



SHEF

## NEWS

SOMERSET HILLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## Message From The Board

Thank you to everyone who welcomed us at the 2003 Back-to-School nights and to those who continue to be involved with our organization in so many different ways!

Since the Somerset Hills Education Foundation (SHEF) began in 1996, it has consistently helped enhance education for all students at Bedwell Elementary School, Bernardsville Middle School, and Bernards High School. Each Fall and Spring, we receive grant proposals from teachers, administrators and students for wonderfully innovative projects and programs that make learning more fun and more relevant. With increasing support from our community, SHEF has been able to fund an increasing number of grants, with a record \$14,358.25 being awarded to 12 deserving proposals last month.

This newsletter (our first) highlights a few of the programs SHEF made possible last year and tells you a little more about what we do. Subsequent newsletters will be published on a regular basis. We are also working on our website — so do “stay tuned!”

Please contact me, or any one of our trustees, for further information, to provide suggestions, or to make a donation. SHEF can only enrich our children's educations with your ongoing interest and contributions.

Sincerely,

Keith Kebel



### look inside!

“North-by-Northwest”  
at Bedwell  
Elementary School

“Inspiration”  
at Bernards High School

“Poetry Alive!”  
at Bernardsville  
Middle School

## Recent Grants

by Maggie Walsh

The Fall 2003 grant cycle garnered 17 proposals — with so many worthy and interesting ideas, it was tough to pare the list down to the final 12! Thanks to all the teachers (+ parent) who took the time to complete the application, and congratulations to those who did receive grants. And, of course, thanks to Dr. Lynn Caravello, Dr. Lynn Kratz and Glen Lampa for their continued support of this process.

**The Anita Codey Tribute** — Upon the retirement of BMS principal Anita Codey, 25 parents made contributions to SHEF in her name. We are pleased to announce the awarding of two grants that reflect Anita's love of literature, art and innovative learning overall: a collection of selected picture books to extend the understanding of literary skills and devices, and Electronic Classroom *Jeopardy!* for BMS and BHS.

### Bedwell Elementary School

**Games Kids Play** — a variety of games for Grade 2 classes, and for new Gifted and Talented Enrichment programs.

**Moment in Time** — all students will make personal clocks and one large community clock, integrating math and art to teach the concepts of time.

**Invention Convention** — materials to enable application of the Problem Solving Design Loop at the elementary school level.

### Bernardsville Middle School

**Photojournalism Club** — materials to display work from participating student, annually at the Bernardsville Public Library, and at BMS.

### Bedwell and BMS Shared Programs

**Seussentennial Celebration** — performances and parent/teacher workshops on reading using the beloved works of Dr. Seuss.

**Listening Literacy** — audio books to enhance enjoyment of books and reading comprehension.

### Bernards High School

**Bernardian** — Equipment and supplies for a more sophisticated yearbook and for use in photography contest submissions.

**Celebrating the Seniors in Somerset Hills** — an intergenerational project involving students and senior citizens in the community.

**Ultra Portable Projectors** (two) — enable student and teacher presentations from the computer and internet, integrating technology into the classroom and curriculum.

# North-by-Northwest

by James McCarron

Bedwell Elementary School

The North By Northwest project started out much like an actual forest. A seed was planted and out grew an idea. That idea was nurtured and cared for by

26 teachers and 403 students in the Bedwell Elementary School until a forest of education and creativity grew out of lots of paper, tape, cones, and clay.

Every few years, the related arts teachers brainstorm ideas for creating a large-scale project that incorporates several disciplines and media. This year they chose the Pacific Northwest for its natural beauty and the opportunity to learn about ecosystems and environments different than our own. Students began the project by researching this area of the world in the computer lab and the library/media center. After viewing presentations, videos, printed materials, and Internet sites, students were able to begin the process of creating a three-dimensional environment in the art room and hallway. During Spanish class, students worked on a map of North America and created a large collage depicting the fauna and



flora of the area, which were labeled in Spanish. In Music, students experimented with various materials to produce a sound track of the Pacific Northwest. The classroom teachers encouraged the project further by keeping journals. We are confident that all who viewed the North by Northwest exhibit enjoyed their experience.



## Poetry Alive!

by Lorrie Lane

Bernardsville Middle School

This past March, 270 fifth and sixth graders were treated to an exciting literary assembly provided by Poetry Alive! Two actors presented a program of "poetry with a twist," which included dramatic renditions of over a dozen different poems. The slate included classics, such as "The Highwayman" and "The Bells," and contemporary works, such as "Southbound on the Freeway" and "Poem for Roman Jakobsen." The high-energy performances of the actors captured the attention of the students... every emotion from sorrow to silliness was expressed.

Fifth grader Kristin Beacham remarked, "The thing that I liked about the Poetry Alive! Assembly was the way they used their imagination to act as if they are the objects.

I also liked the way they made me feel like I could see the scene and hear the sounds." Justin Meyers added, "I really liked the performance of the poems on stage because they worked as a team and kept on going if someone messed up. They got into character very well by changing their voice and using different movements to colorize."

The fifth graders had the 'hands-on' opportunity to learn several of the actors' techniques in four follow-up workshops. During each workshop, the students analyzed a poem, brainstormed ways to make it interesting to the audience, practiced their parts, and then presented a poem in Poetry Alive! style. The students were enthusiastic participants; the two presenters commented that they really enjoyed working with our students who were "bright, creative, and open to new ideas." Remarkd student Grant Mayer, "What I liked about the workshop was pretending to be at a party and acting in front of other classmates. All the different ideas that came up for a simple little poem, called 'Sammy,' were unbelievable."

As a follow-up to the assembly and workshops, the students in Honors Literacy classes chose several poems, decided on ways to present them, practiced, and put on an assembly of poetry for the other classes. Students presented as solo performers, duos, and even as a baseball team! The performers enjoyed themselves as much as the audience did that day.

# Inspiration

by Carolyn Benner

Bernardsville High School

During the fall of 2002, a SHEF grant was awarded to Suzy Cutler and myself, Bernards High School teachers, to equip a computer lab with the visual learning program Inspiration.

Professional development classes were offered in the spring and summer of 2003 to enthusiastic teachers who promptly lobbied for full access to Inspiration throughout the District. As a result, all BHS and BMS teachers now have access to Inspiration. Kidsperation has been installed at Bedwell.

What is so special about Inspiration? It employs visual learning techniques — graphical ways of working with ideas and presenting information across the curriculum. District teachers in math, English, social studies, and foreign languages use the program to help students clarify their thinking, to process, organize and prioritize new information. At the professional development courses, teachers found Inspiration and Kidsperation can help customize instruction, achieve standards, assess student progress, and energize learning.

Once a visual diagram has been created — through brainstorming, webbing, planning, critical thinking, concept mapping, organizing — then a teacher or student can simply use a command to convert the diagram into an instant textual outline. Both Inspiration and Kidsperation programs can also be designed to easily link symbols with web sites to provide ready authoritative sources for assignments and/or additional research.

Teachers who have used the program observe, "Inspiration reinforces understanding, and enhances critical thinking." Students organize and plan. They also recreate, in their own words, what they've learned. This helps them absorb and internalize new information, giving them ownership of their ideas. Another useful aspect of the visual representation allows students to identify misconceptions. Just as a concept map or web shows what students know, misdirected links or wrong connections reveal what they don't understand.

The potential for utilizing these excellent programs is virtually unlimited. Hats off to SHEF for providing district teachers and students the seed money to make it possible.

## Giving Is As Easy As

by Howard Lemberg

22-344-6481

Did you know that SHEF contributions can be made through the annual United Way appeals many organizations make available to their employees? All your family has to do is fill in our official name (Somerset Hills Education Foundation) and our Tax Identification number (22-344-6481) as a specific agency choice for the United Way to which you'd like to contribute. Your United Way deductions will get specifically allocated to programs for your children in your local schools.

Then, whenever you receive a paycheck or paystub, you will know your contributions are being put to great use in your community! Again, 100% of your donation to SHEF is allocated to funding innovative programs for our district students. With your generosity, SHEF has been able to fund over 60 enrichment projects in our schools. The United Way offers another opportunity to continue your support and we thank you for considering this option at plan enrollment time!

## Parents go for the Grant!!

by Debra Wilkins

Parents, bring your innovative ideas to a Somerset Hills School District staff member and team up for a SHEF grant!

SHEF recognizes the power of parent/teacher collaboration and funds grants sponsored by parent partners. The "Bedwell Invention Convention" proposal, submitted by partners Lauriann Swadba and Bedwell Technology Teacher Judi Jensen, this past grant cycle, garnered \$600 towards enhancing the problem solving focus of the Invention Convention at the Bedwell School. It is the latest example of successful parent/teacher partnering!

The SHEF Grant process involves articulating goals and outcomes for an idea, itemizing costs associated with it, and evaluating its implementation. Staff members have applications electronically mailed to them at the onset of the October and February grant cycles. After completing the application, staff obtain administrative approval and forward their request to Debra Wilkins, who presents it to the SHEF Grants Review Committee. All staff are notified of funding via email.

Two heads are better than one; share your next great idea and consider a SHEF grant to make it happen!





THE SOMERSET HILLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
25 Olcott Avenue  
Bernardsville, NJ 07924

*Over the last six years, we have  
contributed more than \$85,000 to  
innovative educational projects in*

**the arts**  
character development  
**literacy**  
**science**  
**math**  
**technology**

*Over 1,500 students will benefit from at least one of these  
programs during each school year.*

Extend your support through donations to  
The Somerset Hills Education Foundation, 25 Olcott Avenue, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

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