As 2021 draws to a close, Ascanius reflects on yet another year that did not look normal, but in which we continued to strive to fulfill our mission. We remain steadfast in our dedication to advance the study of Classics on the elementary and middle school levels.

Inside this issue, you can read about how over the past year we have:

- Given presentations for teachers at virtual professional conferences
- Continued to provide high-quality free and paid curricular resources
- Made three kinds of grants available for teachers and students

In addition, we share the program reports and interviews from some of this year’s recipients of the Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant and the Classical Promise Grant. We hope you will enjoy reading the details about the impact each of these individuals has had on his or her own community of young students!

*Pictured above: Latin Teacher Tom Garvey’s students enjoy free voluntary reading in Latin using materials he purchased with the help of a Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” grant.*
Latin for Your Community’s Little Learners…Even During a Pandemic

This past year as professional conferences remained virtual for a second year, Ascanius continued to adapt in order to promote and support the teaching of Latin among elementary school and middle school students. In June, Ascanius Executive Committee Member Kristen Bortner participated in the American Classical League’s (ACL) virtual Institute with a session titled How to Conduct Outreach Programs at the Elementary and Middle School Levels…Even During a Pandemic. In October, she shared with the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA) conference a pre-recorded presentation, Latin for Your Community’s Little Learners…Even During a Pandemic. Both of these presentations shared lessons which Kristen had conducted, some in-person and some virtual, with a small group of elementary-school-aged Latin learners earlier this year. Kristen shared how the tried-and-true activities from the Ascanius Roman Explorers half-day workshop could be modified to teach the same content virtually or in the outdoors.

To view the ACL presentation and accompanying free materials, please visit www.ascaniusyci.org/ACL2021.

Ascanius Provides Resources and Ideas for Bringing Latin to a Younger Audience

Since 2000, Ascanius has made its lessons and materials available to teachers. We have a wide variety of tried and true resources which can be purchased online as e-books, as well as a select few which are available as printed books. In addition to these, did you know that we also offer a wealth of free, ready-to-use lessons? Below are some highlights of our most popular items. Visit our website for more details and sample pages, or to order!

**Activitates Liberis** Our curriculum guide series includes exciting lessons and hands-on activities. Over 100 pages of lessons, worksheets, and handouts in each volume. Slideshows and audio recordings available online. Background information included for each lesson: No previous experience with Classics necessary! **Volume I: Mingle with Myth** focuses on Classical art and mythology and contains detailed background information for each lesson. **Volume II: Leap into Latin** is a collection of lessons and activities in Classical and Conversational Latin designed especially for the elementary school classroom. Each volume is available in E-Book ($15.00) or black-and-white Paperback ($23.00) format.

**Vocabula Picta** This Latin picture dictionary provides illustrated definitions for hundreds of Latin vocabulary words. The selection creates a bridge between the ancient and modern world by including vocabulary as used in Classical Latin, as well as words for modern objects and ideas. Words are arranged thematically so that they can be accessed easily during written and spoken activities in the classroom. Available in E-Book ($5.00) or Color Paperback ($25.00) format.

**The Shooting Star** was made available for FREE to teachers beginning in March 2020. Each of the thirty e-newsletter issues explores a different topic and features full, ready-to-use lesson and activity ideas. These materials, along with many other teaching resources from Ascanius, can be accessed online for free at www.ascaniusyci.org/shootingstar.
Grants Available for Students and Teachers

Ascanius: The Youth Classics Institute is happy to announce the availability of the following grants. Through these grants, our aim is to spur growth of Latin and the Classics at the elementary and middle school level, and to help create and strengthen foreign language partnerships between elementary and secondary schools. For more details, and to apply, please visit our website. Applications may be submitted at any time.

**Classical Promise Grant**

The *Classical Promise Grant* allows enterprising teachers and students to engineer programs using both the organizational and financial support of Ascanius: The Youth Classics Institute. These grants are available to individuals who wish to create or maintain a Latin and/or Classical Studies program or event geared toward elementary/middle-school-aged students. The "parva" grant awards amounts ranging from $50 to $200 for small events, while the "maxima" grant provides up to $1,000 and supports a longer, more in-depth program. For more details and to apply, please visit www.ascaniusyci.org/grants.

**Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics for All” Grant**

The brand new Ascanius grant, the *Rudolph Masciantonio "Classics for All" Grant*, supports events, programs, and projects geared towards teachers who are instructing elementary and middle-school-aged students about Latin and the ancient Mediterranean. Grants of up to $500 are available for teacher use. Each year, the grant will focus on projects centered on the year's chosen theme. Applications may be submitted at any time and will be reviewed by the committee on a rolling basis. For 2021, the theme is "Supplies and Technology." What do YOU need right now in your classroom? In a year of uncertainty and budget cuts, we want to help fill in those financial funding gaps for teachers as they support these youngest students of Classics. Examples of funding requests include, but are by no means limited to technology subscriptions, classroom supplies, and library texts. For more details and to apply, please visit www.ascaniusyci.org/grants.

**Ascanius Grant for Professional Development at the Elementary and Middle School Level**

This grant is intended to support continuing education for teachers (and teachers-in-training) whose instruction or programming, focused on Latin and/or the ancient Greco-Roman world, will ultimately benefit elementary and/or middle school students. Amounts up to $1,000 are available to assist teachers with registration/tuition, travel, room, and board for programs, conferences, or courses. For more details and to apply, please visit www.ascaniusyci.org/grants.

To apply, please visit our website. Applications are reviewed at the end of each month.
Marwan Mikdadi, Classical Promise Grant Recipient
Baton Rouge Magnet High School - Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Marwan is a senior at Baton Rouge Magnet High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He wanted to start a Latin literacy program specifically aimed at public middle school students since there are so few Latin programs within the public middle schools of the Baton Rouge area. His Latin literacy program at Westdale Middle School teaches Greek and Latin roots to students using fun games and activities. In addition, he has included Roman culture activities such as catapult and aqueduct making, Archimedan screw making, mythology games, and rota and board games. The drive of the program is to use Latin in a highly fun and hands-on way for younger students who do not have access to the subject in school. Marwan hopes the fun, positive experience will help students academically and also further their interest in Classics. He would also like to thank Dr. Dieter Gunkel of the University of Richmond for his assistance with the planning of this project. Below is our interview with Marwan.

How often does your program currently meet?
We meet two times per week. I’m aiming for it to go through the whole school year and hopefully continue into the future. Right now we have over thirty students.

What has been your greatest success during the program?
Just getting the kids interested in the Latin language and seeing how much they’ll enjoy not just learning the roots but wanting to make their own connections. They come up with English words they think come from the Latin word, and then [it’s great] seeing them be able to enjoy making the Roman crafts, and specifically how they’re so eager and able to do things in groups and come up with things. There’s a sort of natural enthusiasm they have for something that they maybe didn’t know about before, and that I’ve been able to contribute to that is incredibly satisfying.

What do you hope any student in your program will take away overall from the class?
That Latin and Classics are so influential in our modern day and can be fun and interesting to learn about, and that will hopefully peak their interest in taking Latin in the future.

Do you plan to continue your own study of Latin after high school?
Yes, absolutely. I’m hoping to continue Classics in college either as a major or a minor.
Kelly Kusch, Classical Promise Grant Recipient
Covington Classical Academy - Covington, Kentucky

Latin Teacher Kelly Kusch used a Classical Promise Grant to conduct a Latin Club for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders at the Cincinnati Squash Academy earlier this year. The group met virtually twice a month. This was the students’ first introduction to Latin, and Kelly utilized the book *English from the Roots Up*. Below, she shares some details about the program.

**Can you share how the idea for this program came about?**
My husband’s office was in the same building as the squash academy. I got to talking with them, and they do a lot more than squash. They give a lot of academic help and tutoring. They were very interested in doing a Latin Club. Here in Cincinnati, some of the schools [these students might later attend] have a Latin requirement, so they thought it would get students excited about something they may not already be excited about.

**What was your biggest challenge in leading this program?**
Zoom was the challenge, that’s for sure! This was also one of the first times I’d worked with younger kids, and I was constantly considering how I could adapt things to work for them.

**What was your greatest success during the program?**
Seeing kids get excited about the subject is always wonderful. Having one kid actually type in the chat or say something like, “I love that,” that’s kind of wonderful.

**What do you hope any student in the program might take away overall?**
I hope they take away a love of language, a love of words...It was exciting when they could come up with a derivative. They were excited about that. I hope they took away that they could figure it out and they could decode some words and feel smart about doing that.

Samantha Darpel, Classical Promise Grant Recipient
Covington Latin School – Covington, Kentucky

A Classical Promise Grant helped the school to offer extra enrichment classes for students in Grades K-8 during their “Explore More” spring session. Samantha notes that these classes provided gifted and talented students especially the opportunity to really invest in something they enjoy.

The grant was used for two classes. In the **Classics workshop**, students learned about Latin and Greek roots. They first examined those roots in words in their daily lives and then later used them to invent their own languages. In the **Architecture class**, students explored elements of classical architecture, took a field trip to a local cathedral, and also learned how to create blueprints. They were shocked to find how much modern architecture is based on classical architecture. “Their minds were totally blown,” Samantha says. Students used a variety of materials, such as modeling class, popsicle sticks, or pipe cleaners, to create their original blueprints.
Alecia Howell, Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant Recipient
8th Grade Social Studies, Clark Shaw Magnet School - Mobile, Alabama

The pandemic has created numerous challenges, with supplies and mental health being just a couple of them. Thanks to the Classics For All grant, I will be able to provide the supplies for my students to create several different art projects to complement our studies of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Students will create Greek "vases" on terracotta pots that either tell a story from Greek history or retell a Greek myth. During our study of Ancient Rome, students will create paper mosaics depicting a symbol of Ancient Rome, as well as write a paragraph explaining how their symbol connects to Ancient Roman history. These opportunities to create will not only complement our study of these classical civilizations, but they will also provide students with a sense of joy through creating their works of art and of pride as others appreciate their work on display.

Alex Hagler, Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant Recipient
Cape Cod Academy - Osterville, Massachusetts

I requested the Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics for All” Grant to establish an independent reading component and improve access to the textbook with digital accounts for all my 6th grade students as part of establishing a new Latin program at the middle and high school levels. The money I received from the grant allowed me to purchase seventeen copies of various Latin novellas for the independent reading program, featuring a diverse cast of characters, in terms of age, place of origin, and intended career. Many of the novellas I chose specifically to feature characters who represent perspectives that Latin texts traditionally read in the classroom do not contain. With the remainder of the grant, I purchased digital textbook accounts for all of my 6th grade Introduction to Latin students for Suburani Book 1. These digital accounts include an online version of the textbook, extra grammar and vocabulary practice, and additional resources to explore in depth the cultural information introduced in each chapter. Because these accounts include an online version of the textbook, students are able to access the textbook without needing a hard copy, which can be prohibitively expensive. The additional resources on culture, history, grammar, and vocabulary allow the students to explore and engage with the material at their own pace outside of class.

Having introduced both the independent reading program and the digital accounts at the beginning of the year, my students have reported feeling increasingly comfortable reading the novellas and using their digital accounts to study for tests and quizzes, learn vocabulary, and review grammar topics from class. Both of these components have also helped with differentiation between stronger and struggling students, allowing them to work through the material at their own pace and providing extra resources for students looking for enrichment. Overall, introducing these components has been a great success, and I am excited to implement them in my Latin classes at different grade levels in the future.
Tom Garvey, Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant Recipient
The Meadows School - Las Vegas, Nevada

I am writing today to reiterate my profound gratitude for the Rudolph Masciantonio "Classics for All" grant that you awarded me in order to stock my classroom with a robust starter set of Latin novellas to be used in regular FVR (free voluntary reading) sessions in my school's mandatory 8th-grade Latin course. This funding allowed me to purchase a total of 57 novellas: 23 pairs of novice-level volumes; and 11 individual intermediate-level books.

We have begun the year by reading in pairs on Fridays. By having two copies of the novice titles, each student can have their own copy in front of them - but the pair can pool their collective resources to piece together meaning. Once we get a little further along into the year, I will give them the option to start reading on their own and test their mettle, if they so choose, on an intermediate reader.

So far, everything is working great! The kids enjoy getting to choose what they read from a very solid selection of titles by various authors on quite varied themes. It's a low-stress activity with no formal assessment attached, allowing for individual differentiation of learning based not only on skill, but on inclination, intellectual curiosity, and internal motivation. Best of all, it’s a very natural way to acquire the language, and incorporating FVR has helped me to craft a more robust and diverse curriculum for my middle schoolers.

Thanks again, so very much for this amazing boon to my students for years to come! Please enjoy the attached photos of kids in action reading, and a shot of the table where I set out the books for the kids to choose from.

Most Recent Recipient of a Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant

Latin teacher Nora (Katie) Phillips of Saint Francis Xavier School in Birmingham, Alabama, was recently awarded a Rudolph Masciantonio “Classics For All” Grant. She will purchase Song School Latin curriculum materials to serve her 4K-2nd grade students. Katie’s goal is to give her young students a strong Latin foundation that harnesses their excitement and energy through song and dance.

It is also worth noting that Katie has a previous connection with Ascanius. She writes, “I got my first experience teaching Latin in 2012 with the Ascanius LatinSummer program. It was a transformative moment for me to be in a classroom with excited second graders, sharing the joy of exploring ancient language and culture. I am so appreciative of Ascanius: The Youth Classics Institute and all you do for young scholars!”
Congratulations to our newest Classical Promise Grant recipients!

Krithik Seela is developing a virtual Latin Club for middle school students. Katherine Butts will offer a mythology program for students ages seven through ten. Vaishnavi Sankar will lead middle school students in preparing and performing a play based on Greek and Roman myths. Ajax Fu hopes to foster a lasting interest in Classics among middle school students by creating a year-round enrichment program. Jordan Guzzi will hold a fair-style event, with various stands set up for introducing students to different aspects of Classics. You can read more about each of these grant recipients and their plans at www.ascaniusyci.org/grants/recipients.

The grants we award are made possible by our generous donors. If you would like to make a donation to Ascanius, please visit www.ascaniusyci.org/giving. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible up to 50% of Adjusted Gross Income.

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Thank you!

CFArtwork, Gilbert Lawall, the Dr. Rudolph Masciantonio Fund, Vanessa Schmitz-Siebertz, the Stuart Higley Foundation, David Willis, 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!