyota Corolla LE to our automotive lab marks a pivotal shift in how we prepare students for the workforce. This isn't just a vehicle; it's a high-tech learning platform. With its Dynamic Force engine featuring dual-injection technology and the Toyota Safety Sense 3.0 suite, our students will be able to engage in both mechanical repair and study electronics and advanced sensor diagnostics".

*(See Car Page 3)*

DR. DAVID L FIELDS

2026

# Evening of Excellence

The Danville Public School Foundation is proud to sponsor the **Dr. David L. Fields Excellence in Teaching Awards**. Established in 2001 and named in honor of former District 118 Superintendent Dr. David L. Fields, these awards are bestowed annually to outstanding teachers and staff who represent the finest in teaching and educational support.



**BUILDING BRIDGES IN EDUCATION AWARD: MRS. PATTY JUAREZ**

Patty serves as the Home Program Intervention Coordinator and a Qualified Interpreter for the district. A vital liaison between the school district and its Spanish-speaking families, she provides critical support to the district's unhoused and at-risk families.

**EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR: MS. ANGI HARDEN**

As a Teaching Assistant, Angi plays a vital role in benchmark testing and progress monitoring at Kenneth D. Bailey Academy. In addition, she provides small-group and one-on-one academic interventions to support student success. One of Ms. Harden's greatest strengths is her ability to build meaningful relationships with the students at KDBA.



**NEW TEACHER OF THE YEAR: MRS. JESSICA GARMON**

Jessica was recognized for her supportive approach with students and her commitment to helping every learner succeed. She clearly communicates daily learning goals so students understand what they are working toward and approaches instruction with an equity mindset, meeting students where they are.



**ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR: MR. KAHLAR DREWS**

District 118 Alumni and music teacher at Meade Park Elementary, Kahlar brings joy and excitement to his classes, creating an engaging environment where students thrive. He founded the Meade Park Drumline (funded by DPSF), providing 4th grade students with the opportunity to learn percussion instruments.



**HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR: MR. GAGE WOMACK.**

Mr. Womack, an orchestra teacher at DHS, has exceptional ability to build meaningful relationships with students in ways that empower success. He also partners with the Danville Symphony Orchestra (DSO), university professors, and clinicians to provide enriching opportunities and experiences for the students.



*Congratulations to the 2026 Award Winners!*

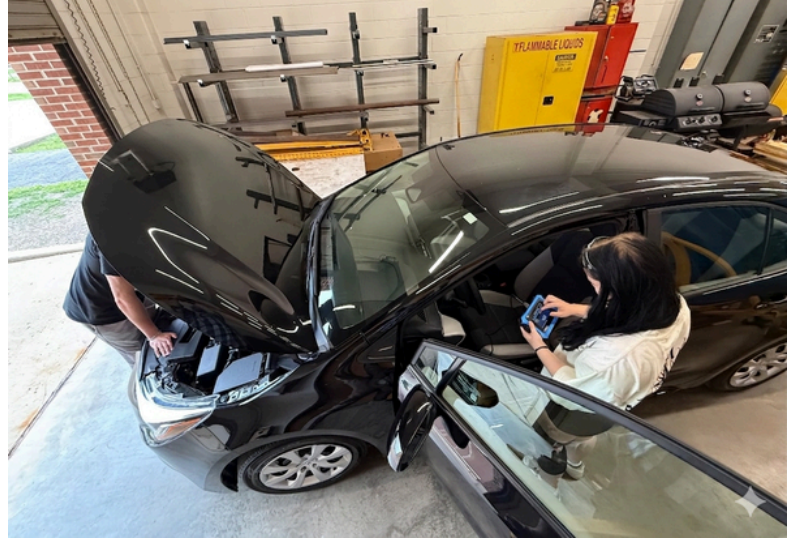
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In addition to the vehicle, Mr. Ladd sought to build a partnership with Toyota of Danville—one that could provide students with real-world exposure through guest speakers and potential site visits to their automotive service department.

Toyota of Danville, a longtime supporter of the Foundation, partnered with DPSF to bring the project to life. On May 4, 2026, the dealership delivered a 2024 Toyota Corolla SE—an upgrade from the original request. Toyota of Danville's Service Department has begun dialogue with Mr. Ladd about educational partnership opportunities for his class.

*"Having this new vehicle will allow students to have relevant and up to date experiences in the current world of automotive repair and technology. Thank you to the DPSF for their generosity and commitment to providing our students with top notch learning materials."*

*Jacob Bretz, Principal Danville High School*



### **Students working on the new car in auto shop class.**

The Automotive Technology request received strong support from District 118 leadership and the DPSF Board of Directors. As a result, \$22,097.60 was awarded, which also provided an online vehicle repair manual and automotive wheel dollies for the lab.

This was one of 27 classroom grants fulfilled by the Foundation since July of 2025 for a total of over \$159,000.

## **Danville Public School Foundation's Board of Directors & Staff:**

**Officers:** President Curt Ellis, Vice President Mark A. Denman, Secretary Lisa Campbell, Treasurer Mark J. Denman  
**Directors:** Adam Brown, Jim Christison, Dr. David Fields, Emma Forrest, Trinidad Hernandez, Debi Hosch, Todd Lichtenberger, Mark Lindvahl, Alex Rosdail, Lester Potts, Patti Rull

**Ex-Officio Members:** Superintendent John Hart, School Board Rep. Alice Payne, DEA Representative Julie Legg

**Staff:** Executive Director Stephanie Yates, Support Specialist Bob Richard

# *Thank You* **Curt Ellis**

After nine years serving as President of the Danville Public School Foundation, Curt Ellis is stepping down. But lucky for DPSF, he is continuing his role as a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors which he has served on since 2007. Curt's genuine kindness and team approach to leadership kept fellow board members and staff engaged and aligned to the mission. Over \$1,000,000 in funding was awarded under his leadership to enhance educational opportunities for students at D118. We appreciate Curt's 19 year (and counting) commitment to DPSF!



**Curt Ellis**

DPSF Board President

Mark A. Denman, retired District 118 Superintendent, will be assuming the role of Board President in July. Mark, too, will be exceptional and we wish him well in his new role!

# What's **NEW** From YOU

Because You Deserve a Chance to See the Difference Your Generosity Makes in the Classroom



## Liberty Elementary Classroom Set of Headphones

Liberty Elementary teacher Jeremy Pettit requested 108 sets of noise-canceling headphones to assist his students in listening to instruction and reading online content in the Core Knowledge Language Arts Reading Program. He explained that the headphones can help students stay focused on the concepts they are learning and lead to better understanding of key vocabulary terms and comprehension of the text. Students benefit from enhanced concentration and productivity. Mr. Pettit was very grateful to DPSF for providing these additional resources for his classroom.



**Award: \$775**



## South View Upper Elementary Total Fitness Room

South View Upper Elementary teachers Kimberlyn Youhas and Aubrey Orr were awarded a \$10,000 Endowment Award to purchase a “total fitness room package”. The package consists of various pieces of fitness equipment and will be used throughout the year. It was a much needed addition to the physical education offerings. When told of the award Ms. Youhas wrote, “HOW EXCITING! Thank you so much for this opportunity! My 5<sup>th</sup> Hour class was just told the news, and they were ecstatic for me and their peers! I will also say thank you from our entire department as this will be a major benefit for each of our classes.”



**Award: \$10,000**



## Band Instruments for Danville High School

At the beginning of the 2025/26 school year, Danville High School had more band students than available instruments. The District was able to purchase some additional instruments, but did not have the budget to meet all the needs. The Danville Public School Foundation stepped in and provided funding for two clarinets, four trumpets, four alto saxophones, one tenor saxophone, a baritone saxophone and one trombone. With these additional instruments students are no longer required to share resources resulting in greater hands-on learning opportunities.



**Award: \$26,547**



# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual 365 Club Breakfast A Success!

On Thursday, April 16, 2026, the Danville Public School Foundation hosted its 17th Annual **365 Club** Breakfast, welcoming over 150 guests- including donors, students and District 118 staff- to Turtle Run for a morning of celebration and community impact.

The event began with breakfast followed by a brief program highlighting three of the 27 projects funded by the foundation over the past year. Board President Curt Ellis opened the program with an introduction of the Board of Directors.

Executive Director Stephanie Yates thanked event sponsors—**The Julius W. Hegeler II Foundation, Earthrise Energy, Iroquois Federal Foundation, OSF Healthcare, EnvirOx, and Saltgrass Steakhouse**—for making the event possible, and provided an update on foundation activities.



**DPSF Executive Director Stephanie Yates**

Curt Ellis was recognized for his nine years of service as Board President and his continued dedication as a DPSF board member since 2007.



**Former Executive Director Bob Richard**

Bob Richard, who retired as Executive Director this fiscal year was honored with a plaque and will be recognized on the donor wall at Danville High School. After retiring from a 36-year career with the Danville Police Department, Bob Richard became Executive Director of the foundation in 2009. At that



**Bob Richard (far right) with students & teachers from South View Upper Elementary**

time, the organization faced significant needs, had limited assets, and no fundraiser. Bob introduced the **365 Club**, built on the idea of donating \$1 per day for a year—and to this day 365 Club membership has continued to grow.

Stephanie Yates noted, “It is the work of Bob Richard that has put this foundation on the map, growing the endowment by over 1700% through his determination, belief in the mission, community relationships, and the support of our amazing donors.”

Over the past year, the foundation has provided more than \$170,000 to support its mission of enhancing educational opportunities for students in Danville Public Schools.



**OSF employees enjoying the 365 Club Breakfast.**

Three funded projects were showcased during the breakfast:

- At Northeast Elementary, new microscopes for second-grade classrooms were introduced through a partnership with the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois. Principal Brent Lockhart, teacher Melissa Sergent, and three students shared how the microscopes have transformed their learning experiences.
- South View Upper Elementary highlighted the addition of bowling to its physical education curriculum. Principal Robin Fluno, along with PE teachers Kimberlyn Youhas and Aubrey Orr, brought eight students who demonstrated the program by setting up bowling lanes at the venue and inviting guests to participate
- Meade Park Elementary presented “Drumming Around the World,” a project featuring world drums that has expanded performance opportunities for students. Principal Tanner DeLaurier, music teacher Kahlar Drews and

eight students spoke about the program before closing the event with a fantastic live drumline performance.

“This event is truly a celebration for our donors,” Yates said. “It allows them to see firsthand the difference they are making, while also showcasing the incredible talent of teachers and students at District 118.”



**Meade Park Elementary Student Drummers**

It is not too late to Make a Difference Every Day!  
[CLICK HERE](#) and Join the **365 Club** Today!

## Memorial Donations

### Gifts Received in Memory of Charles “Chuck” Schroeder

James & Catherine Cox, Heather Cunningham, Richard & Joan Edwardson, Charles & Diana Goodin, Gordon & Sandy Green, Donald & Tamara Hackman, Dr. Alice Marie & Darrel Jacobs, Dianna & Kevin Kirk, Dr. Shawn & Mindy Mallady, James & Mary Pate, Daniel Raney, Su and Terry Smith

### Gifts Received in Memory of Sharon Black

Vermilion County Republican Women’s Club

## Walk of Honor

### Sharon Black -

By Vermilion County Republican Women’s Club in Memoriam

### Mary Montgerard-Hurst, Mark Powell, and Joann Puhr

Retiring Teachers with 30 + Years of Service - By District 118

**Lynn Ingrum** - By Friends in Memoriam

**Charles Schroeder** - By Friends in Memoriam