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Faculty receive grants to fund a variety of projects

Summary:

(April 6, 2004)-Faculty at the University of Minnesota, Morris have recently been awarded grants to fund a variety of projects.

The Lake Region Arts Council recently awarded two grants to promote and enhance the quality and quantity of art in west central Minnesota.

A grant of \$1,970 was received for the Children's Theatre production of "The Hobbit." This marks the fourth consecutive year that the Children's Theatre has received funding from the LRAC. Nearly 3,000 elementary, middle school, and high schools students from the area will be treated to 10 special matinees of "The Hobbit" in mid April. Most of the money from the grant will be used to reduce ticket costs for the shows.

"We are very grateful for the award. It helps us to service many students in a cost-effective manner," said Ray Schultz, assistant professor of theatre arts at UMM.

Some of the money will also be used to help create and publish study guides for schools whose students will attend the shows. The study guides include things such as map making, riddle games, vocabulary, background on the author, and questions for discussion.

Associate Professor of French Matt Senior also received an LRCC grant of \$820 to help finance a March 26 performance of "L'illusion comique (iComic Illusion)" by the nationally renowned theatre troupe, Le Theatre de la Chandelle Verte. The play, which was open to the public, was performed entirely in French by these actors, who have performed it at Harvard University, New York University, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The play was well received, selling out close to 120 of the 140 available seats in UMM's Black Box Theatre. It was attended by students from UMM, Concordia University, NDSU, the College of St. Benedict, as well as high school students within a 90 mile radius of Morris.

"It's something unique and interesting to bring an entirely French play to the area," said Senior. "L'illusion comique, first performed in 1635, shows the fine line between real life and illusion. Following the play there was a 45 minute talkback in which members of the audience were able to ask questions of the players.

A grant from Student Activities at UMM, as well as support from UMM's International Programs Committee, Humanities Division, and theatre arts discipline helped to make the play possible.

Viktor Berberi, professor of Italian, received a \$300 grant from the National Italian American Foundation. Some things the money may be spent on include starting an Italian club on campus, Italian films, and a set up for next year's International Country Fair at UMM.

"We have great students," said Berberi. "It's nice to have [the money] for them to spend."

The Minnesota Humanities Commission recently gave \$3,900 to support the 2004 Learning in Retirement project by Learning Unlimited, an outgrowth of the former Heritage Preservers whose programming continues to be offered by Learning Unlimited, one of the Learning In Retirement Networks (L.I.R.N.) located throughout the State of Minnesota.

Learning Unlimited, the local LIRN organization, embraces, in addition to the once Heritage Preservers program, other local programs that provide intellectual, cultural and other activities directed at older adults in Morris and other communities within approximately a 50-mile radius in all directions of the city. One goal of Learning Unlimited is to, "make sure people have an opportunity to learn throughout life," said Frederick Farrell, the Learning Unlimited Program grant director.

The 2004 project brings cultural and other engaging programs to adult learners, including many seniors, throughout the year. The community-wide programs range from poetry readings to the current National Issues Forum: News Media and Society: How to restore the Public Trust.

From the outset of the program speakers have been brought in from throughout the state, including the local and surrounding communities. "We are fortunate to be in a state that prizes education and in a region with a wide variety of professionals and well-informed citizens who have helped make this a lively, on-going enterprise," said Farrell.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.