



# SOMERSET HILLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# NEWS

Dedicated to Supporting Bedwell Elementary School, Bernardsville Middle School, and Bernards High School

## Message From The Board of Trustees

The Education Foundation enjoyed one of its best years ever, achieving record performance in funds raised during a difficult economic climate.

Good progress was realized against our annual goals:

- **Expand the Board of Trustees and attract more volunteers**  
As an outcome of Kindergarten parent coffees and small group gatherings (described more fully elsewhere in this newsletter), volunteers came forward to help with the Chili Cook-Off and join the Development Committee. Six of them have subsequently been elected to the Board of Trustees.
- **Increase awareness of SHEF as an Education Foundation**  
SHEF trustees participated actively in Bernardsville Chamber of Commerce, Unity Day, Back-to-School Nights, HSA meetings, Principals & Presidents meetings, Bedwell Golden Guest Day, Bedwell Family Fun Day, and the screening of Race to Nowhere. Our Annual Report-Newsletter, Website, E-Newsletters, and Facebook page helped us effectively communicate more information to you.
- **Increase fundraising via Development Plan initiatives**
  - The 8th annual Chili Cook-Off was another overwhelming success – ticket sales again approached 700 and net proceeds exceeded \$100,000.
  - Our annual campaigns achieved their best results in 10 years, driven by a 30% increase in donations from district staff and a Staff Tribute Program that exceeded its previous two years combined.
- **Support major educational initiatives**  
SHEF presented the district with \$68,000 to fund three exciting new programs (described more fully below):
  - Columbia Teachers College Readers-Writers Project Partnership

- College & Career Counseling Center
- The Virtual Academy at Bernards High
- **Establish groundwork for additional fundraising**

A Development Committee (described more fully elsewhere in this newsletter) was activated to plan future fundraising programs, focusing on extending SHEF's umbrella to include a Major Gift Fund and a BHS Alumni Association.

As always, the most satisfying aspect of our work has been the Foundation's ability to fund district-wide programs. By devoting \$22,631 to fund 19 classroom project grants this year, SHEF has disbursed \$282,381 to 206 projects over the last 14 years. The \$68,000 major projects grant continues SHEF's drive to provide innovative education enhancements for district students and staff. When combined with the classroom grants, it brings SHEF's support of the district to more than \$90,000 for the school year. We are pleased that we have been able to deliver at least that amount in each of the last six years and \$750,000 during SHEF's lifetime.

We wish to thank our district staff for their commitment to education – your inspired, exciting, and innovative ideas provide students with difference-making experiences. And finally we wish to thank this year's 440 contributors – your continued generous support will allow us to make the district's educational offerings even more special.

Keith Kebel  
Executive Director of Development

Valerie Zanardi  
Chairman of the Board

## SHEF Funds Major Projects

In a break from recent practice, the Somerset Hills Education Foundation will be funding three major projects within The Somerset Hills School District next year. In June, SHEF presented the Board of Education with \$68,000 to launch the Columbia Teachers College Readers-Writers Partnership, a College and Career Counseling Center, and the Virtual Academy at Bernards High.



Students collaborated with artist, Nancy Peer, on different ideas for a literary mural in the BMS Media Center.

### look inside!

Chili Cook-Off 2011	Financial Report
Community Outreach	"Race To Nowhere"
Development Committee	SHEF Grants
Financial Contributors	Support the Foundation

"This year was unique in that we funded several projects instead of just one," said SHEF Vice-Chair Carey Kane. "Often the district has asked for one large technology project to be funded. This year there were many different programs that the school district requested we fund."

In order to better guide students through the increasingly competitive and complex college admission process, the district will create a **College and Career Counseling Center** during the 2011-12 school year. As part of this multi-faceted project, the district will develop a series of parent workshops on college planning and the application process, as well as offer one-on-one sessions for individual families, as needed. It also will establish a **Resource Center**, which will simplify and streamline the application process by offering all necessary college and career documents in one location. Parents and students can visit the Center during regular working hours without an appointment. Funding also will be earmarked to develop in-house college admission experts and create an ambassador to spearhead college outreach initiatives. After the initial program start-up, the **College and Counseling Center** will be an on-going addition to the Bernards High School Guidance Department.

"As the process of college admission has become more competitive and complex, we realized the need for more of a focus in this area," Superintendent Pete Miller said. "By funding this new center, guidance counselors will have the time to expand their college outreach and will be able to spend more time with students assisting in the college selection and application process."

**The Readers-Writers Project** is a literacy partnership aimed at kindergarten through fifth grade. Through this program, Columbia University will provide onsite training and monitoring during the school year in the areas of reading and writing best practices.

"We selected the Columbia Literacy program for funding because it impacts the entire elementary school and will bring our literacy program to the next level in educational excellence," Kane said.

**The Virtual Academy** will enable Bernards High School to offer unique and innovative electives that otherwise would be cut due to low enrollment. Through this initiative, students can take online courses in more than 40 areas of study, including such diverse classes as AP Computer Science, Meteorology, and Oceanography. The SHEF grant provides funding of \$450 for each of 20 upperclassmen, who were selected over the summer through an application process.

"By offering these classes in a virtual environment," Kane said, "the district can offer classes that only a handful of students may be interested in taking."

## Financial Contributions

A sincere thank you to all who have generously donated to SHEF in the 2010-2011 school year:

### PLATINUM SOCIETY (\$5000+)

Penelope Ayers

### GOLD SOCIETY (\$2500+)

John & Lynne Brum  
Steven Insler  
Peter & Carol Jegou  
Michael & Debra Mandelbaum  
Terry & Kathy Travis

### SILVER SOCIETY (\$1000+)

George & Pam Ackert  
James & Lisa Boylan  
Jason & Diana Cohen  
Marc & Allison Ecko  
Neil & Lois Gagnon  
Martin & Jean Kendall  
Greg & Michele Lobo  
Clifford & Ariel MacTavish  
Alex & Suzy van Dijk  
John & Janet Wurch  
Paul & Valerie Zanardi

### BRONZE SOCIETY (\$500+)

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James & Kim Austin  
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Karen McMahan  
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Karen Mlynarski  
Kelly Martin Munz  
Torod & Sabrina Neptune  
Ed & Jennifer O'Connor  
Jerome Parmer  
Michael & Michelle Paulik  
Edgar & Chris Pew  
Robert Polster & Laura Ruggeri  
Joe & Michelle Ray  
Chris & Mary Ann Reed

# 2010 – 2011 SHEF Grants

SHEF is pleased to support innovative programs in The Somerset Hills School District. In addition to the \$68,000 donated to the district for three major projects, SHEF has disbursed \$22,630 to the following grants:

## FALL 2010 GRANTS

### BEDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shakespeare Live!; Steal Away: The Living History of Harriet Tubman; Environmental Art Education

### BERNARDSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dancing Towards Health; Elements of Fiction in Music ; Heart Smart - See How it Flows

### BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL

BHS Intergenerational Golden Prom; Everything Old is New Again; Exploring the Met; BHS Mathathon

### DISTRICT

Shared Partnership with the Friends of the Bernardsville Library; The Mask Messenger (Faustwork Mask Theatre)

## SPRING 2011 GRANTS

### BEDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Believe to Succeed; Kindles for Kids; iPads and Speech Therapy

### BERNARDSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Survivors Speak; Composition and Inspiration in the Classroom: The Music of Larry Neek

### BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL

Bernards High Robotics

Please visit our website, [www.shefnj.org](http://www.shefnj.org), for details on all the grants.



Believe to Succeed highlights successful people with disabilities. This will inspire all students that they can succeed no matter what challenges they may face.

Dancing Towards Health- BMS gym Students in the BMS Concert and Jazz teachers have incorporated Zumba, an bands will have composer Larry Neek all encompassing athletic, cardiovascular compose a piece specifically for BMS workout set to music, into the gym students and their skills.

Kindles allow students to utilize the growing technology of electronic books and use the technology to expand upon their reading experience.

## Development Committee Activated

Two of SHEF's goals for the year were to increase fundraising via Development Plan campaigns and to establish groundwork for additional fundraising initiatives. An important step in achieving those goals was to create a Development Committee.

Under the leadership of the Executive Director of Development and comprised of 14 trustees and volunteers, the committee met regularly to assess current fundraising programs and plan future ones. Its recommendations led to SHEF participation at Bedwell's Golden Guest Day, sponsorship of the screening of *Race to Nowhere*, and changes to the timing of our Staff Tribute and Annual Giving campaigns. The committee's focus in the coming months will be on the acquisition of fundraising and event management systems, organizing a Bernards High School Alumni Association, researching and planning for a major gift campaign, and firming up the "case for support."

If you have the skills and interest to participate in this committee, please contact any of the trustees or the Executive Director.

## Financial Report

### SHEF Financial Report 2010-2011

For the period covering July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011

Opening Balance		\$25,778
Revenue		\$152,179
Chili Cook-Off Receipts	\$128,115	
Annual Giving Campaign	\$9,725	
Matching Gifts & United Way	\$877	
Staff Donations Campaign	\$3,435	
Staff Tribute Campaign	\$5,636	
Directed Gift	\$1,500	
BHS Centennial	\$1,731	
Special Event	\$984	
Interest	\$167	
Disbursements		\$126,997
Technology & Large Scale Initiatives	\$68,000	
Classroom Grants	\$22,631	
Chili Cook-Off Expenses	\$27,829	
Postage, Printing, Website	\$3,344	
Insurance	\$2,512	
Directed Gift Grant	\$1,500	
Memberships, Registrations, Administrative	\$1,160	
Closing Balance		\$50,981

# “Race to Nowhere” Comes to the Somerset Hills



When Vicki Abeles' 12-year-old daughter was diagnosed with a stress-induced illness, the California mom-turned-filmmaker began examining the lives of today's students. Her findings – documented in the film “Race to Nowhere” – have opened a debate on how the high-stakes culture of our educational system is affecting our children.

Local families were given the opportunity to join that national dialogue on April 28th, when SHEF partnered with the Bedminster PTO to sponsor a screening of Abeles' critically-acclaimed documentary at the Performing Arts Center at Bernards High. “The screening marked the first time SHEF has partnered with another organization on a project,” noted Jansyn Tropea, SHEF Trustee from Bedminster.

The controversial film, which drew national attention and was shown at hundreds of venues nationwide this spring, bills itself as a call to action. It hopes to motivate families, educators and policy makers to challenge current assumptions on how to best prepare the youth of America to become healthy, bright citizens who contribute to society.

Though neither SHEF nor The Somerset Hills School District endorsed the documentary, SHEF recognized the value of offering the screening.

“It was a public service to show it,” SHEF Trustee Dana Sherman said.

## SHEF Spreads Its Wings in the Community

In an effort to establish a greater presence in the community, the Somerset Hills Education Foundation launched a series of Community Outreach initiatives this year aimed at making the organization more visible.

In October, the group hosted its second annual **Kindergarten Coffee & Chat** social outreach initiative. Parents of kindergartners were invited to one of two **Coffee & Chat** sessions, where SHEF representatives educated them on the Foundation and how its donations benefit the school district. This year's events resulted in SHEF gaining two Development Committee members and two trustees.

In February, SHEF trustees hosted five **Small Group Gatherings** in their homes. Keith Keibel, Executive Director of Development, spoke on the future of funding in the school district and educated parents on how this will affect their child's education. A member of the SHSD Board of Education attended each gathering. The events were very casual and resulted in five new trustees for SHEF.

“We really tried to get more noticed in the schools and community,” SHEF chair Valerie Zanardi said.

SHEF's push to expand its profile stemmed from the funding cuts at the state level, which resulted in budget cuts at the local level.

“The school district has to operate as more of a business now,” Zanardi stated. “That means SHEF has to grow more to help more.”

Having more community members involved with the Foundation is one of the keys to growth.

“To make more money, we need more people involved,” Zanardi commented. “And you need to be more visible to do that. We find that many parents are not aware of all that SHEF funds in the district to provide the excellent education students receive.”

“So we were spreading our wings this year.”

SHEF will be hosting the **Kindergarten Coffee & Chat** sessions again during this fall 2011.



## Financial Contributions cont.

Dennis & Carolann Reznick  
Joe Rossi  
Scott & Jen Russo  
John Paul & Kathleen Sanderson  
Kris Schmid  
Clifford & Jodi Sebastian  
Gene & Lynn Sharp  
Dana Sherman  
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Joe & Linda Billotti  
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John & Gail Canavan  
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Chris & Tracy Connor  
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Kevin & Laura Jelinek  
Drs. Neill & Julia Johnson  
Dennis & Carrol Kalsow

## How Can You Support the Foundation?

- Look for an **Annual Giving Campaign Envelope** and letter which will be mailed in mid October.
- A **Tribute or Memorial gift** is a perfect way to honor a teacher, friend, or relative while supporting the mission of the Foundation. A gift acknowledgment will be sent to the party of your choice.
- If you donate **appreciated stock** to SHEF, you are eligible to receive a tax deduction for the full fair market value of the securities transferred and you do not have to pay capital gains taxes on the appreciation.
- Many businesses will **match a charitable gift** made by employees and retirees to an education foundation like SHEF. This is a wonderful way to double the value of your donation. If applicable, please enclose your company's matching gift form with your donation to SHEF.
- A donation may be directed to the Foundation via the **annual United Way campaign** at many employers. Simply fill in our name (Somerset Hills Education Foundation) and tax identification number (22-3446481) as a specific agency of choice.
- **Volunteers are always being sought** to help with our fundraising efforts. We especially need more people with skill or interest in: communications, computing technology, event planning, finance, fundraising, law, marketing, or sales. If you wish to volunteer or share some ideas, please contact any of the trustees listed in this newsletter.

## Financial Contributions cont.

Tricia Keener  
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 Eduardo & Alicia Agnese  
 Bryan & Toni Allocco  
 Mark Aronson & Brenda Forte  
 Carolyn Benner  
 Grosvenor & Betsey Blair  
 Stephen & Donna Blejwas

# 2011 Chili Cook-Off

Thanks to the support of the five communities in our district, the 8th Annual Chili Cook-Off sold out with nearly 725 registered guests—the fourth consecutive year that we've topped 700! Under Lynne Brum's leadership and nearly 100 volunteers, the event generated more than \$100,000 in net proceeds, close to another record. The money raised directly supports technology and innovative programs in the schools that serve students in Bernardsville, Peapack, Gladstone, Far Hills, and Bedminster.

This year the committee maintained its objective to attract local sponsorships to underwrite the event. Many local businesses came forward as sponsors to make this a successful year. The donor list included: **Platinum Level:** *Penelope Ayers*. **Gold Level:** *Bernardsville Print Center; Brown & Brown Benefit Advisors; Fun House Furnishings & Design; Peapack-Gladstone Bank; Phillips & Fredricks Jewelers*. **Silver Level:** *Diamond Dream Fine Jewelers; Steve Strambi-Wells Fargo Advisors*. **Bronze Level:** *Bollinger Insurance; Clearbrook; Debra Ross-Weichert, Realtors; Diehl's Jewelers; 56<sup>o</sup> Wine; Gary's Wine & Marketplace; George VanDyke; Keller Williams Towne Square Realty; Ken Rent; Lotus Mind & Body; Olcott Square Interiors; Raritan Liquors; Somerset Hills Education Association (SHEA); Starbucks*.

Back by popular demand, the Mechanical Bull returned and challenged many for a wild ride. An addition this year was the "Chili Pepper Lounge," decorated by Fun House Furnishings and Design of Mendham, which provided a respite for many of our guests who purchased tickets at the Red Hot and Spicy levels.

Twenty-two area chefs served up chili to all the partygoers. The winners for this year's chili contest were: **Best Restaurant/Caterer:** *1st Place - The Station Pub & Grub / The Bernards Inn; 2nd place - Gladstone Tavern*. **Celebrity Chef's Choice:** *1st place - Flavor Geeks™; 2nd place - The Somerset Hillbillies (Cliff MacTavish and Matt Donnelly)*. **Best Display:** *1st place - Flavor Geeks™; 2nd place - Gladstone Tavern*. **People's Choice:** *1st place - Team Screwball (Steve Schwed and Rick Krueger); 2nd place - Flavor Geeks™*.

SHEF would like to express its gratitude to our hosts, Susan and Bob Landmesser, who generously donated the use of their Carriage House on Upton Pyne estate.



Henry Kane tries his hardest to stay on the bucking bull.



Andrea McGee and Laura Hartnett, co-chairs of the Decorating Committee, transformed the empty Upton Pyne carriage house into the Wild West.

## Save the Date for the 9th Annual *chili cook-off*

Saturday, March 24, 2012

Please contact SHEF at 908.204.1930 ext 1344 if you are interested in volunteering with SHEF's major fundraising event.

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 FM Global  
 LexisNexis  
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**GIFTS IN MEMORY OF**  
 Joseph Poplowski  
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*The mission of the Somerset Hills Education Foundation is to promote and provide educational opportunities through innovative programs and projects.*