



# GRANT UPDATE

**JANUARY 28, 2013**

## Linking Learning Through Bracelet Club

Holland Elementary's Friendship Bracelet Club was created in 2010 to provide opportunities for Intensive Learning Support (ILS) students to practice social, academic and therapeutic goals while engaging in a fun activity with their peers. Skills and strategies from math, language arts, and speech are strengthened as students learn to socialize and interact appropriately with their general-education peers, all while crafting one-of-a-kind creations.

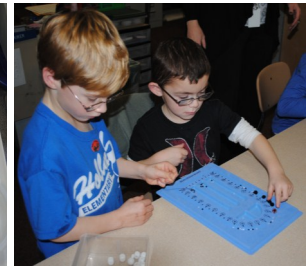
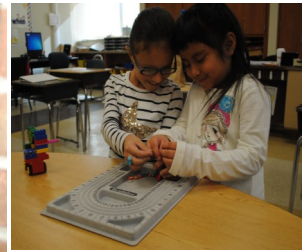
During this first year, ILS teacher Melanie Kiker envisioned the program's expansion and reached out to the Council Rock Education Foundation (CREF) for help in bringing her ideas to reality. Through a grant from CREF in 2011, Ms. Kiker was able to expand the program to include all students, Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade and create a collaborative service project with Goodnoe Elementary students as well.

In 2012, this Friendship Bracelet project teamed the Holland Bracelet Club with Goodnoe Elementary to conduct a jewelry sale, offering students from both schools the precious opportunity to meet and collaborate with a new peer. According to Holland ILS teacher Mrs. Melanie Kiker, the exchange was invaluable because Holland students were able to generalize the skills they learned in an isolated classroom environment and to demonstrate their achievement in peer-to-peer collaborations.

CREF funding not only helped the Bracelet Club expand the number of students participating, it also helped maintain beading supplies and the purchase of sorting and storage equipment. Bracelet Club sales generated proceeds of over \$2000, all of which was donated to the Miracle League in 2012.

"This program is flexible, and can be tailored for students from K-6," said Mrs. Kiker. "They begin with following directions and later being more creative and following their own pattern." The program also integrates in-school interventions, such as occupational and speech therapy, helping students practice fine-motor, manual dexterity, and conversational skills.

Ultimately, Mrs. Kiker feels that empowerment is the main benefit to students from Bracelet Club, best summed up by Tyler, an eager 6<sup>th</sup> grade participant: "My favorite part is sorting stuff and sorting the beads". By offering learning support students a fun and creative way to participate in an activity with their classmates, **Holland Elementary's Bracelet Club** will continue to promote growth and engagement among a diverse student population



Submitted by Andrea Mangold

Photos provided by Holland Elementary staff