**Previous MMSA Mini-Grant Winners**

**“Caching In with Middle School Learners” Kasson-Mantorville Middle School, Kasson, MN, 6th grade team**

Our 6th grade team would like to implement a project using GPS units in our Science, Math, and Language Arts classes with the introduction of geocaching. Students will use the GPS along with problem solving and algebra skills to locate coordinates to find hidden caches. Students will be evaluated through a technical writing assignment. Utilizing this tool in the middle school classroom will be a way we can integrate technology while implementing an interdisciplinary project. We will also be “caching in” on the strengths and interests of middle schoolers while promoting physical activity and possibly a lifelong hobby.

**“DMS Rockin’ Multimedia Production” Discovery Middle School, Alexandria, MN, Rebecca Hartness**

As 6th grade teachers, we are truly the transition year between elementary and middle school. We’ve noticed that our students are not quite ready for the leap into middle school. Through this experience our students will embark on a journey of self-discovery, transforming the way they work together and respond to risk. In the end, we hope to build self-confidence and team spirit as we develop their ability to problem solve and resolve conflict creatively. We will implement and revisit the lessons learned throughout the school year so that we can create a more unified, cohesive team.

**“Tattered Pages Bookstore” Northfield Middle School, Northfield, MN, Amy Sieve**

Three years ago, as part of my PLC (Professional Learning Community) I conducted a survey on the reading habits of our lowest and our highest scoring Middle School students on the reading portion of the MCA test. The data confirmed my suspicion that successful students have lots of book in their homes, they receive books as gifts, they live in homes where books are valued, and they spend their free time reading for pleasure. Likewise, the data also confirmed that less successful students don't have the same access to books in their homes, don't receive books as presents, and don't place much value on books.

With this information, I put together a plan to open The Tattered Pages, a used bookstore in our school. Through newsletters, articles in the local newspaper, advertisements, and speaking engagements I solicited donations. I also received grants and new book donations from our local colleges and retail bookstores. Today, The Tattered Pages contains over 3,000 new and used books that students and their families can buy. What makes The Tattered Pages unique, however, is that books are "bought" using play currency, or earned coupons, rather than real money. Students earn these coupons in a variety of ways, including:

Donations- students receive a coupon for every book they donate

Working in The Tattered Pages- the store is open all day every day, and it is *completely* managed by student workers.

Doing a job from the Job Jar- staff members send me jobs they need done in their classrooms, and students earn coupons when they fulfill these jobs. These jobs include sweeping classroom floors, dusting, filing, etc.

Excelling in their classrooms, lunchroom, school bus, etc.- every month staff members (including custodians, bus drivers, etc) receive coupons in their mailboxes. Students who demonstrate good citizenship, or academic excellence, are given coupons by their teacher.

This December we will be holding our *Third Annual Holiday Shopping Extravaganza.* This is held in the evening and is a wonderful opportunity fro students, and their families, to "purchase" gifts for everyone on their holiday list, without spending a dime. As always, the evening will include free gift-wrapping, holiday treats, music, and movies. And, this spring we will be holding our *Third Annual Mother's Day Sale.* This is a time for Mothers and their middle schoolers to come to The Tattered Pages. While the students shop for a Mother's Day present (and have it beautifully gift wrappedl), the mom s are listening to a live chamber orchestra and munching on donated baked pastries and yummy coffee.

Because our Middle School has a large population of Latino students, my goal this year is to find good deals on books to purchase in Spanish.Grant money from the MMSA would be very useful in helping our Spanish collection grow. In this way, we could better serve our Latino families and help put more books into their hands and homes.

**“Flipping Through Minnesota” Kasson-Mantorville Middle School, Kasson, MN, Amy Wix**

Often times while reading Northern Lights in class students will comment that they have visited the area we are talking about. We would like to have a set of Flip Video cameras available for students to check out to record some of the sites they see while on trips with their families. They will be responsible for researching the area and making a presentation back to the class. Students seem to have lost the ability to effectively communicate with others face-to-face. We would like students to record aspects of our social studies curriculum and bring their presentations back to the classroom.