

Chromebooks at SHS—Spring Update

The **Chromebook** rollout, funded by SEF as part of the district's "one-to-one" technology initiative, is proceeding apace at Summit High School. In February, all 330 sophomores received a Dell Chromebook for use at home and school. They join the members of the freshman class who received Chromebooks in October.

But what is a Chromebook and what can it do? Picture a light-weight but rugged laptop-like device. Instead of relying on an operating system or installed software, the Chromebook uses an internet connection and a Google account to give students a broad range of



functionality such as word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation applications. With the Chromebook, teachers can post documents and questions, assign videos for students to watch and respond to, provide links to websites for students to explore, and offer real-time feedback on students' progress on assignments. Students can create presentations in virtual groups, perform quick or in-depth online research right at their desks, take online assessments, and even turn in homework through the "cloud."

Social Studies Supervisor Jim Woods said, "The Chromebooks help make the learning more student-centered, in that the teacher is putting up work for students to do, and then they're responsible for working through it, often several tasks at their own pace. What is being created is an effective digital learning environment."

Student responses to the Chromebooks have been positive, with ninth graders making observations such as: "It is a lot easier to turn in assignments," "You can do homework on the go," and "You can't lose information/paper. I am much more organized."

By next year, all SHS students will receive Chromebooks. As the rollout proceeds, the district continues to offer teachers training on how to most effectively incorporate the tool into their classes.

SEF awarded \$363,000 for the Chromebooks, the largest grant in SEF history. One-third of the grant was funded through the SEF Endowment, a permanent invested fund aimed at supporting strategic programs like the Chromebook initiative. The Endowment Fund, raised through donor contributions, provides \$200,000 in grants each year above and beyond funds raised annually. To learn more about the SEF Endowment, visit sefnj.org.

The Eyes and Ears Have It!

Ngai, the God of Everything and Everywhere, had Brayton Elementary School first grader Sebastian Ruiz's senses on high alert. Sebastian, perched on the edge of his chair, had his ears transfixed by Ngai's proclamations on the Playaway audiobook *Hot Hippo*, while his eyes were glued to Ngai's colorful countenance in the hardcopy version. This is exactly the type of response English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher Susan Harden anticipated last spring when she penned an SEF grant to purchase **Playaway Bookpacks** for the district's elementary level ESL students.



Playaway Bookpacks pair an audiobook with its paperback twin. The former is housed in a small self-contained unit, about the size of a deck of cards. The only thing needed to start the listening experience is a pair of headphones. Students can listen to books and read along at the same time. The combination of visual and aural material is a boon for readers of all levels and types, from the emerging to the struggling to the voracious.

Mrs. Harden thought Playaway Bookpacks would be ideal "for the ESLs who don't have anyone at home who can read to them in English. [Bookpacks] provide extra exposure to English language and literacy." The grant request resulted in an SEF award of \$11,300 to the district's five elementary schools for the purchase of Bookpack units.

The response to the units has been enthusiastic from students, parents, and teachers alike. Brayton first grader Ruiz says he thinks the Playaway Bookpacks make him a better reader: "I like that I get to follow what the book says." Given the \$50-\$100 price tag per Bookpack, the units are only allowed to be signed out and taken home if parents complete an acknowledgment of the potential replacement cost and a permission slip.

As Mrs. Harden looked around the classroom at her rapt readers, she added, "We are so grateful for SEF's generosity which has afforded many students a very special and fun literacy experience. Any opportunity for our students to enrich their world through reading is thrilling for us. Thank you again ever so much!"

No Debate About It...

The **Speech and Debate Club** at Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School has flourished under the guidance of teachers Theresa Martin and Warren Wannamaker. Funded by a series of SEF grants, approximately 40 students across the three grades meet weekly to prepare for tournaments in the spring. At these meetings, Martin and Wannamaker teach students the format of debates as well as offer strategies and ideas on how students can focus their ideas. For speech tournaments, the teachers offer suggestions on piece selections, work on performance details and timing, and provide constructive criticism during practice sessions.

Started in 2012 with an SEF grant, the team has received numerous accolades. However, for Martin and Wannamaker the best outcome is watching their students become more thoughtful and confident as public speakers. According to Martin, "The ability to be articulate and to understand multiple points of view beyond your own is a critical skill to have in the world today. Speech and Debate helps students develop those skills." These sentiments are recognized by the students themselves. Sixth grader Sydney Zagorin stated, "Speech and Debate gives me the opportunity to discuss different subjects and to understand that there is more than one side to every topic."

An added benefit of the LCJSMS Speech and Debate Club is that many of the students have regularly joined and succeeded at the high school level. Martin and Wannamaker work with their high school counterparts to build a cohesive relationship between the two teams. Members of the award-winning Summit High School Forensics Team have been mentoring the middle school participants



and will continue to help them with their speeches and research throughout the spring. Anne Poyner, teacher and coach of the SHS team, noted, "As in the music and athletic programs, having a strong feeder program at the middle school greatly improves our high school speech team. The students come with the basic skills and the excitement of continuing to achieve their personal best."

SEF grants have supported the teachers who help prepare the students for tournaments, membership in the New Jersey Consortium for Gifted and Talented Programs, and tournament fees. Wannamaker asserted, "I am proud of the hard work our students put into the program. Success for us goes beyond trophies, and it is wonderful to see students grow as competitors and as individuals. That growth has been greatly assisted by the Summit Educational Foundation."



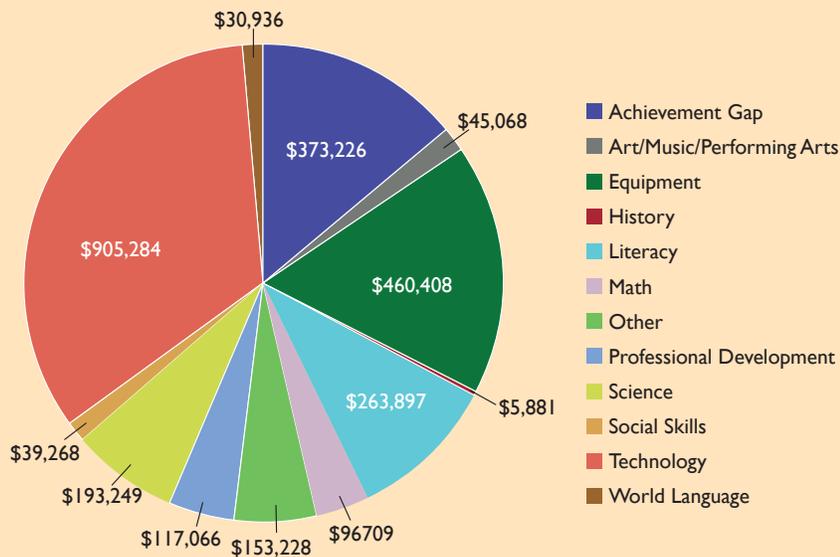
FAR LEFT:
Christine Murray,
SEF President;
Jennifer Anderson,
SEF Events Chair;
and Irene Murdock,
SEF Vice President

LEFT: Katherin and
Tim Freeman,
Partners Night hosts

SEF hosted its annual **Partners Night** at the lovely home of Katherin and Tim Freeman on November 20th. The event, a thank you to SEF's larger donors, was a spectacular evening with over 120 people in attendance. Superintendent June Chang spoke about SEF's role in enhancing education within the Summit Public Schools. District Technology Supervisor Doug Orr thanked SEF and its donors for their financial support in bringing one-to-one technology to the middle school and the high school. A highlight of the evening was a mesmerizing performance by Sean and Keegan McManus, members of Summit High School's award-winning forensics team.

SEF Grants Funding: FY 2011-15

For a complete listing of approved grants, visit sefnj.org



Fall Grants Approved

Thanks to the generous support of so many families, SEF was able to approve 32 grants totaling over \$85,000 in the fall 2015 grant cycle.

Sample grants include:

- **Family Science, Math, and Technology Nights** at all five Elementary Schools, totaling \$14,510
- **Author/Illustrator Visit by Trinka Hakes** Noble to Washington & Jefferson Schools, \$3,600
- **STEAM Curriculum Initiative for 4th Grade** at Brayton School, \$1,224
- **Comic Book Literacy Initiative for 3rd Grade** at Franklin School, \$8,610
- **Audio and Paperback Read-Along Collection for Fluency in 2nd Grade** at Lincoln-Hubbard School, \$1,118
- **New Gymnasium Sound System** at LCJSMS, a grant made in partnership with the LCJSMS PTO, with contributions of \$5,372 from SEF and \$5,000 from the PTO
- **Learning Ally Audiobooks** at LCJSMS, \$5,791
- **Forensics Debate Team** at LCJSMS, \$8,830
- **Wind Ensemble** at LCJSMS, \$1,601
- **Sphero Robotics for the Library MakerSpace** at LCJSMS, \$1,421
- **“Gizmos” Interactive Computer Simulations for Science Experiments** at SHS, \$5,419
- **21st Century Collaborative History Classroom** at SHS, \$9,315
- **3D Printer for Design Projects in Physics** at SHS, \$4,526
- **Jazz Band Visits by Professional Clinicians** at LCJSMS and SHS, totaling \$1,100

President’s Message

Last year, over 740 families donated to the Summit Educational Foundation! The most exciting thing about SEF is the widespread support we receive from the community. Given the 51 grants totaling more than \$740,000 submitted by teachers and staff and the dozens of volunteers who serve on our committees and board, I can truly say that SEF is a community effort. Furthermore, our grants impact every student in our schools—whether your child received a Chromebook or iPad, met with the college specialist, read books funded by SEF, sat in a Node chair, or used math manipulatives, SEF has impacted each student’s educational experience.

SEF is proud to have funded our first multi-year grant last year. We funded Chromebooks at the high school (described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter) over two years. Previously, all our grants were funded on a one-year basis. Because of the funds generated by our Endowment Fund, we are able to look at longer-term strategic initiatives such as the Chromebook rollout. As we continue to grow our Endowment, we look forward to having a steady stream of income to support these types of visionary district grants.

Coming up on our calendar is Casino Night, our annual fundraiser at the Elks Club. Mark your calendar for March 19th and join us for a fun-filled evening hosted this year by Franklin School. In April, Summit Educational Foundation celebrates 30 years of “Creating Possible” in the Summit Public Schools. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with a reception on April 21st at 6:30 p.m., prior to the Board of Education meeting. We invite the community to join us.

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- I would like to make a gift of marketable securities. Please contact me.
- I am interested in getting involved with SEF. Please contact me.
- I am interested in hearing more about the SEF Endowment Fund.

SEF is a non-profit 501(c)3 foundation.
Donations are tax-deductible and qualify for corporate matching gift programs. SEF is a United Way designee.

SAVE THE DATES:

WELCOME
To the *Fabulous*
CASINO NIGHT

Saturday, March 19, 2016
7pm at The Elks Club, 40 Maple St., Summit

This year registration is online only!
Please visit www.SEFNJ.org

SEF Is Turning 30!

Join Us on April 21 to Celebrate

April 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of SEF! To commemorate this milestone, SEF will host a reception on Thursday, April 21, at 6:30 p.m. at Summit High School, just prior to the Board of Education meeting. All members of the community are invited to join us to celebrate the \$5.4 million in grants SEF has made to the Summit schools over the past three decades.