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## MEF funds new elementary science program

By Jenn Freedman



Photo Ana Moon

The Moraga School District has launched a new elementary science program this fall with the help of a generous grant from the Moraga Education Foundation (MEF). The program adds two new dedicated, credentialed science teachers who lead all elementary students through UC Berkeley's FOSS science curriculum each week.

Longtime fourth grade teachers Millie Tang from Los Perales and Virginia Drury from Donald Rheem have been tapped to teach the new curriculum. Both passionate and experienced educators, Drury also previously held a similar position at San Ramon Unified as a science specialist.

FOSS is a product of UC Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science, made by scientists and teachers. The FOSS program aims to make students active investigators instead of passive spectators. Awarded more than any other science program in America, FOSS is widely recognized for its quality, rigor, support, and effectiveness.

"Many children think they are 'not good' at certain academic subjects, like science, at an early age. My goal is to help students learn to love learning and find answers to problems. . We want students to love science, ask questions, and wonder about the world around them," Drury shares.

Tang adds, "We want our students to continue to be curious about the world around them, to be bold, to

carry on their investigations and research outside of our classrooms. We want them to be relentless with their search for the 'how-to' and their 'I wonder.'"

With the new program, each student receives 45 minutes of hands-on lab work in the new, dedicated science classroom each week. In addition, Drury and Tang are leading teachers with a coordinated science lesson in the classroom. They have even created an internal website for the classroom teachers to share student progress, lessons, and links to ensure easy accessibility for all educators.

"The more people that are sharing and teaching the same subject, the more impactful it is going to be for the student," Brian Sullivan, principal at Rheem, emphasizes.

"My first graders call themselves scientists," a teacher recently mentioned to Ana Moon, president of MEF. "To have that be in their vocabulary that they identify as a scientist, it's going to open up so many possibilities for these kids to envision themselves enrolling in STEM electives at JM or taking classes like Biotech or Computer Integrated Manufacturing at Campolindo High School," Moon said.

MEF has been supporting Moraga's public schools for over 40 years. Thanks to the generous community of donors, MEF granted \$2.55 million to Moraga public schools this year, making these science teachers and many other programs possible.

Donations fund academics, enrichment, academic support, and student wellness.?

The 2022-2023 Giving Campaign is going on now to raise funds for next year's grant. Donations can be made online at [moragaeducation.org](http://moragaeducation.org).

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