

# News U Trust

APPRECIATING, DEVELOPING, AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL STAFF



## *Bus Driver Appreciation Day!*

Excitement is in the air for the start of the 2013-14 appreciation days! The first one is Bus Driver Appreciation Day set for September 12. We can't wait to see all the photos and read the summaries of the ways you honored your drivers during their special day. The theme is Planes, Trains and Automobiles.

One great idea to get the entire school involved is having the students write thank you notes to the drivers, fold them into cool airplanes, put them in an airplane hangar made especially for them, and deliver them on the morning of appreciation.

Another fun and easy suggestion is having A-Team members and other students stand outside the school on Bus Driver Day with "vapor trails" of thanks for the drivers to read as they drop off the students in the morning.

The number one goal of the day is to tell the drivers how important they are and thank them for doing their jobs well. The new appreciation days will start off right because you are spreading an attitude of gratitude in your school and community.

Have fun!

## What's In This Issue?

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### MINI-GRANTS COMING YOUR WAY!



### MEMBER APPRECIATION DINNER



### MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!



### SCHOOL COORDINATOR HELP



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September 2013 Edition

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## MINI-GRANTS COMING YOUR WAY!

How many times have you heard a teacher say, "If I just had \$400 to buy an iPad to use with my class, I could ..." or "If I had \$250, I could buy this program that would..."? That wish is about to come true for some of your teachers. The Utrust Board of Trustees voted to establish a mini-grant program to fund small projects for your school or school system. Any school employee may apply for a mini-grant to fund a school project not to exceed \$500.

A school may apply for a mini-grant not to exceed \$2500 and a school district may apply for a mini-grant for the total amount allocated for the system by the Utrust Board of Trustees. A school board application will trump all others in the school district. So, it's up to your board whether teachers and schools in your school district get a shot at a mini grant.

Applications are easily completed and will not exceed one page. Just tell us what you want to do and make a statement about how that will make a difference. It's that simple. A team of judges at Utrust will rank the applications and checks

will be sent to the winning applicants all within two weeks.

Trustees will determine at their October 11 meeting, the amount of money that will be set aside for mini grants this year. When that is determined, each school district will be informed and mini-grant applications will be made available.



"The application process will be easy and fast," Utrust Administrator, Dan Tollett said. We'd like to fund projects that will directly benefit students and enhance learning. We expect lots of applications for neat projects."

Trustees plan to use the mini-grant program as an incentive for school boards to use excellent employment and unemployment practices to contain unemployment costs. Boards will become eligible for mini-grants by meeting five standards of excellence in employee management. This requirement will become effective in the 2014-15 school year but will not apply during the 2013-14 school year. This will give boards a full year to meet the five standards and become a [5 Star Board](#).

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MAY THE  
FORCE BE  
WITH YOU!

As you kick off the EAP in your schools, we want to remind you of one of the strongest ways to inject excitement, enthusiasm and cooperation into the program-- THE G-FORCE!

Establishing a G-Force will make your life as a middle or high school coordinator so much easier and will simplify the activities on appreciation days. (The G Force is not needed as much in elementary school because room moms or classroom teachers fulfill many of the G Force responsibilities and some of the students may be too young to carry out the responsibilities.) Choose, or ask teachers to select, 1 or 2 students

from each homeroom or if your school doesn't have homerooms then choose a certain period of the day. These students will work with the A Team to get the whole school involved in honoring the designated school employees.

By having the G-Force in place you automatically know who to contact about announcing what needs to be done and they can get and keep other students up to date on writing letters, saying thanks and anything else. Make this year the best it can be as you use the force to infuse your EAP with even more appreciation.



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## SCHOOL COORDINATORS NEED HELP

School coordinators need at least two adults to help you with the A-Team in elementary and middle school. We strongly recommend that the adult leadership team consist of a coordinator and three team leaders, one each for the action team, creative team and the paparazzi. An elementary or middle school coordinator who does not have adult assistance will be overburdened. High school coordinators can find responsible students to be leaders of the three teams.

A key guideline for the employee appreciation program is when everyone does a little no one is overburdened. Be certain that you're a team has adequate adult staffing. This year we will be sending an agenda for the action team, creative team and the paparazzi for each A-Team meeting. We are confident that the the suggestions included in the packets can be done in one A-

Team meeting of about one hour for each appreciation day where there is sufficient for the leadership.

We have also discovered that the time it takes the lineup resources other than adult team leaders is well worth the effort. for example, the school coordinator at Gallatin high school set up a table during registration and had over 60 parents volunteer to assist with the program, mostly by providing resources for appreciation days. A school coordinator who enlists sufficient adult leadership, lines up resources and follows the suggestions in the Utrust packets will experience an overwhelmingly successful Employee Appreciation Program without ever feeling overburdened.

Try it. You will like it.

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## Roll Out the Red Carpet

What do the CMA's, the Grammy's and the annual Utrust Member Appreciation Dinner have in common??? They are all connected with the Country Music Hall of Fame! Yes, you read it right---the Hall of Fame.

This year we are excited to announce that you will be our special guests at this famous Nashville venue. Whether you can

sing like Tim McGraw or not, please make plans to be there on November 9 at 7:00 p.m. as we celebrate all that has happened this past year and look forward to what the future holds. There will be a fantastic dinner, fun program and of course some awards. So make your plans and we will see you on the red carpet!!!



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## New "Strands" define EAP roles



In order to encourage and equip those who are leading out in the Employee Appreciation Program, we have developed easy to access, fun and informative strands for the different roles necessary for a successful program.

You will find video tutorials, powerpoints and documents that are all designed to help you better understand your role and give you simple ideas of how to carry out your responsibilities.

At the Utrust website ([www.tnuct.com](http://www.tnuct.com)) you will see an umbrella that is labeled Employee Appreciation Program. After clicking on it you will enjoy seeing the entire options laid out in visually appealing format. Whether you represent the school board, the A Team, School or System coordinators or the G Force, there is a place for you!

These strands can also be used as a recruiting tool for the program as it offers the opportunity for people to see the various elements and gain a stronger understanding of how the program operates. We encourage you to check out the new strands and share them with others to get them fired up about showing appreciation!!!



## *Tweet this...*

Social media is an integral part of students' lives today so let's be sure that we are using it to promote the EAP. Encourage your A Team and G Force to develop a hashtag for your school EAP and to use it with each of the appreciation days. Consider something like #jacksonEAP so that it is easy to use and remember then get the students to use your hashtag in promoting the activities. They can spread the word about who is being

appreciated and what is needed from students through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. After clearing it with your administration, you can also involve students in the various days by offering different challenges and posting pictures with honorees.

Use different contests or challenges to engage students through 'most likes' or a prize to the person who tweets the most about the day. Be creative and see how using social media can take your EAP to a whole new level and let us in on the fun with #utrustEAP.