



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 Somerset Hills Education Foundation (SHEF) had a great 2011-2012 school year. We have seen our community awareness grow, maintained our fundraising during tough economic times, supported some very successful initiatives and are positioning ourselves for sustainable growth throughout the next several years.

Beginning in September with the formation of a Major Initiatives Committee, the Trustees embarked on a strategic process to plan SHEF's future support of The Somerset Hills School District (SHSD). SHEF hosted a series of small group meetings for a variety of constituent groups – district administrators and staff and, at our annual Small Group Gatherings, parents and teachers. At each of these meetings we asked the simple question: *What is your "pie-in-the-sky" idea for SHEF funding in the future?* The ideas that were shared were diverse, creative and extremely useful towards developing our strategies for future initiatives and grant funding. Throughout the next year and on an ongoing basis, we will be researching and evaluating some of the commonly identified major initiatives, creating a prioritized list of projects and incorporating those in future planning.

The Chili Cook-Off continues to be an extremely successful fundraiser. The 2012 event attracted \$25,000 in sponsorships, a crowd of over 600 attendees and proceeds exceeding \$100,000. We are looking forward to the 10th Annual Chili Cook-Off in the spring of 2013.

We are grateful for the hundreds of donors and volunteers who support the Foundation and the countless hours spent on planning and organizing the Chili Cook-Off, the financial contributions to the Annual Campaign, Staff Tribute Program, the faculty and staff supported SHSD Staff Campaign, matching

corporate gifts, and other fundraising efforts. Your contributions have enabled SHEF to fund over \$305,000 in classroom grants in the last 15 years - funding that goes directly into the classrooms, enriching the curriculum and enhancing our students' educational experiences.

In June of 2012, SHEF made a \$56,000 contribution to the District to support three major initiatives including:

- An expansion of The Columbia Teacher College Readers/Writers Workshop at *Bedwell Elementary School and Bernardsville Middle School*
- An expansion of the *Bernards High School College & Career Center*
- An expansion of the *Bernards High School Virtual Learning Academy*

In addition, seed money was set aside for the opening of the SHEF - sponsored *Summer Center for Academic Excellence* in the summer of 2013. All of these initiatives are explained in more detail on page 3.

The Board of Trustees includes a diverse group of committed volunteers who bring a wealth of experience to lead SHEF. The Trustees include parents of students in every school, faculty and administration as well as a representative from the Board of Education. We are honored to lead this organization and we thank you for supporting SHEF as we support the students of The Somerset Hills School District.

Alice Rose
Executive Director of Development

Alex van Dijk
Chairman of the Board



SHEF's entry for the Bernardsville Chamber of Commerce holiday window display contest

look inside!

SHEF Grants	College & Career Center
Major Initiatives	Columbia Readers & Writers
Financial Contributors	Chili Cook-Off 2012
Financial Report	Giving Envelope Enclosed
Support SHEF	

SHEF Funds Major Projects

The three initiatives launched last year by the Somerset Hills Education Foundation (SHEF) proved so successful that not only will SHEF expand the **Columbia Teachers College Readers-Writers Workshop**, the **College & Career Center** and the **Virtual Academy** at Bernards High, but the Somerset Hills Board of Education will also support the programs financially – a first in the history of SHEF's partnership with the district.

"The programs we rolled out last year were so successful and made such an impact on the education of our students that the district wanted to expand upon them," says Valerie Zanardi, SHEF's past chair. "The Board of Education showed its commitment to these excellent programs with more than just words."

In June, SHEF presented the Board of Education with \$56,000 to continue and further develop the **Readers-Writers Workshop**, the **College & Career Center** and the **Virtual Academy** (please see related stories on page 3). In conjunction, the district allocated \$55,000 for the three programs.

"The support that SHEF has provided to our students over the years has been tremendous," says Peter Miller, superintendent. "We are extremely grateful for the \$56,000 contribution from SHEF to further enhance our academic and counseling programs, which were well-received. The **Columbia Teachers College Workshop** provided additional training for elementary and middle school language arts teachers; the **Virtual Academy** opened up an array of new courses for high school students; and parents, students, and staff have benefitted from the expertise of Rebecca Labus, the **college and career specialist**."

Last year, SHEF contributed \$68,000 to the Board of Education to institute the three initiatives. It marked the first time that SHEF supported multiple academic-based projects instead of one larger technology program.

A portion of SHEF's funding for the 2012-2013 school year will also be allocated to examine the feasibility of hosting a **Summer Academy for Academic Excellence**, which would offer enrichment opportunities for middle and high school students.

Financial Contributions

A sincere thank you to all who have generously donated to SHEF in the 2011-2012 school year:

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2011 – 2012 SHEF Grants

SHEF is pleased to support innovative programs in The Somerset Hills School District. In addition to the \$56,000 donated to the district for three major projects, SHEF has disbursed \$23,189.16 to the following grants:

FALL 2011 GRANTS

BEDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Trees– Seasons of Change; iPads for Special Education; From the Garden to the Kitchen; Log Cabin

BERNARDSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Enhancing Physical Education

BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL

Bernardsville Then and Now; Fitness Gram

SPRING 2012 GRANTS

BEDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Get Moving Get Healthy; We Go for Nat Geo; Growing with Kids; Elmo Document Camera

BERNARDSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Forging the Future of Fitness

BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL

Golden Prom; Ode to Omiros; An Expanded Spectrophotometry Program

Please visit our website, www.shefnj.org, for details on all the grants.

Major Initiatives Committee

The Somerset Hills Education Foundation (SHEF) decided at their annual board retreat in September 2011 to create an ad hoc group to explore major initiatives to fund. The objective of this newly formed **Major Initiatives Committee** was to establish a list of programs and projects that would enhance the quality of education, student life, and services that The Somerset Hills School District (SHSD) provides to the district's population.

SHEF came to this decision due to an effort to change its fundraising strategy. Instead of raising general funds and then requesting ideas for new programs and projects to underwrite, SHEF now plans to identify these ideas first and then develop a fundraising plan to achieve them. The committee started this process by setting in motion a plan to solicit general concepts for initiatives that could then be generated into a list to be researched and analyzed.

Ideas were developed from several meetings that took place in Fall 2011 and in the early months of 2012. Representatives from the **Major Initiative Committee** met with school board representatives, district administrators, teachers, and students throughout the school year. The objective of casting such a broad net was to ensure that the initiatives considered be impactful to the community it serves.

SHEF's popular **Small Group Gatherings**, where parents and teachers in the district are invited to the homes of SHEF trustees for group discussions, were also utilized to seek ideas to consider.

SHEF considered projects of different magnitudes regardless of the budget. The results of these efforts were developed into a comprehensive list of projects for future consideration. Moving forward, SHEF plans to focus all fundraising initiatives on these programs and projects.

Financial Report

SHEF Financial Report 2011-2012

For the period covering July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Opening Balance		\$50,981
Revenue		\$158,310
Chili Cook-Off Receipts	\$141,052	
Staff Tribute Campaign	\$5,000	
Annual Giving Campaign	\$4,745	
Matching Gifts & Just Give	\$4,992	
Staff Donations Campaign	\$2,375	
Interest	\$146	
Disbursements		\$119,493
Technology & Large Scale Initiatives	\$48,500	
Classroom Grants	\$23,189	
Chili Cook-Off Expenses	\$33,660	
Database & Website Management	\$7,283	
Printing & Postage	\$2,974	
Insurance	\$2,818	
Memberships, Registrations, Administrative	\$1,068	
Closing Balance (includes Funds for Ongoing Projects)		\$89,799

College & Career Center

Navigating the post-secondary planning process can appear quite daunting. Given the excellent education found in the SHSD, Bernards High students are poised for greatness and now the **SHEF-funded College & Career Center** at BHS will help students, and their parents, plan for the future with greater ease.

In October 2011, SHEF funded the hiring of **Rebecca Labus, a college and career specialist** with many years experience.

In previous jobs, Labus has served as a college admissions counselor, a high school guidance advisor, and as a consultant at a private college preparatory service. She is in a singular position to view the college application process from all these many different perspectives.

Since October, in addition to the services offered by the BHS guidance counselors, Labus has led numerous seminars for parents and students on the many different aspects of the college search. Her impact in aiding the students and guidance department was so effective, SHEF voted to continue funding this center for an additional year.

This upcoming 2012-13 school year, the **College & Career Center** will host a variety of programs including the use of Naviance, a college search database available to all BHS students, standardized testing (ACT vs SAT), the Common Application, the financial aid process and many other topics.

Labus spent this spring organizing several programs to debut this year at BHS. For example, this September parents and students are invited to hear several college admissions representatives speak on the college application process and, from their unique outlooks, what makes a great application.

Rebecca Labus and BHS guidance counselors will also be running a Senior Lunch Series for students. These workshops will be given in the Community Room during all four of the lunch periods in September and October. Topics will range from Creating and Narrowing Your List, Interviewing Tips, Writing Essays and Resumes, to discussions on getting ready to submit for Early Decision/Action.

In November, Labus will be running a special seminar on *First Generation Admissions and Financial Aid*, as well as another evening program that takes a closer look at *Community Colleges*.

The **SHEF-sponsored College & Career Center** at BHS will also begin a process to help students investigate potential careers and create plans to make these vocations a reality.

Enclosed you will find a brochure outlining the **College & Career Center** programs. For updates please go to the BHS Guidance department webpage. Rebecca Labus is available to meet individually with any parent or student, so please email her at rlabus@shsd.org to arrange an appointment.

SHEF-Funded Columbia Teachers College Workshop Showing Big Impact

Bernardsville resident Kerry Davis happened to be subbing at Bedwell the day teachers attended a writing workshop funded by SHEF and facilitated by **Columbia Teachers College Readers-Writers Workshop**. When the teacher returned to the classroom, Mrs. Davis watched the workshop results firsthand and found the experience amazing.

"Ms. Spadaccini came right back from the workshop and started implementing what she learned – I was so impressed," says Mrs. Davis, a former teacher and mother of three. "She said, 'Get your journals out and let's practice.' She had the whole class writing right away and implementing what she learned."

Through the **Readers-Writers Workshop**, teachers in grades third through fifth at Bedwell and the Middle School received onsite training and monitoring during the 2011-2012 school year in reading and writing. The program was so successful that for the upcoming academic year, the Board of Education allocated \$14,000 toward the program, along with SHEF's contribution of \$11,000. The district also hopes to expand the program to grades six through eighth and notification is pending.

"This professional development program is at the pinnacle for teaching writing," says Valerie Zanardi, SHEF's past chair. "It's a competitive program, and we were accepted with our first application. Other schools have been coming to us for advice on getting in."

Through the program, teachers throughout the year receive five days of professional development comprised of live classroom demonstrations. "New strategies are implemented and teachers then use those in their classes over the next few months," says Jennifer Shouffler, director of curriculum and instruction. "Then, the trainer, Brooke Geller, comes back and teaches another strategy. It's optimal learning because our teachers see the professional development in a live classroom."

Dawn King, a teacher at Bedwell, found the program beneficial to her students. "My fourth graders enjoyed the different units, especially learning to write personal narratives and realistic fiction stories," she says. "Their enthusiasm was contagious. I was particularly impressed at how their writing skills grew and developed throughout the school year."

Mom Kerry Davis witnessed similar academic improvements with her son Shane, a rising fourth grader. "Shane can sit and write book reports, create a story web and edit his own work," she says. "Parents need to know that this program is one of the best in the country. It's a great thing SHEF is doing."

Support SHEF & the Students Of The SHSD

- **SHEF Annual Campaign** – Enclosed you will find a donation envelope for our **Annual Campaign**. This is one of two critical fundraisers that SHEF conducts each year. Your contributions will allow us to continue our support of the classroom grants and other initiatives. Please return the enclosed donation envelope with your **Annual Campaign** donation.
- **NEW!! Donate Online** – You can make a secure credit card donation to the **Annual Campaign** (and throughout the year) through our website www.shefnj.org.
- **Appreciated Stock** – A donation of appreciated stock is eligible for a tax deduction for the full fair market value of the securities transferred and you do not have to pay capital gains taxed on the appreciation. To learn more about donating stock, contact Executive Director, Alice Rose at 908-204-1930 ext. 1344.
- **Matching Gifts** – Many companies will match a charitable gift made by employees and retirees to an education foundation like SHEF. If applicable, please enclose your company's matching gift form or apply online as per your company's policy.
- **United Way Campaign** – You can direct your United Way campaign donation to the charity of your choosing. Just fill in our name (Somerset Hills Education Foundation) and tax id number (22-3446481) as your agency of choice.
- **Volunteer** – SHEF is a volunteer driven organization. We are always in need of assistance! You can lend your expertise in communications, web and social media, finance, fundraising, marketing or sales. To volunteer contact Executive Director, Alice Rose at 908-204-1930 ext. 1344 or go to www.shefnj.org, select the "Contact Us" page and complete the online form.

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2012 Chili Cook-Off

SHEF would once again like to express our gratitude to our host, Susan Landmesser, who generously welcomed SHEF to utilize The Carriage House on her estate. We are sad to say this may have been our last year at this location, but are so appreciative of all the wonderful years and wonderful memories we have experienced in this lovely setting.

This year the event chair, Alice Rose, and her committee maintained the mission to attract sponsorships to underwrite the event. SHEF was encouraged by the response of 23 sponsors totaling \$25,500. The donor list included: **Platinum Level-** *Lexus of Bridgewater, Penelope Ayers*; **Gold Level-** *Bernardsville Print Center, Brown & Brown Benefit Advisors, Phillips & Fredricks Jewelers, Three Meadows Farm, Wild Bill's Olde Fashioned Soda*; **Silver Level-** *Bollinger Insurance Solutions/PURE Group, Peapack-Gladstone Bank, Steve Strambi of Wells Fargo Advisors*; **Bronze Level-** *Ajnsztajn Family, Debra Ross of Sotheby's International Realty, Diamond Dream Fine Jewelers, Gary's Wine & Marketplace, Jeff Leach of Clarion Capital Partners, LLC, Keller Williams Towne Square Realty, Ken Rent, Olcott Square Interiors, Raritan Liquors, Sean Larkin of Larkin Wines, Somerset Hills Education Association (SHEA), Starbucks of Bedminster, Bernardsville, Basking Ridge, & Warren, and 56⁰ Wine*. This corporate sponsorship allowed all revenues to be funneled directly back to the three schools in the district in the form of grants, technology, and program initiatives. SHEF is very appreciative to all the local businesses, volunteers, and attendees who made this event so successful.

Of special note this year, Sean Larkin led a wine tasting in the Chili Pepper Lounge, which was beautifully decorated by Olcott Square Interiors. This amazing room and fun vinous experience was available to our top sponsors and all Red Hot Spicy ticket level attendees.

Twenty area chefs served up chili to almost 600 partygoers. The winners for this 2012 Chili Cook-Off were: **Celebrity Chef's Choice:** 1st Place – Pat Wry and Bill Moytko; 2nd Place – Le Fashion Cottage. **Best Display:** 1st Place – The Station Pub & Grub/The Bernards Inn; 2nd Place – Le Fashion Cottage. **Best Restaurant:** 1st Place – Soup Shoppe; 2nd Place – The Station Pub & Grub/The Bernards Inn. **People's Choice:** 1st Place – Pat Wry and Bill Moytko; 2nd Place – Team Screwballs (Steve Schwed and Rick Krueger).

For photos of the event, please visit www.shefnj.org



Hope to see you at the 10th Annual

chili cook-off

Spring 2013

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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The mission of the Somerset Hills Education Foundation is to promote and provide educational opportunities through innovative programs and projects.

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