

Foundation Awards More Than \$20,000

By **JEFF MELLOTT**
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HARRISONBURG — Soon, some physically disabled city elementary school students will be sitting on a Roller Racer.

Propelled by swinging the handlebars back and forth, the device will allow the students to keep up better with their friends at recess, said Karen Miller, a physical therapist for the schools.

Miller plans to purchase 10 of the devices with a \$1,000 grant from the Harrisonburg Educational Foundation.

The foundation recently awarded 28 educators, including Miller, a total of \$20,372 in educational grants or \$3,270 more than one year ago.

'Great Strides'

The nonprofit foundation, created in 1994, raises funds from private contributions to aid the city's public school system.

The foundation has gone through a renaissance in the past two years.

"We have made great strides with the foundation, not only teacher grant program but with the opening of the teacher supply depot," said Foundation Executive Director Craig Mackail.

The teacher supply depot receives discarded supplies that can be used in the classroom.

Mackail, who is the supervisor of research, planning and operations for Harrisonburg City Schools, said the biggest achievement of the year could be the name recognition the foundation has achieved in the community.

"A lot of people were not aware that we existed," he said.

Wide Variety

The foundation's grant awards were spread throughout the division's schools. The grants also covered a wide variety of projects.

Along with the Roller Racer, grant recipients will use the money to encourage reading in English and Spanish. Another

project involves teaching teachers elementary Spanish.

Students will get information about the food pyramid in another project.

Rolling Along

Miller remembered the Roller Racer from her own youth. She stumbled across it surfing the Internet and saw an opportunity for her students.

Miller, who works closely with special education teachers, said the first Roller Racers purchased would be used at Stone Spring, Waterman and Spotswood elementary schools.

"It has great exercise benefits for my kids," Miller said of the students. "It was the social impact [of the Roller Racer] that really drove me to pursue the grant.

"A large part of their day, is just joking around and racing around with their peers."

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