

LIASCD Mini-Grant Winner – 2008

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Project: In Grandma's Attic: Researching Local History Through Restorations of
Historic Homes

School District: West Babylon

P. David Pearson suggests that a teacher's role is to "act as a sort of tour guide to help students see richness and possibilities." (1985) In the proposed interdisciplinary project, *In Grandma's Attic: Researching Local History Through Restorations of Historic Homes*, teachers will engage 4th grade students in inquiry-based learning to investigate local history to make a connection between the past and present and collaborate on the restoration of a historic home. Teachers will guide students in inquiry-based studies on the richness of their Long Island heritage. With the introduction of a mobile literacy/technology work station in the balanced literacy classroom, students will be able to integrate technology of today with the study of artifacts of the past.

From the 1930's to the 1960's, the tulip bulb industry flourished in Suffolk County. A 1929 English Tudor-style house, is currently owned by the Historic Services Department of our local county government. The Town Historian's Office has secured the support of Suffolk County Historic Services, and the Town Historical Society to allow students to collect and display artifacts, creating a *living history museum* of the daily life of the family who lived in the home during that era.

The town historian and historical society will join students in efforts to:

- Explore the influence of the tulip bulb industry on the growth of their community-how it operated, what made it successful, and how the tulip bulb industry influenced the economic and social aspects of community life
- Investigate the significance of a local historic home that was once owned and occupied by a family operating a large local tulip bulb business
- Understand eras, themes, and developments in local history through the hands-on investigation of primary and secondary resource materials
- Make history come-alive through the creation of a *living history museum* for community viewings
- Disseminate project information to local historical societies and community groups
- Assist with preparations for the grand opening celebration of the historic home



Words, when written, crystallize history; their very structure gives permanence to the unchangeable past.-Francis Bacon

With this in mind, 4th grade students in collaboration with the school district, the town historians and historical society will assist in documenting and preserving a portion of the history of their community and give voice to a not-so-distant past. The opening of the local historical site is scheduled for late spring in 2008.