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2011 will mark 24th year for popular Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program

As the thousands of teachers, principals, counselors and librarians joined the students and headed back to schools all across Indiana, 120 of them chatted about their summer adventures as beneficiaries of a special Lilly Endowment program. The program is the popular Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program, and it will be back next year for the 24th time.

So far, more than 2,200 Indiana educators have taken their fellowships in hand and roamed the world to explore opportunities they have long dreamed of. This summer's fellows could be spotted in Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Greece, Scotland, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, England, France, Sicily and the Netherlands. They studied everything from Italian mosaics to the life of William Butler Yeats.

They also visited Central and Latin America to immerse themselves in the Spanish language, study organic gardening and create journals of words and art. Some traveled to Africa and Asia. Others stayed in the United States to photograph and "absorb" the national parks through hiking, backpacking and camping; build an organic backyard bee colony; collect family stories; tour the Midwest in a Model A Ford; and write children's books about bats and kangaroos.

But now it is time to look ahead to the Teacher Creativity Fellowship class of 2011. Up to 120 awards of \$8,000 each will be made to public and private K-12 licensed teachers, principals and assistant principals, guidance counselors and librarians/media specialists to support creative projects.

These projects will take place during six weeks next summer and must be completed by Aug. 31, 2011. The grant period, however, will run through May 31, 2012, so that recipients will be able to report how the grant activities have influenced their work in the classroom.

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“The best teachers know that learning never ends,” said Sara B. Cobb, Endowment vice president for education. “These teachers are curious. They are articulate and enthusiastic. They are eager to share. We have teachers return and tell us the fellowship was a life-changing experience and the ‘biggest adventure of my life.’

“We are constantly amazed and gratified by the enthusiasm the teachers bring to these projects, the lessons they learn and the people they meet. The excitement they bring back to the students in their classrooms is contagious,” Cobb added.

All applicants must have at least three years of professional experience to be eligible for this competitive program. Also, former Teacher Creativity fellows who received their award before 2004 are eligible to apply for a second award in the 2011 program.

Applications for the Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program must be postmarked by Nov. 5. Notification of grant awards will be made by Feb. 25, 2011; grant payments will be made in due course after March 15.

For specific questions about the Teacher Creativity program, application procedures or grant-writing tips, please consult the Endowment’s Web site, www.lillyendowment.org and click on Education, then on Teacher Creativity. You may also contact the Endowment by e-mail, teachercreativity@lei.org.