

Guam Preservation Trust
FINAL REPORT
SHOP: SUPPORTING HERITAGE ORIENTED PROJECTS

Implemented during the 2025–2026 school year, Project SHOP (Supporting Heritage-Oriented Projects) awarded grants to 25 teachers from Guam’s public, private, and charter school systems. Each teacher received \$500 to purchase supplies for projects designed to increase students’ knowledge of Guam’s history and culture while supporting the consistent educational goals outlined in the Trust’s strategic plan. As a result, the Trust found the program to be successful, with projects demonstrating a clear connection to Guam’s history and culture. This final report will examine the results of Project SHOP and its impact on participating schools.

A total of 775 students, ranging from elementary through high school, participated in Project SHOP. The program also collected data on the project’s impact across different grade levels. This report outlines the number of participating students in each grade level and summarizes the overall results of the project on the classes involved.

At the elementary grade level, 394 students participated in the project and showed an immediate increase in awareness and knowledge of Guam’s history and culture. Teachers reported that the projects encouraged creativity and collaboration among students. They also observed that integrating lessons on Guam’s history and culture into classroom activities fostered greater pride in and appreciation for students’ work. Across the reports, teachers described students learning Chamoru history and cultural traditions through language instruction, reading local legend books, and participating in drawing activities.

In addition, incorporating these lessons into daily school activities increased student engagement, particularly because the activities were hands-on and enjoyable for students. One participating school noted that the project helped its ESL learners become more confident while also strengthening their understanding of the local community. The following quotes from the final reports further illustrate these outcomes:

“This project reinforced that student engagement and cultural pride matter more than completing every planned component.”

“A key lesson learned is that culturally relevant content significantly increases student engagement and confidence, especially for ESL learners. Students were more motivated to write and share when the content reflected their own community and identity.”

“Overall, the project demonstrated that language development and cultural education can be meaningfully and successfully intertwined.”

“A positive outcome was that students were more engaged and confident when cultural learning was hands-on and meaningful. Providing cultural lessons and activities helped strengthen students’ appreciation for Chamoru culture and traditions.”

At the middle and high school grade levels, the project encouraged students to recognize the importance of preserving Chamoru traditions and cultural arts. With 85 participating middle school students and 296 high school students, projects became more in-depth and analytical in nature. Similar to the elementary grade level, teachers observed that students were more engaged and confident in their learning when lessons incorporated hands-on activities. Additional activities included carving, dancing, and visits to historic sites.

Teachers at these grade levels also explored Chamoru history and cultural preservation in greater depth through topics related to cultural identity, environmentalism, colonization, and the impacts of tourism. Through these lessons, students developed a deeper appreciation for Chamoru cultural practices as well as the historical and cultural significance of important cultural sites. Overall, students enjoyed these projects because they encouraged deeper reflection on Chamoru culture and increased students’ awareness and understanding of Guam as a whole. The following quotes from the final reports further illustrate these outcomes:

“A positive outcome was that students were more engaged and confident when cultural learning is hands-on and meaningful. Providing cultural lessons and activities helped strengthen student’s appreciation for the Chamoru culture and traditions.”

“This project reinforced that preservation happens through practice, and that giving students the opportunity to create helps strengthen their understanding and appreciation of Chamoru culture.”

“Students learned about topics such as cultural identity, environmentalism, colonization, and impacts of tourism that were highlighted in the poetry books purchased from the grant.”

“The students preserved the history and heritage of these historical sites of Guam by storytelling it to students, teachers, and assistant principal.”

“This project challenged students to think beyond traditional symbols and explore meaningful ways to represent Chamoru identity through their own cultural lens.”

Overall, the classroom and school community greatly benefitted from the SHOP project. Teachers responded positively to the project, noting growth not only in their students but also in themselves as educators. The project provided both teachers and students with valuable opportunities to learn about Guam’s history and culture in ways that were previously inaccessible to them.

The availability of books, materials, and instructional support funded through the project significantly strengthened both classroom learning and the wider school community. By incorporating lessons and activities centered on Guam's history and culture into their lesson plans, teachers discovered meaningful ways to continue these practices even after the project ended.

Many teachers reported that the SHOP project had a lasting positive impact on students' learning and cultural awareness. As a result, several teachers expressed interest in participating in the grant program again in the future. The following quotes from the final reports further illustrate these outcomes:

"Perhaps most tellingly, students asked if they could repeat this project next year. This demonstrated that the experience left a lasting impression."

"Students became more excited to participate and share their own connections to Guam's tradition and family experiences. . . the classroom environment became more culturally inclusive and reflective of our island community."

"Overall, the SHOP funds positively impacted student learning and cultural awareness in lasting ways."

"Overall, the SHOP funds enhanced instructional quality, supported student achievement, and strengthened cultural appreciation within the classroom"

"Overall, the grant funding not only supported this specific cultural and environmental project, but also provided a lasting resource that will continue benefiting students and teachers across multiple areas of the school community."

"As the educator, my idea for this SHOP grant was fulfilled and made learning fun."

"The SHOP funds helped create an inclusive, culturally responsive learning environment that supported student growth and strengthened our school community"