



OUTLOOK

THE SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Newsletter, Spring 2003

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I would like to take this opportunity to update you on all the good things SOMEF has been able to accomplish because of our supporters. As you may know, one of our School

District's major goals is to foster a *community of learners* - and we at SOMEF have taken that goal to heart. We have developed programs that are now institutions in our community, that address all our different constituencies - parents, pupils, and educators.

Our mini-grants are really the brainchildren of our staff and inspire our students. What better way to engage our children and our teachers than to support their creativity. This year we were able to make 55 grants at a total of \$20,184. SOMEF has now awarded over 100 grants totalling over \$42,700. The ACHIEVE Volunteer Tutor program not only reaches our pupils, but also provides a venue for community members to participate in our schools.

This year we helped to support the Ferguson-Tripod Project through a grant we gave to the district to fund a survey of student/teacher relationships. The result of the survey forms the cornerstone of a staff development project addressing the Achievement Gap.

As we look to the future, we will seek to find innovative ways to actively engage that most important educational partner of all, our students' parents.

All of this takes hard work, dedication, and money. I want to thank our wonderful community for continuing to help us meet all of these demands.

Sincerely,
Thea Okin, President

GETTING A JUMP START ON READING

SOMEF accomplishes some of its goals through collaborations with other Maplewood and South Orange community groups. In 2001, the South Mountain YMCA received a grant from the United Way to create an after-school program to serve children in kindergarten and first grade that would include assistance in emerging reader skills. The "Y" approached Deborah Prinz, coordinator of the ACHIEVE Program

in search of volunteers who could serve as reading buddies for the children.

Now in its second year, the after-care program, called *Success by Six*, is in operation at the VFW hall in Maplewood. ACHIEVE tutors are recruited to spend an hour or more each week on site doing activities with children that promote good reading skills. Some of the children have already begun to read; others are still developing pre-reading skills such as recognizing letters, words patterns and sounds.

The volunteers were trained by South Orange/Maplewood District teachers, Tina Lehn and Jennifer Cullen in reading theory and reading readiness strategies. In addition to working with letters and word sorts, tutors also spend plenty of time reading with the students. Five-year ACHIEVE tutor, Cindy Galeota describes

working in *Success by Six* as "a blast." New tutor, Angie Builes agrees: "The children are so sweet...working with them is a great experience."



Volunteers visit *Success by Six* on weekday afternoons between 4 and 7 PM, making this an ideal tutoring arrangement for those who are busy during the day. High school students are also welcome to participate as reading buddies.

"Y" director, Paul Kieltya and after school program director, Tommy Donaldson see the ACHIEVE tutors as a wonderful addition to *Success by Six*. They know that parents and teachers alike appreciate the extra attention being given to the children. Everyone wins when experienced readers pass along the life-long pleasure of reading.

Anyone interested in volunteering for *Success by Six*, or for any of the other ACHIEVE alternatives should call Deborah Prinz at 973-378-9637 or e-mail dprinz@somsd.k12.nj.us.

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SOMEF GRANTS \$11,000 FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In November 2002, SOMEF announced its decision to award a grant of \$11,000 to assist the School District to participate in a groundbreaking professional development program called the Tripod Project. SO/M joins with a select group of top-ranking culturally diverse districts to engage in a multi-phase process led by Ronald F. Ferguson, Ph.D. of the Wiener Center for Social Policy Research at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

The goal of the Tripod Project is to open up lines of communication and build knowledge among teachers about ways of achieving success in the classroom by

focusing on the three fundamental and interdependent aspects of instruction: content, pedagogy and communication. SOMEF is extremely proud to help make it possible for the district to take advantage of this endeavor that draws on the latest research aimed at closing the achievement gap between white and African-American and Latino students by seeking to improve performance for all.

District Director of Planning and Assessment, Dr. Patricia Barker reports that the first phase of the Tripod Project is underway with student surveys that will provide information on their attitudes toward their own academic performance.

This data will inform teachers as they share ideas about teaching practices as they relate to the three areas of instruction.

Supporting this initiative is in keeping with the foundation's mission to enhance the educational experience for all members of the school community, as the Tripod Project will affect everyone, including future SO/M students and teachers. SOMEF shares the district's view that addressing the achievement gap is a top priority. The best way for us to excel as a district is by making sure that all of our children are performing to the best of their ability.

MOSAIC MAGIC

Last spring, there was magic in the air at Marshall School. It was not ordinary magic, or Harry Potter's wizard magic: it was *Mosaic Magic*.

Mosaic Magic took place because Marshall Principal Angelica Allen feels it is important to build a sense of community in the school. One way of accomplishing this goal is by creating a different theme each year that permeates the halls and every classroom. Last year's theme was "Making a Mosaic."

A SOMEF mini-grant funded this school-wide project. Each class created a mosaic panel using objects commonly found at home. Parent Gary Steficek designed and fabricated the wood panels needed for each class, which are now permanently displayed in the front entrance hall of the school. Art teacher Ellen Weisbord was the creative manager and leader of the project. She had each student in each class participate in the process by bringing in household items, once their class agreed on a category for its theme. Each class produced a mosaic pattern and design before the final gluing.

Through this mosaic project Marshall students learned a great deal about art and transformation. Just as each ordinary object took on a new life and meaning when it became part of the mosaic, each individual made a contribution and gained from being part of a group to benefit the community.

Each mosaic demands a closer look. These well-thought-out designs are not just unique, but they offer a whimsical flair! Marshall has a new theme brewing for this year: weaving is in the air!



Viewing some of the mosaics.

TEACHER MINI-GRANTS AWARDED FOR 2002-03

CLINTON SCHOOL Meta Johnson & Donna DelGuercio *For the Love of Poetry - Part 2*, Ann Bodnar & Yolande Fleming *Africa Quest*, Sharon Edelberg & Kathleen Anderson *Six + One Traits - Books for Teachers*, Mary Ellen Murray & Janine Guida Poutre *Alphabet Garden*, Irene Dunsavage *Making Connections through Puppetry, Poetry and Prose*, Deborah Blumenthal *Horn and Straw Therapy Programs for Speech Development*, Nicole Kelly *Art and Creative Movement*, Katie Simpson & Arlene Aguirre *Coming to America, Coming to South Orange-Maplewood Schools* COLUMBIA H.S. Darren Heiber *Literature Circles*, Matthew Hall *Video Crime Scenes - Forensic Science*, Sharon McLean & Beth Stein *Student Advocacy for the Millennium Conferences*, Mariann Balmann *Calculators for All*, Kandice Williams *Portable Ballet Barres*, Linda Dangelo *Imagining Tolerance*, Beth Stein & Janet Mandel *The Harlem Renaissance*, Frank Bender *Health and Driver Education Materials and Tapes*, Detective Michael Morrison *Maplewood Mentors*, Jack Martin *Landscape Design*, Jack Martin *Model Rocketry* JEFFERSON SCHOOL Julie Dichiaro-Getlan & Bonita Patterson-Samuels *Team Together*, Diane Laden *Developing School Library for Character Education* MAPLEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL Michelle Epstein & Shirley Deeds *Student Health Fair/Get Smart and Stay Healthy*, Linda Caviness & Michelle Kaufman *Enhancement of Student Performance through Use of Multi-Media*, Tara Melchior *Teacher Resource Center for Special Education*, Loren Quinn *Multiple Intelligences Uncovered with Manipulatives*, Marquis Smalls *Book of the Month Reading Club*, Phillip Lester *PeerVention Project*, Barbara Burgess *Creating a Resource Room-Non-Fiction Library*, Pieta Bellizia *Recognition Activities for 6th Grade Transition Team*, Patricia Gieser *Audio Book Collection*, Patricia Marsh, Anna Herstatt, Kelly Slye & Valerie Sharp *Mystery Mania* MARSHALL SCHOOL Angelica Allen *Achieve Reading Room*, Arlean Lambert *Turning on the Turned-Off Reader*, Bebe Greenberg *Learning Centers in Kindergarten*, Barbara Gervasio *Lights! Camera! Interaction!*, April Intile *Listening Center*, April Intile *We Are A Community* SETH BOYDEN SCHOOL Kristopher Harrison *Books that Reflect Us*, Kristopher Harrison & Linda Yarborough *Boyden Buzz*, Judith Symonds *Knitting Together a Community*, Linda Yarborough *Peacemakers in the World*, Vicki Arlein *Mini-Nature History Museum*, Brian Edgerton *Morning Messages*, Tamar Herman *Increase Literacy by Updating & Expanding Class Library*, Risa Yesowitz *Ladysmith Black Mambazo Concert*, Tina Lehn & Bernice Avella *Popp Integrating Art & Music into the Multiple Intelligences Curriculum* SOUTH MOUNTAIN SCHOOL Serena Hopper & Merle Hornstein *State Cake* SOUTH ORANGE MIDDLE SCHOOL Karla Wiggins, Peter Smith & Karen Marcus *Rocketry*, Diane Grant *Project Astro Nova*, Carole Huynh *Le Francais Au Soleil*, Jane Leahy *Rauen Social Sciences: Weed and Feed* TUSCAN SCHOOL Kathy Lamkin *Audio-Assisted Language Arts Enrichment*, Joanne Tesi & Dawn Geanette *Crafty Reading*, Claire Van Tine *Music Library Enhancement*, Joanne DeVonish & Christy Lisiura *Book Binders Club*

Ensuring a bright future for our children



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DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!
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