

FUTURE DEFINING

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AeroVironment makes an impact on local schools through its Corporate Social Responsibility Program

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As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility Program, AeroVironment continued its commitment to making an impact in the community in 2019 by earmarking money for the Simi Valley Education Foundation's (SVEF) annual Enhancements Grant Program. AeroVironment chose to fund grants specifically for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-related projects throughout the Simi Valley Unified School District. Money was awarded based on grant requests written by teachers for the enhancement of education in their classrooms. Distributed funds were presented in person at each school for immediate use.

The Simi Valley Unified School District is Ventura County's second largest school district (as of the 2018-2019 school year), and it serves the city of Simi Valley and the unincorporated Ventura County areas adjacent to the city's borders.

Being such a large district poses a myriad of logistical concerns, among which is robust funding for worthwhile programs, updated classroom equipment, and day-to-day supplies. Many instructors take the burden upon themselves

to provide the basics – from paper and pencils to calculators – but they can't close the gap alone.

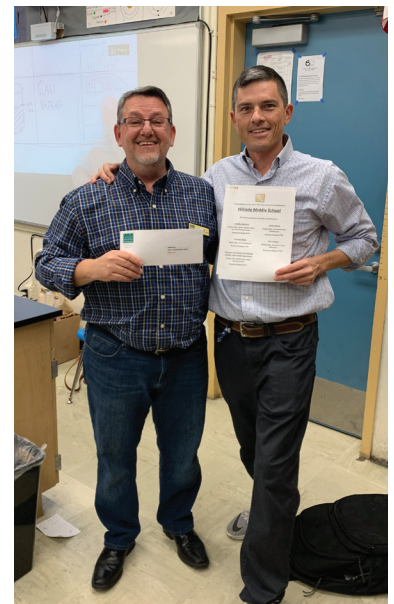
In order to be considered for funding, teachers must complete a grant request that expresses the classroom need, the expected learning outcomes, and the budget for the project. Each submittal is then gathered and evaluated by an SVEF committee

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—Erik Temple

in a blind review process. Once approved, it's a quick turnaround to cut checks and deliver them to each school.

Funds received from AeroVironment were divided into 15 grants and distributed to the local K-12 schools for efforts ranging from acquiring scientific calculators for the Royal High School chemistry class; furnishing supplies in a MakerSpace at Township Elementary; providing a Vex V5 Robot starter kit at Santa Susana High School; and for telescopes at Hillside Middle School.



AeroVironment employee and past SVEF president, Mike James (l), presents grant money to teacher Erik Temple of Hillside Middle School in November 2019.

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"Telescopes are going to give the students more perspective than any standard science lesson plan could," said Erik Temple of Hillside Middle School. Temple's class was awarded an Enhancement Grant to procure telescope building kits for the classroom.

The class will be responsible for building the initial set of telescopes with Temple's guidance. The students' handiwork will be tested by using the telescopes to observe, track, and graph the moon's phases. Each group will be tasked with presenting their findings to the rest of the class.

Through this telescope project, students will learn how to problem solve, plan and carry out an investigation, analyze gathered data, construct explanations, utilize critical thinking skills, and further develop their communication skills. Nearly 200 students will be directly affected by this project

this year alone. After the initial build, the telescopes will remain in the classroom to benefit a new set of youngsters coming in each school year. Sounds like the making of young scientists and engineers!

"As a champion of education, 100% of AeroVironment's sponsorship goes directly to the classroom for STEM-based learning programs. We are forever grateful for their partnership helping us make a difference in the lives and futures of our students and teachers," said Kristin Tignac, 2019 SVEF president.

Through this program alone, AeroVironment has impacted more than half of the schools in Simi Valley in 2019. The company plans to continue supporting education in the local community, working arm in arm with the SVEF. We'll get back with more on how these grants are growing students. Stay tuned!