Applications Open: Golden Grants Supporting Northern and Central California K-12 Schools and Nonprofits

Local Business Owners Fund 'Golden Grants' Program Offering $2,500 to $10,000 Grants to Help Combat Learning Loss and Funding Gaps



McDonald’s Owner/Operator Peter Ou presenting a ceremonial $10,000 grant check to leadership and students from the New Conservatory Theatre Center.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From Eureka through the Bay Area and Central Coast, McDonald's franchisees have opened applications for their annual McDonald's Golden Grants program. Designed to support K-12 education initiatives, youth sports, and local non-profits, the program will award grants ranging from $2,500 to $10,000 to organizations dedicated to youth mentorship, literacy, recreation, and community development.

Government funding cuts and economic pressures have left many local organizations struggling to sustain essential services, compounded by an academic crisis. A study by Education Scorecard highlights a national "learning recession" in reading scores, with California ranking 29th. The Golden Grants program aims to bridge these budget deficits and directly empower grassroots education initiatives.

“As local business owners living and working in these communities, investing in our youth is at the heart of what we do. We are proud to support the educators and mentors working every day to close these learning gaps, and help children explore a world beyond their own,” said local McDonald’s Owner/Operator and former educator, Suzette Hofman.

Since 2023, this group of McDonald's owner-operators has awarded $180,000 to 64 organizations across a coverage area extending from Eureka to Santa Barbara. In the 2025 grant cycle, $55,000 was distributed across 16 organizations. Past recipients include the New

Conservatory Theatre Center for Education—which served over 12,000 students across 45 San Francisco schools during the 2025–26 academic year—as well as The Helix School, Homework Club, United Way Santa Cruz County, Santa Rita Union School District, and the Grace Fisher Foundation.



McDonald's Owner/Operator Michael Smith presents Los Osos Middle School with a $2,500 grant.

How to Apply: Applications are open to 501(c)(3) nonprofits and public or private K-12 educational institutions across the Eureka, Bay Area, and Central Coast.

- Application Deadline: October 9, 2026
- Application Portal & Guidelines: Visit https://mcdgoldengrants.com/ to apply or view full eligibility details.

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>
> *Local McDonald's Owner/Operator and former educator, Suzette Hofman*

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McDonald’s Owner/Operator Steve Peat and his leadership team present a $1,000 check to Flock Works of Fort Bragg in January 2026.

This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/935514667

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