



For Immediate Release

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MAXCOURAGE AWARDS INAUGURAL MICRO-GRANTS FOR TEACHERS TO UPDATE AND DIVERSIFY CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

(BOSTON, MA) – Longstanding literacy and social emotional learning non-profit The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum announced today that it will award funding to nine teachers from Boston and beyond to update and diversify their classroom libraries, through its inaugural book micro-grant program.

MAXCourage is a free integrated English Language Arts and Social Emotional Learning curriculum developed thirty-three years ago in partnership with Boston Public Schools. Today, in addition to BPS, the middle-school program is taught in public, private, charter, and parochial schools throughout Massachusetts, across the country, and around the globe, as well as in after-school and summer programs.

The program prompts middle school students to explore the role of courage in the texts they read and in their own lives—how they enact their values in the face of fear, injustice, or adversity. As the capstone of the curriculum, participating students across the nation and around the world write personal essays about a lived experience of courage, and submit them for publication in MAXCourage’s [annual anthology](#) of student writing, *The Courage of Children: Boston and Beyond*, providing a means to amplify youth voice and bear witness to students’ lived experiences.

In an effort to strengthen support for participating teachers and students, in fall 2023, MAXCourage began piloting a new micro-grant program to update and diversify classroom libraries, with an emphasis on sharing stories with their students which contain rich, diverse representations of courage. Through the pilot, any teacher who submitted MAXCourage essays last school year could request \$250 in new books of their choice for their classroom. (Teachers can choose to implement MAXCourage alongside any texts they see fit, though the organization provides suggestions through its list of [Recommended Texts for Teaching About Courage](#), released in fall 2022 as part of an update and expansion of its curriculum offerings.)

On November 28, MAXCourage awarded micro-grants to an inaugural group of nine teachers: Daniel Cesario of Joseph Tynan Elementary School (Boston Public Schools); Aaron Cohen of Blackstone Elementary School (Boston Public Schools); Lizmarie Argueta of Roosevelt K-8 School Boston (Boston Public Schools); Scott Larivee of Mary Lyon K-8 School (Boston Public Schools); Alexias Soares of Roosevelt Middle School (New Bedford Public Schools); Michael Andrews of Barnstable Intermediate School (Barnstable Public Schools); Sabina Kozak of (Our Sisters' School (New Bedford, MA); Amy Rojek of Community Preparatory School (Providence, RI; and Dawn Austin of the American School of Barcelona (Barcelona, Spain).



The books provided by the micro-grants will reach nearly 400 total students across the teachers' classrooms. Teachers said in their funding requests that support for new books helps them to foster text-rich environments and increase student engagement; support inclusion and access for students with disabilities; and increase their libraries' diversity along multiple axes, providing students access to stories that both reflect their lived experiences, and offer windows into the experiences of those who are different from them.

Based on the impacts of book funding teachers reported and the demand for funding, MAXCourage is exploring an expansion of the micro-grant program's small-scale pilot for future school years, Executive Director Carrie Coughlin said.

"MAXCourage is proud to partner with and support teachers and their students by uplifting diverse stories in school libraries which reflect the student body. We hope to expand on this small effort next year," Coughlin said.

To request a copy of the 2023 essay book; learn more about MAXCourage's award-winning free curriculum; or support the continuation and expansion of the micro-grant program, contact MAXCourage at info@maxcourage.org.

About MAXCourage

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, or MAXCourage, was founded by Stephanie Warburg in honor of her son, Max Warburg, a courageous 11-year-old who lost his battle with leukemia in 1991. In his short life, Max helped raise awareness about the importance of creating a bone marrow donor registry.

MAXCourage was founded in Boston and based in residence on the Northeastern University campus. Its free English Language Arts curriculum was the first private curriculum used in Boston Public Schools, and is now taught in public, private, charter, and parochial schools throughout Massachusetts, across the country, and around the globe. In 2023, the organization expanded its curriculum offerings to also serve after-school and summer programs. To date, MAXCourage has reached nearly a quarter-million students, supporting both literacy skill-building and social-emotional learning.