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Barr MS Trout Program Wins Grant Money for Chiller

The students are excited to receive the trout eggs in October

By [Kim Tran](#) [Email the author](#) September 19, 2011 [Print](#)

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Empty tanks of water set to 52.8 degrees sit in classrooms at Barr Middle School. The fifth-graders are buzzing and excited about Oct. 12 when they'll be getting their trout eggs. From October to Spring, they will raise and watch the stages of trout growth. In the spring, the students take a day-long environmental field trip to release the trout.

Teachers Debra Levy and Heather Schucker head up this trout program.

"We had two chillers up and running and one broke last year," said Levy. "We asked the school if we could get another but with the district being tight on money, we started applying for grants." They applied for a grant from Rockland Community Foundation in March and found out in August that they were selected for a \$500 grant.

"Many schools applied and they won from about 15-18 applicants," said Pat Byrne, president of RCF.

"Our organization's mission is to encourage and increase charitable giving in Rockland County and to connect donors to charities that mean the most to them," said Rhea Vogel, vice president of RCF. "We were most impressed by what they are doing. (Teachers) Debra Levy and Heather Schucker received the innovative teaching grant. The grant will be allocated from our environmental fund."

"We use TroutInTheClassroom.org and each year we've added something to build the curriculum," said Schucker. "It's really progressing and improving." This is the fourth year of the trout program.

"It not just releasing trout. It's so much more than that," said Levy. She went on to explain the other activities of the environmental fieldtrip. "There's an invertebrate study, GPS tracking, the music teachers come together and the kids come up with their own lyrics. It's great to see the energy in their faces." Last year's theme was anti-bullying.

Other grade levels are also involved.

"The first graders come visit three times during the trouts' growth to see the progression of the trout," said Levy. "AP Biology high school students come (on the field trip) to study and collect invertebrates for the fifth-graders."

"It sounds like fun as well as educational," said Byrne.

"(It's best to) get kids to learn by doing it," said Barr Principal Roger Guccione.

Check out how last year's trout release went in this [previous Patch article](#). Last year the program was done with sixth graders, but since both Levy and Schucker are now fifth-grade teachers, the program is being done with fifth graders this year.

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