

Donors aid Oak Ridge Elementary class

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Alice Mercer was losing hope that she would receive the Flip video and Web cameras she wanted for her classroom.

The Oak Ridge Elementary teacher had posted the wish on a website called www.DonorsChoose.org, an online charity that connects public school teachers with donors to fund classroom projects.

Thousands of teachers nationwide have posted to the site – asking for donations for items as diverse as classroom computers and live tadpoles so students can observe life cycles.

On Monday, thanks to a \$1.3 million gift from the Claire Giannini Fund, every project in California was funded.

"The timing is really great, because it's right before school starts and I had already been planning on doing lessons involving the equipment I am getting," said Mercer, whose high-poverty school is located in Oak Park. "I'm pinching myself."

Mercer said she plans to use the equipment to Skype with faraway classrooms, to have students make videos about what they are learning and to allow fellow teachers to use it for professional development.

In all, six donors contributed \$533, with the bulk coming from the Claire Giannini Fund.

"I was really thrilled," Mercer said. "I started doing the happy dance."

In Sacramento County, 29 projects received \$20,000 on Monday so teachers can purchase requested materials.

In all, the Claire Giannini Fund donated \$1.3 million to 2,233 projects in California. In October, an additional \$100,000 will go to support urgent school projects across the county.

"I applaud all donors who have given already and hope many more will join with us to make this gift the start of a sweeping movement to transform the lives of students in schools today," Hilda Yao, executive director of the Claire Giannini Fund, said in a news release.

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