Finding Ways to Share Latin and Classics with Young Students in These Challenging Times

This year looked different for everyone, and Ascanius is no exception. Despite the pandemic and the unexpected changes we have all had to make this year, Ascanius still stayed active in whatever capacity it could.

In person events have not been possible. We were especially sad to have to cancel the Let’s Learn Latin workshop we had planned to conduct in Birmingham, Alabama, in late March in cooperation with the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS). However, we quickly jumped on opportunities to support teachers in new and different ways. In March, we discontinued our Membership Program and made its ready-to-use online lessons and materials free to all. We hope that these resources have been useful to teachers and families. They can be found online at www.ascaniusyci.org/shootingstar.

We were also able to participate virtually in conferences. Later in the spring, we set up virtual exhibits for the annual meeting of CAMWS and for the American Classical League Institute. In July, Ascanius Executive Committee Member Kristen Bortner made a virtual presentation to the National Junior Classical League Convention. Her thirty-minute video explained how high school students can share their love of Latin with younger students in their own communities, and it also included several ideas for safe ways to do this during the pandemic.

Some of our Classical Promise Grant recipients were lucky in the timing of their projects, while others were, understandably, unable to complete them as intended. Inside this issue, you can read about the completed projects and also the creative and flexible changes that some of our grant recipients have found.

Lastly, despite all the ways 2020 kept us on our toes, Ascanius was fortunate enough to find out that it was a beneficiary of the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund. This is an incredible opportunity for us. We are excited that this fund will help us to be able to offer a variety of grants to continue to advance our mission. More grant information and how to apply will be available early 2021!

The support we receive from our loyal supporters and friends allows us to continue our work to inspire our youth to embrace a lifelong learning about Classics. With that being said, we’ve updated our mailing address in order to streamline our operational processes. If you’d like to reach us by mail with any questions or to make a donation, please send us mail to P.O. Box 11352, Burke, VA 22009.
Supporting Teachers and Students Virtually

Right: The Shooting Star is one of the resources that Ascanius made available for free to teachers beginning in March 2020. Each of the thirty issues explores a different topic and features full lesson and activity ideas. Although most teachers know Ascanius as an organization whose focus is on the elementary and middle school levels, many of these activities are suitable for high school students as well. These materials, along with other teaching resources, can be accessed online for free at www.ascaniusyci.org/shootingstar. We hope teachers find them useful!

ASCANIIUS HAS MOVED!

Please note our new mailing address: P.O. Box 11352, Burke, VA 22009
Ascanius a Beneficiary of the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund for Classical Studies

This year, Ascanius learned that it is one of the beneficiaries of the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund for Classical Studies. Fifteen classical organizations, including Ascanius, will receive annual grants to be used in support of the promotion of Classics.

Dr. Masciantonio taught Latin, Spanish, French, and social studies in the Philadelphia Public Schools before becoming the department head of foreign language and a curriculum specialist for the city’s public schools. In the 1970s, he spearheaded one of the most extensive Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) programs, in which fourth through sixth grade students in Philadelphia received daily Latin instruction from itinerant Latin teachers. An evaluative study found that these students made significant academic gains in the areas of English vocabulary and reading after one year of Latin.

At Ascanius, our faculty training sessions during LatinSummer always included discussions of Philadelphia’s FLES program and Dr. Masciantonio’s groundbreaking work. We were even fortunate to have him as a supporter of our programs from our earliest years.

Dr. Masciantonio died in 2016 and is remembered by many as a champion of Classics. At Ascanius, we remember him as a true pioneer of elementary-level Latin, and we look forward to honoring his memory with the work that the fund will help us to make possible.

Ascanius to Offer New Grants

Are you…

- a high school student or teacher planning to hold a Latin or Classics event for elementary school or middle school students in your community?
- a teacher at the elementary or middle school level in need of supplies to help in your teaching of Latin or Classics?
- a teacher hoping to further your own professional learning in order to better serve your elementary or middle school audience?

Watch for a special announcement in early 2021!

Ascanius will begin offering new grants that will support teachers in several ways, ultimately benefitting students on the elementary and middle school levels.
Classical Promise Grant Recipient Report

Katie Close, The Oaks Classical Christian Academy (WA)

Inspired by her own travels to Greece and Italy in Summer 2019, Katie created a Grand Tour experience for a 3rd grade beginning Latin class in Fall 2019. She made colorful passports for each student, also utilizing maps and stamps, and then used them to "travel" through the ancient world of Chapter 1 in Hans Orberg's Classic text, "Lingua Latina.” She also used the passports and stamps to encourage speaking Latin in front of the class and in small groups.

Katie Close and her school’s 3rd grade students display the passports she created.

Following the conclusion of her program, Katie shared some wonderful details in the interview below.

How long was your program, and what topics did it cover?
We met for two days on one week, and then two days the following week. Each meeting was thirty-five minutes long. The daily topics included the geography of ancient Europe, Asia, Africa, and review. I used the textbook Lingua Latina. I like it because no matter what country you come from, you can learn Latin using that book.

You created a colorful and professional-looking passport for your students. How did the students respond to that?
Some students thought they were actually going on a trip at the end [because the passport was so beautiful], and I had to tell them that they weren’t.

What was your biggest challenge?
I had worked before in a tutor setting or advanced small class, but it was harder to go to a large class of twenty-four with all eyes on me and hands up with a lot of questions…If I’m moving on with my words and their hands are still on the other thing, it’s not a great way to learn Latin. It’s about moving at their pace.
What was your biggest success?
*My goal was to make it memorable. It was encouraging to hear the students talk about what they had learned the day before.*

Do you have a favorite moment from your program?
*On the fourth day, which was the review day, I asked a question and gave Roman-themed stickers when students were able to respond in a complete Latin sentence. They were so excited and all earned a sticker. It gave me reassurance that I had done something right.*

At the time of her program, Katie was student of Mr. Eric Indgjerd at The Oaks Classical Christian Academy in Spokane, Washington. Katie is now attending New Saint Andrews College in Idaho. Katie says she is considering a career in teaching Latin. “I’ve always wanted to teach it. With this program, I got a chance to test out teaching, and it’s for me, so here we go!”

---

**Classical Promise Grant Recipient Report**

**Andrea Stehle**, BASIS Shavano Middle School (TX)

For the past three years, Andrea’s seventh grade students have conducted a mythology camp for younger students at their school. Beginning last October, they held a monthly mythology program for elementary-school-aged children living at a long-term shelter called Magdalena House. For Andrea’s students, this was a service learning activity, and their goal was to use mythology stories and activities to provide a positive experience for the children living in the shelter. One activity enjoyed by all was reading myths and coloring pictures of Pandora.

Due to COVID-19, the school has been unable to continue the program since April. Andrea has decided to use the remainder of her Classical Promise Grant to purchase Classics-related books which the Magdalena House can use as holiday gifts for the children there.
Classical Promise Grant Recipient Report

Livia Hoffman, Saint Ignatius College Preparatory High School (IL)

Livia is a senior at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory High school in Chicago, Illinois. She studies Homeric Greek, Classical Latin, and Egyptology and has a passion for the ancient world in general. She also volunteers at the National Hellenic Museum of Chicago. With her Classical Promise Grant, she planned to give a series of thirty-minute interactive presentations, The Eureka Seminars, to elementary and middle school children this past summer at the National Hellenic Museum of Chicago. Her topics included Troy, Cleopatra, and cuisine of the Classical world. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, Livia has been unable to deliver her presentations to a live audience, but she hopes to do so by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. In the meantime, she has prepared her talks and made them available on YouTube.

After completing the recordings of her presentations, Livia participated in a short phone interview about the process.

How did you get interested in Classics?
My dad and I used to read children’s histories of the world. I loved the ones about the Classical world and would ask him to read them over again. I was about five or six years old.

What do you love most about Latin now?
It is amazing to study a civilization from so long ago and see how it has impacted our society today.

How did you get your idea for the seminars?
I was volunteering at the Hellenic Museum and wanted to combine my love of kids with my love of the subject matter. The museum was very encouraging about the idea.

What part of the preparation for your presentations did you enjoy the most?
Learning about ancient recipes and Apicius was the most fun because reading an ancient cookbook is unique.

Do you think the National Hellenic Museum of Chicago might be able to use the videos you have made?
The museum might be able to play the videos for an online class.

What do you hope any young student who views your presentations will take away from them?
I hope that kids would be interested in getting into the Classics. I want to spark an interest in studying the past and how it connects to our present.

Above: Livia Hoffman made her presentations available on YouTube when her in-person events were unable to take place.
Classical Promise Grant Recipient Report

Sara Wietbrock, Crown Point High School (IN)

Sara Wietbrock is a Latin teacher at Crown Point High School in Indiana. Her school planned to use its Classical Promise Grant to offer a summer enrichment program to local students in third through seventh grades. High school students act as the teachers and introduce the younger students to Classical mythology, Roman culture, and conversational and Classical Latin. The program aims to expose students to Classics, to encourage connections between Latin and students’ own language, and to prove to students and parents that Latin is alive and exciting.

As a result of the pandemic, the program was not able to take place as planned this past summer and has been postponed to Summer 2021. Ascanius looks forward to hearing an update next summer!

Congratulations to our Fall 2020 Classical Promise Grant recipients!

Kelly Kusch

Kelly Kusch has taught Latin and Greek for 30 years. Currently, she is working on opening Covington Classical Academy in Covington, KY in August of 2021.

Kelly used an Ascanius Classical Promise grant to purchase the books and flashcards for English From the Roots Up, Volumes 1 & 2. She will use the materials at twice monthly Latin Club meetings at the Cincinnati Squash Academy. The Cincinnati Squash Academy “uses the disciplined game of squash to help transform talented students in underserved communities into scholar-athletes, productive citizens, and future leaders with character on the path to and through college.” Not only does it teach squash, it provides academic support and guidance through required after-school lessons and tutoring, all at no cost to the families. The students are enjoying hearing myths and learning Latin and Greek roots.
Congratulations to our Fall 2020 Classical Promise Grant recipients!

Gianna Turner, Alpine Christian School (TX)

Gianna Turner is a student at Alpine Christian School in Alpine, Texas. This is the first year for her school’s Latin Club. They are planning to put on a play that they will perform outside for their kindergarten through fourth grades. Gianna and her club will use their Classical Promise Grant to purchase materials for the play, including props and costumes.

Publications Spotlight

Alpha is for Anthropos

Alpha is for Anthropos is an exquisitely illustrated alphabet book for Ancient Greek. Playful Greek verses and drawings in the style of red-figure vase paintings are sure to delight readers of all ages.

For more details about the book and its supplements, as well as to order, please visit http://www.ascaniusyci.org/store/alpha-series.htm.

A very limited quantity remains from our first and only printing of Alpha is for Anthropos. Order your copy today!

Thank you to our donors over the past year!

Rowena Fenstermacher, Gilbert Lawall, Richard Popeck, the Dr. Rudolph Mascianantonio Fund, Robert Scheid, Albert Schultz, the Stuart Higley Foundation, Allen Ward, Jr., and Wayne Wray

Thanks to your generous support, we have been able to reach countless students and teachers across the country.

Multās grātiās vōbīs agimus!