

Team Lead Testimonials

2022, 2023, 2024

Kelly Ross, 4th

As a fourth grade teacher college isn't always thought about this early by my students and possibly my students' parents either. It's just not discussed or a necessity at this age. College or trade school seems so far away. Yet with the CFWC EAS we have started making students and parents more aware of how important it is to start preparing for college or trade school earlier. Students can earn money by just doing their work. They can start saving money now that will help them when they do decide their next step after high school. This program is planting the seed in our young students to start thinking about their future and making the plans to be prepared for whatever they decide to do with it.

Mary Jo Wynn, 5th

Mr. Keaffaber, superintendent of the MSDWC, continually tells our students to "Dream Big and Work Hard." The Early Award Scholarship Program gives us an avenue to help students meet that challenge. When we ask, "What would you like to do when you grow up?" we are challenging them to dream big. When we assign work and set expectations for them to meet, we are challenging them to work hard. Not only are they challenged to "Dream Big and Work Hard" each day at school, they are afforded the opportunity to dream a little bigger because someone else is investing in them. Someone else is paying attention to their work, their grades, their account. I believe this allows them to think "Hmm, maybe I can be an astronaut...a nurse...a mechanic...a physicist...a doctor...a chef...because someone else believes I can."

Tammy Shafer, 6th

Cody McClure, 7th

CFWC's EAS program gives students an opportunity to learn about options that will be available for them in the future.

Todd Ward, 8th

My students typically feel a significant disconnect between what they do in school on a regular basis and what they might experience in "real life". They do worksheets, read through materials, perhaps consider hypothetical scenarios in class, but seldom does any of this feel like it will have any real world context for them. The EAS program offers them a bridge between those worlds. The opportunity to have real funds put into a real account with their name on it is finally a step toward real work, earning, and achievement beyond their daily school sphere.

Matt Denney, 4th

My experiences with the Community Foundation Scholarship has been fantastic. It has given students an avenue to both save money for post high school education and to look at all the different options that can be available. We take our students to Heartland Career Center as part of our College Go Week experience. When we return we talk about how there are many careers in the skilled trades where CFWC 529 funds can be used in addition to a traditional 2 or 4 year college experience. The 529 scholarship fund gives us an avenue to help kids with their educational expenses and also to begin discussions on different career options while in elementary school.

Natalie Unger, 5th

Conversations about post-high school options are very important. This program reveals relevant, impactful pathways that may be overlooked to the general public. EAS ignites conversations between children and adults that spark opportunities that otherwise may have been disregarded.

Mary Norman, 5th**Cory Blocker, 6th grade**

I have noticed kids love to interact after seeing their statements and comparing with each other. It leads those not involved to ask how it works and what they need to be doing. We gave out candy bars to those involved, and again kids were taking the paperwork home, so they could get signed up.

Sabrina White, 7th

As a seventh grade teacher, I see students who are still engaged in school and willing to work. However, at this age they are just beginning to think about their futures. Some students are fully aware that adulthood lies on the horizon while others struggle to acknowledge the need for any thoughts of their futures. When I hand out statements of money earned to my students through the E.A.S.P., those dreams of a future become more tangible in their eyes. I watch as they share their numbers with one another or smile and pack the paper away for later. It is a beautiful reminder that there is a future ahead of them and it is as big as they can dream it to be. The quarterly assignments help create a scaffold, reminding students to think about their tomorrows and to work hard for whatever they want those tomorrows to be. For these reasons, I have enjoyed my first year working with the Community Foundation of Wabash County and look forward to more positive interactions such as these in the future. I appreciate the foundation and the Early Award Scholarship Program for helping students to find their dreams and to reach for them.

Tyler Cook, 8th

In 8th grade students begin to map out their four year high school plan with the guidance office. This is a stressful day for some students because it focuses on answering the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" They start to see that their course selections in high school, their GPA, their desire to do an internship or attend Heartland Career Center, and their future career plans are all impacted by the academic choices they make as a freshman. The Early Award Scholarship Program is crucial for middle school students to have the opportunity to start to think about their future before they do their high school planning. From the College and Career Week activities, to actual cash they can track being deposited into their accounts, The EAS program opens the door for crucial conversations with students about the importance of their future. I also think the EAS Program sends a message to Wabash County students that they matter and that their future is important.

Kari Johnson, 8th

The Community Foundation of Wabash County's Early Award Scholarship Program is a great tool that we can use in the classroom to talk to our students about their futures, the possibilities, and the reality that higher education is available to everyone. It's a great way to remind them to not only dream about all of the possibilities that their future holds, but also to give them hope that that future is obtainable.

Janet Sparks, 4th

Alyson Keefer, 5th

Ashley Thomas, 6th

The Community Foundation of Wabash County isn't just another program. It is setting students up for a brighter future no matter what career or college path they choose. It warms my heart knowing my students have so many aspirations in life, and contributing to their Early Award Scholarship fund can make all the difference. What is really innovative about The Community Foundation of Wabash County is the students are working towards these goals themselves. With essay writing, keeping their grades up, scholar of the quarter, etc, the possibilities are endless. Those who are enrolled also get incentives so that maybe next nine weeks they will try harder to reach their goal if they didn't get it. Those who are not enrolled get to see all of the opportunities and become interested in the process. I love the fact that we are helping students with their future, even those who haven't decided yet, and it starts in third grade. Starting that young with working towards a scholarship fund and sharing a positive outlook on the program, will hopefully keep students engaged for many years to come.

Ryan Evans, 7th grade

It's hard for kids to decide what they want to be when they "grow up." There's so many options. In today's job market just a simple high school diploma won't let kids prosper, they need some

type of training to enhance their skills. This can be a 2-year, 4-year, or apprenticeship. This type of training isn't free or cheap. That's where the CFWC comes in. They allow students to save money for this type of education after high school. This program even pays students while they are in elementary - high school just for completing work in class.

Zach Wenrich, 8th grade

Wabash County is facing issues which will require an "all hands on deck" approach to solve. Like many teachers, I firmly believe the way to approach solving these issues (socioeconomic/generational poverty, for example) is through education. I go to my job everyday like someone who is hellbent on reaching one student a day to help them achieve their goals. If I can get one student everyday to believe what they are doing now, in 8th grade, is going to help them out sometime in the future I consider it a win. The tricky part of doing this is convincing kids the content I teach is actually going to do that. Sometimes teaching kids how the government works doesn't do the job, which is where the CFWC Early Scholarship Awards activities come in. Having kids put their future on a timeline helps them visualize what they will be doing, teaching kids there will be choices they get to make, and roadblocks to overcome helps me to achieve my goal of reaching that one kid everyday. The activities are great at developing kids' intrinsic motivation to achieve their goals, but at the end of the day most kids need something extrinsic, a reward, for what they are doing on an everyday basis to help them achieve these goals. Not only do these activities help them out internally, but the students are able to get paid for doing these activities. The reports we hand out quarterly are a reminder to the students what they are doing is literally helping to achieve their goals. I know I am passionate about what I do, and based on what students have said after they graduate I know the passion is helping. However, I can only do so much. With the help of the CWFC, I am able to gear my passion towards solving the issues Wabash County is facing and will continue to face. The activities and funding provided for the Early Award Scholarship program helps me do my job, and more importantly reminds my students what they are doing matters.

Nickole Dennis, 4th grade

Michelle Story, 5th grade

The Community Foundation Early Award Scholarship Program has given me ideas and opportunities to help me get my students thinking about their futures and the paths that are available to them to help them reach their goals. From visits from Heartland Career Center where opportunities for hands-on apprenticeships and technical training are available to researching college degrees and types of colleges and universities, my students walk away from my class knowing that there are many options available to them. Students have enjoyed participating in college visits, career exploration in programs such as JA Biztown, and exploring personality and career inventories that helped them see job potentials. They have been challenged to write essays that put their academic and research skills to the test. Students are also challenged to work hard now to start achieving their future dreams by giving them opportunities to earn money each year just by doing their daily classwork and working to show

growth on test scores. The Community Foundation Early Award Scholarship Program has been an instrumental tool in my teacher's toolbox to encourage students to begin planning for their futures.

Emily Penrod, 5th/6th grade

Tiffany Eiler, 4th grade

Alyssa Eddy, 5th grade

In my experience, most scholarships and career-oriented initiatives focus solely on college-bound students. However, college is not the right path for everyone. As the daughter of a machine trades teacher, I recognize the value of vocational education. The CFWC allows me to emphasize this in my classroom thanks to the ability to use scholarship dollars for apprenticeships and trade schools.

Heather Terflinger, 6th grade

The EAS program has given us an avenue to integrate conversations and activities about college and careers into our sixth-grade curriculum that were previously lacking. These conversations and explorations have allowed students to begin thinking and getting excited about possible career paths. The scholarship money and extra treats are an added bonus that enrolled students get excited about each quarter.

Leslie Altimus, 7th grade

Emily Ludwig, 7th grade

This program has improved students' enthusiasm with certain assignments. My favorite part of it is that students start thinking about their futures early with intention. They begin to set more goals early on and can start to see how those goals and dreams can be achievable, with help from the program. I also think it helps with their self-esteem when they do well on assignments and earn money toward their scholarship, because it's something they worked for and earned, but also because they are recognized for their efforts. They know that their families, and their teachers, are proud of them and that they should be proud of themselves.

Amy Ambrose, 8th grade

1. Why are you a team lead?

The 8th grade preparing for college and careers class is teaching students to think about their future and what career do they think they would like to have. I am a team leader because it was a perfect fit in the class.

2. What impact do you see on students and/or families?

I see students starting to think about their future. Some students don't see the connection at the beginning of the semester. But when they are planning classes for high school, they can see how the rest of the class gets them ready for high school.

3. How is your classroom/school/community better with EAS?

Helps a family with some money for college or tech school that would not have been there,

4. When has a student behaved differently or worked harder because of EAS?

They can make the connection between what they learn at school and what they need to get to the job they want.

Alyssa McDowell, 8th grade