

Donors help community, not just teachers and public schools

It's the giving season in a community known for giving. Sioux Falls Public Schools are among the beneficiaries of the generous nature of area residents.

Members of the Education Foundation's Board of Directors appreciate donors' willingness to help teachers and schools.

Board members also ask that donors keep the Education Foundation in mind this year as they make end-of-the-year giving plans.

"The need is always great. We certainly appreciate those funding partners who want to improve the quality of education in our community," says David Heflin, who chairs the Education Foundation Board.

Donations to the Education Foundation support special programs for teachers and students. The programs, which are available only because of donations, benefit the community as well as students.

"I honestly believe that anything we can do to help teachers teach and students learn will help our community as a whole," says Amy Scott-Stoltz, a member of the Education Foundation Board.

"Having innovative educational opportunities in our school system can help attract businesses to our community as well as attract families with children who are looking for a good place to raise their kids," says Scott-Stoltz, a financial advisor with Raymond James. (Continued on Page 2.)

Surprised raffle winners make plans

Jason Forbes and his wife, Lynne Keller Forbes, didn't make it to the Presidents' Bowl football games. But they received phone calls and texts from people who were there.

They informed Jason that he had won one of the two \$5,000 prizes announced during the bowl games.

They were quite surprised – happily so.

Jason, a CPA with Thurman, Comes, Foley & Co. LLP, had purchased 10 tickets. At last check, the couple and their three children had not spent the winnings.

"It's sitting in a savings account right now. We didn't go out and buy anything. I don't know what we're going to do with it," Jason says. (Continued on Page 2)

Check out our new website

With help from Blend Interactive, the Education Foundation's website has been updated and relaunched. Check it out at <http://www.sfeducationfoundation.org>.

The refreshed site includes news and useful information about Education Foundation programs, board members and the Sioux Falls School District.

It also includes links for people who would like to make donations or would like to volunteer.



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(Continued from Page 1)

Scott-Stoltz encourages prospective donors to discuss potential tax advantages with their tax attorney or financial advisor.

Prospective donors may go to the Education Foundation's website at www.SFEducationFoundation.org or call the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation at (605) 336-7055.

The Education Foundation maintains two funds with the Community Foundation: an endowment fund and an awards fund.

The end of the year is typically when such funds get the most attention, says Candy Hanson, president and CEO of the Community Foundation.

"It's just a giving time," Hanson says. "It's probably driven by the wealthy, but it's a giving time for everyone."

The Sioux Falls area demonstrates its generosity annually through, for example, donations to the Sioux Empire United Way. Representatives of the United Way say the four-county Sioux Falls area ranks second in the nation in per capita giving, trailing only Palm Beach, Fla.

The most recent fundraising event conducted for the Education Foundation was the Cash for Classrooms Raffle, which concluded at the Sept. 7 Presidents' Bowl football games.

Board members and others sold raffle tickets for \$10 apiece and raised thousands of dollars for school programs. (See sidebar story about this year's raffle winners on Pages 1 and 2.)

Heflin credits past and present board members for stepping to the challenge of making sales. Vernon Brown, Doug Erickson and Meredith Larson led active board members in ticket sales.

Heflin also thanks members of the Presidents' Bowl Committee of Sioux Falls for their cooperation and promotion of the raffle. He is especially appreciative of the support from Presidents' Bowl Committee members Ann Nachtigal, Kay Stenzel and Laura Goodhope.

All of the money raised in the raffle and through other fundraising endeavors supports programs such as Innovations in Education, which this year will award more than 35 grants - typically totaling several hundred dollars apiece - to teachers for special programs (see a story about one recent winner on Page 3).

In addition, 64 new teachers are receiving \$100 grants to buy supplies for their classrooms.



Raffle winner Jason Forbes (top left) receives his check from David Heflin. JoAnn Feiock (lower middle) is accompanied by her grandson, Caden Quintanilla (lower left).

Raffle winners make plans

(Continued from Page 1)

The winner of the other \$5,000 was JoAnn Feiock. She bought one ticket upon arriving at the Presidents' Bowl to watch her grandson, Caden Quintanilla, play for Lincoln High School.

She left after the first game and was "extremely surprised" get a phone call later on game night, advising her that she had won the second drawing of the night.

"I haven't decided what to do with it," Feiock says. But, she added, she bought the raffle ticket as sort of a tribute for her grandson's final year at Lincoln. So she might use part of her winnings buy him some gasoline.



Grant helps students study and enjoy music from around world

Music teacher April Hokanson has students from around the world in her classroom at Longfellow Elementary School. A grant from the Education Foundation's Innovation in Education program is helping her teach them about the music, dance movements and children's literature from other countries.

"The best part is when students are from that country and can share," Hokanson says. "It becomes very real to them."

Hokanson used a \$681 grant that she received last year to supplement the curriculum with more music, dance supplies and reading materials. She bought magazine subscription, books, CDs, DVDs, and dance accessories and instruments.

The most expensive item is a digital subscription package to Music Express Magazine, which cost \$195. Dance supplies included Rainbow Ribbon Wands, which resemble streamers on sticks. Instruments include an African water drum, which creates a unique sound because its striking chamber is filled with water.

Hokanson uses the Internet site Google Earth to "fly" students to whatever nation and musical culture they are studying. A world map posted on the wall tracks their travels and exploration of the world.

She uses Music Express Magazine, which she bought with grant funding, to help students learn about the culture, history, customs, instruments, rhythms and songs of different countries.

More than 300 students in kindergarten through the fifth grade have benefitted from the enhanced program, which reflects the Sioux Falls School District's goal to help students succeed in a changing world.

In addition to Hokanson, Longfellow, which is at 1116 S. Fourth Ave., is served by an orchestra and band teacher.

Response to her improved music class has exceeded the expectations of the 10th-year teacher.

"It absolutely was a big success. It opened the kids' eyes to the world around them," she says. "We have fun in here!"

Students attend two 35-minute classes per week. Some excited students ask Hokanson what country the class will be visiting next.

Damian, a fourth-grader, said the program is fantastic. "My



April Hokanson displays some of her new music supplies.

favorite part was learning the tango from Argentina," he says.

Mahdi, a fifth-grader, called the program awesome. "I liked the African drums and learning about cultures," he says.

The grant received by Hokanson was among 36 awarded by the Education Foundation during the 2012-2013 school year. Funding from the grants comes from business sponsors and other donors.

Hokanson plans to apply for another grant this year to continue her subscription to Music Express Magazine.

Teachers at any grade level who are employed by the Sioux Falls School District are welcome to apply. Grants are awarded through competitive process. For judging criteria and other information about the program, see www.sfeducationfoundation.org.



Busy bank executive finds time to serve on Board, help schools



Stephanie Gongopoulos is the model of what a nonprofit board member should be, says Tami Haug-Davis, chief executive officer of a regional Girl Scout organization.

“She’s just awesome,” says Haug-Davis, who leads Girl Scouts -

Dakota Horizons, an organization that represents the Dakotas and parts of Minnesota and Iowa. “She talks the talk, and walks the walk.”

Haug-Davis and Gongopoulos served together on the board of a prior scouting organization, and with Gongopoulos on the Dakota Horizons Board, they continue to work together.

“She didn’t agree to serve on something unless she commits to it wholeheartedly, personally and professionally,” Haug-Davis says.

Gongopoulos also has been an engaged member of the Board of the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation for the past year.

Her employer, The First National Bank in Sioux Falls, is a strong supporter of the Education Foundation, too.

“The bank had been supporting the Foundation for a number of years, so I was very familiar with its mission and fundraising,” Gongopoulos says. “It’s a working board. I’ve enjoyed that aspect of it.”

Gongopoulos is the executive vice president of cultural development for First National Bank. She oversees marketing, human resources and operations from a second-floor office that overlooks the heart of downtown Sioux Falls.

She has worked for the bank in leadership positions for the past 15 years, the past five in her present position.

Before becoming a bank executive, the graduate of Lincoln High School spent a year teaching preschool. She is married and has two children, and is deeply engrained in the community.

Don Scott, a retired bank executive, previously served on the Foundation Board. He approached Gongopoulos about serving on the Foundation Board. She was too busy at the time to make the commitment, but she didn’t rule out serving in the future.

Scott, who helped get First National Bank active in the Foundation, says Gongopoulos served on a committee that helped determine the bank’s charitable spending.

First National Bank is one of the major sponsors of Foundation programs, which are designed to complement and enhance educational opportunities in the community’s public schools. The bank contributes \$6,000 a year to Foundation programs.

“The First National Bank in Sioux Falls has been a long-term supporter of the mission and programs of the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation. Stephanie joining our Board highlights their commitment to our work,” says David Heflin, who chairs the Foundation Board of Directors.

“Our volunteer board depends on hard-working individuals who want to make an impact as a volunteer. Stephanie has stepped in from the beginning of her service to provide ideas and solutions to make us stronger,” Heflin says.

In addition to Gongopoulos and Heflin, members of the Education Foundation Board are: Vernon Brown, Catherine Dekkenga, Diane Dietsch, Doug Erickson, Twaine Fink, Steve Herman, DeeAnn Konrad, Meredith Larson, Wendy McDonnell, Pamela Miller, Mike Moore, Anne Powers, Cathy Regas, Justin L. Reilly, Carly Reiter and Amy Scott-Stoltz.

Mission

The mission of the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation is to enhance educational opportunities and promote achievement among all students by supporting academic projects and activities not funded by tax dollars.

It is our belief that the good life we share here is a reflection of the quality education our students receive in our local public schools.

The Education Foundation is administered by an advisory board that is comprised of community leaders, parents, School Board members, and current and retired district teachers and administrators.

