Erin Sims, Alan Crockett, Among Area Recipients Of Western Governors University Grant Awards

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GODFREY - Two area teachers, one from Godfrey and another from Edwardsville, will be the recipients of the Western Governors University Grant Awards. The K-12 teachers were among a dozen in Illinois that were selected by the online, nonprofit university to receive funding for their innovative classroom projects.

Four K-12 teachers from the Metro East area have received grants totaling $1,830 through Western Governors University's "Fund My Classroom" initiative. The grants

will be used to fund innovative classroom projects that foster learning in new, unique ways.

Erin Sims, a third-grade teacher at Albert Cassens Elementary School in Edwardsville, received a $200 grant to purchase a diverse set of reading materials for her third-grade classroom.

Pastor Alan Crockett, a K-8 teacher at the American Christian Academy in Godfrey, received a $1,000 grant to purchase an iPad and a computer for his classroom.

The other recipients include:

Jennifer Winkeler, a third and fourth-grade science teacher at St. John the Baptist Catholic School in Smithton, who received a $150 grant to purchase modeling clay, a bag of sand, a box of Plaster of Paris powder, paint brushes, a fossil sorting kit and a few pocket LED handheld microscopes for students to complete hands-on science explorations.

PJ Creek, an eighth-grade science teacher at Carriel Junior High School in O'Fallon, who received a $480 grant to purchase a set of Sam Kean's *The Disappearing Spoon* for his entire class to inspire them to read more science-based literature.

"We were happy to read about all the amazing projects our teachers have planned and are excited we can bring so many to life through our 'Fund My Classroom' initiative," said Dr. Angie Besendorfer, Regional Vice President of Western Governors University. "This past year has been a challenging one for both teachers and students as they were forced to adapt to new styles of teaching and learning.

"This initiative is an opportunity for WGU to celebrate teachers and thank them for their dedication to educating and positively impacting their students, while enhancing learning for students – both in and out of the classroom."

The innovative classroom projects were among 12 in Illinois chosen by Western Governors University to receive funding. The nonprofit university issued a call in March for K-12 teachers across the area to nominate proposed classroom projects for the opportunity to receive full or partial funding through its "Fund My Classroom" initiative. More than 60 nominations were received statewide. Most grants were awarded during Teacher Appreciation Week, which ran from May 3 – 7.

To learn more about the "Fund My Classroom" initiative and the work WGU is doing to help teachers advance their careers, visit wgu.edu.