



SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD EDUCATION FOUNDATION
"Ensuring a bright future for our children"

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**South Orange-Maplewood Education Foundation
Announces Grants to Teachers**

December 2006 -- After careful review and consideration of 64 individual applications, the SOMEF Grants Committee is pleased to announce 4 large grants (awards of \$1,500 and up) and 46 small grants (awards up to \$1,500) have been made to teachers, principals and administrators throughout the South Orange-Maplewood district for the 2006-2007 school year. This represents an influx of \$28,600 of funding for local schools which ultimately benefits children across the two towns. The disbursements mark the 6th anniversary of the SOMEF Teacher Grants Program, which began in 2000 when \$1,000 was shared among three applicants.

According to SOMEF trustee and committee chairperson Sandra Karriem, there was strong competition for available the limited grant dollars. "This season we received applications totaling an overwhelming \$170,000 in grant requests – one of the largest amounts ever. More striking than the financial demand however, was the broad range of high-quality requests and resourceful ideas. Teachers are clearly focusing on the whole child – we reviewed proposals that touched on social, physical and academic topics."

This year, SOMEF was pleased to launch a new partnership with the Pierro Foundation, which supplied funding for two arts related grants. The Pierro Foundation supplied partial funding for the Renovation of the Domareki Art Gallery at Columbia High School, and full funding of the Tony Smith Art Project at Columbia High School. Under the direction of Larry McKim, CHS art teacher, art history students will embark on a study of the work of acclaimed minimalist sculptor and South Orange native, Tony Smith.

"We were privileged to work with the Pierro Foundation," said Karriem, "and are excited about the ability to support more arts related programming in our schools."

Among the grants that received full or partial funding for the 2006-2007 season are:

- Replacement of outdated and worn books at the South Orange Middle School Library
- Webcam Pals – A project enabling high school students to communicate with peers in other countries via a webcam
- Building Literacy in Kindergarten with Big Books
- Project Wisdom – A school-wide character education program at Clinton School
- Student Video Production – The creation of a video 'magazine' at Seth Boyden to help students use their creative strengths and 'teach' others

The South Orange-Maplewood Education Foundation believes that an exemplary public school system is essential to the well-being of our community. SOMEF's mission is to enhance the educational experience for all students and staff, by providing funds to enrich educational programs, activities and facilities. SOMEF raises money through events, such as Night of 100 Dinners, Honor Your Teacher tributes, and fundraising appeals. To learn more, click on www.somef.org