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Web site allows donors to give gift of education

By **DONNA HOLMAN**
T&D Staff Writer
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This year, instead of giving the same Valentine's Day presents as in years past, people have the option of giving the gift of education.

DonorsChoose, a nonprofit organization that connects South Carolina public school teachers with resources needed for their classrooms, is offering Valentine's Day gift cards. Available in any dollar amount from www.donorschoose.org, the gift cards can be delivered either via e-mail or standard postal mail. The recipient is then able to log on to the Web site and fund the public education project of their choice.

Gift card recipients can search teacher project proposals by type, cost or location at www.donorschoose.org. Once a project is fully funded, DonorsChoose purchases the supplies – anything from colored pencils to microscopes – and ships them directly to the classroom. The students send a package, including thank you notes and photos of them using the new resources, to the donor to show exactly how their funds made a difference.

"This is one of those gifts that keeps on giving long after the flowers have faded or the box of candy has been eaten," said Katie Bisbee, executive director of DonorsChoose in the Carolinas. "By giving a DonorsChoose Valentine's Day gift card to the ones you love, you're showing your commitment to public education in South Carolina and making a direct impact on our schools."

Current local projects on the site include:

- Motivating reading – A Marshall Elementary School media specialist requests around \$500 to purchase bean bags for children to sit on, relax and read in the media center and in the front corridor of the school.
- Do you hear what I hear? – A Marshall Elementary School first-grade teacher requests around \$1,000 for the purchase of "I Can Read!" read-along sets, a listening center and other materials to improve children's fluency as readers, increase their vocabulary and enhance their communication skills.
- Blow those horns! – A Dover Elementary School general music instructor requests around \$550 for the purchase of recorders, the most basic wind instrument, for students in fourth and fifth grades to teach students good breathing techniques as well as finger dexterity and a sense of melodic rhythm.

Since DonorsChoose launched in South Carolina in 2005, \$431,857 has gone directly to public school classrooms, benefiting 41,974 students. Visit www.donorschoose.org to see other projects that need funding.

T&D Staff Writer Donna Holman can be reached at dholman@timesanddemocrat.com and 803-534-1060. Discuss this and other stories online at TheTandD.com.

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