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### Squire Family Foundation Awards Annual Grants

**E. NORTHPORT, NY** – The Squire Family Foundation has announced its commitment of more than \$61,000 for nine grants designed to bring philosophy instruction to pre-college level students, including one grant targeted at young women. The grantees include:

- The Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania
- *Imagine Magazine* (a publication of the Center for Talented Youth)
- Miss Porter's School
- Mt. Greylock Regional High School/Williams College
- Mt. Holyoke College
- New York University
- Teachers College/Columbia University
- University of Memphis Philosophical Horizons Program
- University of North Carolina Philosophy Outreach project

Dominic Sisti at the **Penn Center for Bioethics** will use the funds from the Squire Family Foundation to develop self-contained, all-inclusive curriculum materials designed for high school teachers who would like to teach bioethics but may not have a background in the field. These materials will be offered, free of charge, via the Penn Center for Bioethics and the Squire Family Foundation websites. In addition to these materials, the Center will create a virtual presence advancing the teaching of bioethics in secondary schools.

Under the leadership of its founding director, Arthur L. Caplan, Ph.D., the Penn Center for Bioethics has become a leader in bioethics research and its deployment in the ethical, efficient, and compassionate practice of the life sciences and medicine. Over 20 Fellows and Associates with full- and part-time faculty appointments teach in a number of University of Pennsylvania schools and departments -- including medicine, law, nursing, business, education, philosophy, psychology, sociology, religious studies, and public policy -- and collaborate to advance the interdisciplinary field of Bioethics. For further information, please visit: <http://www.bioethics.upenn.edu/index.php>.

*Imagine Magazine*, a publication of Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth, will devote its March/April 2010 to philosophy for pre-college students. Funds from SFF will underwrite a dramatically expanded digital edition and online presence, and help create a data bank of interested teachers and students.

At **Miss Porter's School**, the grant will underwrite a "Philosophy Professor in Residence" program which will advance the school's desire to integrate philosophy into its curriculum via an interdisciplinary approach. An alum, now a philosophy doctoral candidate, will spend a week on campus, working with subject area teachers and

encouraging students to consider philosophy as a field of study or career. Through the Philosophy Professor in Residence Program, the students of Miss Porter's will not only be able to see what kind of role philosophy has played in the pursuit of knowledge historically; they will also be encouraged to pose philosophical questions about important contemporary issues.

The Squire Family Foundation sees the opportunity to reach young women as imperative since only 21% of professional philosophers are women (only 27% of philosophy Ph.D.s are granted to women; only 39% of philosophy undergraduate degrees are granted to women). Additionally, although philosophy is offered at many young men's and co-ed preparatory schools, it is rarely offered at schools for young women.

Miss Porter's, a day and boarding preparatory school for young women in Farmington, CT, since 1843, challenges its students to become ethical global citizens as part of its mission. For more information, visit:

<http://www.porters.org/podium/default.aspx?t=105090>

**Mt. Greylock Regional High School**, working with Williams College, in Williamstown, MA, will offer a one-year philosophy course that will focus on critical thinking and logic. The two schools will also work on developing innovative programming, including a school-wide assembly, that will highlight the ways colleges and universities can work with area elementary and secondary schools to introduce younger students to philosophy, and college students to careers in education.

**Mt. Holyoke College** philosophy professor Thomas Wartenberg continues to use his grant to train his undergraduate philosophy students to "do" philosophy with elementary school. As of September 2009, they will be working at both the Martin Luther King Charter School of Excellence in Springfield, MA; and the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School in Northampton, MA. In addition to expanding his website, he is also planning a mini-conference at the American Philosophical Association's Pacific Division meeting in 2011 on "Teaching Children Philosophy." For more information, visit: [www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org](http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org)

The grant to **New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development** will be used to fund a Program Coordinator for "EXCEL in Writing, Thinking, and Inquiry," a program designed, in conjunction with the Children's Aid Society, to help New York City teens improve their critical thinking and writing skills, and encourage them to apply to and succeed in college. The program is part of a \$240,000 grant from the Teagle Foundation.

The Coordinator will facilitate the activities of the EXCEL high school student participants, document and monitor project progress, supervise the NYU student mentors, and collaborate with NYU faculty on the summer courses in philosophy and writing. While much of her work will be at NYU, she'll also make regular visits to the CAS school and community center from which participants will be drawn in order to support the students as they bridge the disparate worlds of home, community, and university. At

NYU, she'll meet regularly with professors to design and implement the summer writing curriculum, which will stress philosophical inquiry, and the program evaluation.

**Teachers College/Columbia University Philosophy Outreach Program** will expand its presence in Manhattan. The grant will enable the program, which facilitates the creation of after-school philosophy clubs, to hire a coordinator, pay a stipend to graduate student volunteers, provide high school students with materials, and develop and maintain a website. The program is also receiving matching funds from the Columbia University philosophy department.

**The University of Memphis** philosophy department will use its grant to sponsor a three-day workshop in September 2009 featuring a keynoter and other speakers prominent in the field of philosophy for children. The workshop will introduce the department's recently-launched Philosophical Horizons program to the Memphis educational community and the community at large. By building relationships between philosophy graduate students and local teachers and administrators in the Memphis school system, the department hopes that the program can grow and become more well-established.

At **The University of North Carolina**, the grant will be used to fund a program coordinator for the Philosophy Outreach Program, now in its fifth year. The Outreach Program uses the philosophy department's intellectual resources to help people in the community think carefully and clearly about a broad range of ideas, commitments, and practices that shape their lives; and to get them excited about philosophy.

The program has a pool of well-trained and dedicated philosophy graduate students who enjoy leaving the campus to engage actively with people in the community. These Outreach instructors excel at showing K-12 students how to think critically, analyze ethical issues, and promote critical debate and thoughtful discussion. Our instructors are directly involved with the personal and social development of their K-12 students. The students learn how to think, how to analyze information, how to interact and work cooperatively in teams, how to become contributing members of their community, and how to take responsibility for their actions. For more information, visit: <http://philosophy.unc.edu/outreach.htm>

The Squire Family Foundation was founded in 2006 by Gary Squire, a Washington, D.C. attorney and businessman who studied philosophy at Yale and Oxford Universities. He has had a long-standing interest in ethics and education, serving on the board of Trustees of the Wakefield School in The Plains, VA, and as a founding member and former trustee of the City Collegiate Charter School in Washington, D.C. The Foundation advocates that all American elementary and secondary students have an opportunity to study philosophy, maintaining that the study of philosophy is important because it teaches students not what to think but rather *how* to think. Its goal is to teach students to critically and systematically examine and reflect on their beliefs so that they can act responsibly.

David Schrader, executive director of the American Philosophical Association based in Newark, DE, sees "a growth in the number of students majoring in philosophy." The

reason, he speculates, is that "in a world where people change careers many times, the skills that philosophy teaches you are wonderfully transferable." (*US News & World Report*, 12/18/08). "Those tools," the article continues, "include critical thinking, logic, and analytical writing, which have practical applications in a range of careers—such as law, teaching, medicine, business, and management—and are valuable to have in times of economic (and employment) uncertainty."

"There is a growing interest in teaching philosophy to secondary and even elementary-school aged children," says foundation director Roberta Israeloff. "Debating the 'big issues' is part of adolescence. Philosophy is not just a subject; it teaches you how to approach problems; it makes you think about how to think." (*Newsday*, 4/19/09). "Teaching pre-college students to reason and think clearly--to take a position and construct a rational argument for it--has many benefits and may even help raise scores on standardized tests."

For more information about the Squire Family Foundation, visit: [www.squirefoundation.org](http://www.squirefoundation.org) or contact Roberta Israeloff, director, at (631) 662-7645.

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