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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRANT PROVIDES STEM TRAINING FOR LIBRARY STAFF AND EDUCATORS IN THE PANHANDLE

(Panama City, FL) The Northwest Regional Library System has received grant funding for the Bay County Scientist in Residence Project which will prepare librarians and educators in the Panhandle to teach intermediate and advanced Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) classes in their communities. The classes for the public will be geared for students ages 10-14. This project has been funded under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Florida Department of State's Division of Library and Information Services. NWRLS staff from Bay, Gulf and Liberty counties are participating in the training as well as librarians and educators from surrounding Panhandle counties.

Our Scientist in Residence, Jason Scott, is an experienced mechanical engineer who will provide training on 3D Printers, Arduino micro-controllers, and building robots. The Scientist in Residence project will be implemented in three phases. Phase I provides training for library staff and other educators who will attend five classes taught by our Scientist in Residence. The first class, which will focus on 3D printing, takes place Monday, February 13 from 1-4 PM at the Bay County Public Library.

In Phase II, Jason Scott will teach classes for the public at the Bay County Public Library and he will be assisted by the participants trained in Phase I. Once the trainees have completed Phases I & II, they will teach their own STEM classes. Project supplies are funded by the grant.

The grant will also fund the purchase of 3D printers which will be available for public use in selected NWRLS locations in August 2017. At least one 3D printer will be available for public use in Bay, Gulf and Liberty counties. Part of the training received during this project is focused on how to create 3D designs and operate 3D printers, so staff will be able to help the public in using these printers when they become available for public use.

As a key partner in education, the Northwest Regional Library System is committed to supporting the school curriculum while also sparking interest in STEM subjects by offering high quality classes, qualified mentors, and the equipment needed for children to design and assemble their own projects. The Bay County Scientist in Residence project website, http://www.nwrls.com/STEM_at_NWRLS.html, will be updated with the lesson plans, videos, and additional resources as the project progresses. A Facebook Group has also been created and is linked through the website. Interested members of the public are encouraged to join the Facebook Group, follow the progress of the grant project, and contribute their own comments and ideas.

For more information about the Scientist in Residence Project contact Robin Shader, Project Manager, at rshader@nwrls.com or 850-522-2109.

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