

Morven Park's Center for Civic Impact and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation – Working Together to Provide 21st-Century Skills to LCPS Students

By Gwyneth Mac Murtrie

Gwyneth Mac Murtrie is the Director of Education at Morven Park and oversees the curriculum planning and day to day instruction provided by the Park's education team.

Morven Park is honored and excited to be one of twelve Jack Kent Cooke Foundation 2018 Good Neighbor Grant recipients! The \$35,000 award provides support to the thousands of K-12 Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) students participating in our Center for Civic Impact programs each year. The foundation's support plays a key role in allowing the Park to teach not only civics education but vital 21st-century skills to LCPS students.

The award generously supports supply costs, staffing, and print needs for all nine programs currently offered by Morven Park. This includes replacing butterfly wing costumes that allow 2nd graders to fully immerse themselves into the world of the monarch butterfly, purchasing soil components that let 3rd graders learn how to improve the health of their school's soil, and enhancing the middle and high school programs with updated materials and workbooks. In an effort to continue student leadership development outside of the classroom and outside of the school year, the grant also provides for Morven Park's Youth Leadership Retreat. During the Retreat, middle school students from all over Loudoun County come to Morven Park for three days to learn about leadership styles and how their own style can best be applied to specific situations. Supplies, t-shirts, and meals for Loudoun's emerging leaders will be covered by funds from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

The most exciting opportunity afforded by the Good Neighbor Grant is the underwriting of bus transportation to the Park. While busing might not sound as dazzling as monarch wings, many schools only have funds to send students on one field trip per year and it is hard to compete with the annual trip to the National Zoo or Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Thankfully, funds from the Good Neighbor Grant can be used to cover the cost of transportation from select schools in Loudoun County. This allows teachers and schools to continue their traditional field trips **and** enjoy a new experience at Morven Park.

Additionally, the foundation's grant will allow for the development and implementation of at least one new educational program. Currently, programming is available for nine grade levels, and Morven Park would like to expand into an additional four grade levels. During the 2018-19 school year, Park staff will connect with local teachers to evaluate their greatest curriculum needs and how Morven Park might help meet them with new Center for Civic Impact content.

The Morven Park staff and Board of Trustees are thankful to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation for their careful consideration of our unique educational programs and their recognition of our phenomenal education team. We are proud to partner with the Cooke Foundation to grow the Center for Civic Impact and to reach new schools and more students in the coming year.

To learn more about Morven Park's K-12 offerings, visit www.MorvenPark.org/education. To learn more about the Cooke Foundation's Good Neighbor Grants, visit www.jkcf.org/grants/good-neighbor-grants/. To provide support to the Park's educational curriculum and staff, visit www.MorvenPark.org/DonateNow.