

Avon Education Foundation

P. O. Box 548, Avon, CT 06001-0548

PRESS RELEASE

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AVON—As Avon Public Schools and community educators gear up for another school year, they have a new partner in making Avon’s schools the exemplary district so many residents have come to expect. The Avon Education Foundation has been working this summer to launch a funding program that will support educational efforts in Avon’s schools and throughout the community.

“We are looking to support unique and creative projects that will add depth to the curricula in Avon,” said Sue Bertolini, Board Chair of the Avon Education Foundation, and one of the three residents who spearheaded the effort to bring an education foundation to town.

“A year ago when the school budget was passed at a lower funded rate than that asked for, I went to Dr. Kisiel [Avon’s School Superintendent] and asked if there was an education foundation in town to provide extra funding for the schools. I wanted to donate the difference in my tax bill from what I supported to what was actually passed. Dr. Kisiel said that there wasn’t an education foundation. However, he thought an education foundation would have a positive impact on the schools and community,” said Bertolini. Along with Sara

Ray and Janet Anderson, Bertolini formed a committee that eventually led to the AEF.

The school district's administration is very supportive of the foundation. "The Avon Education Foundation creates a dynamic educational support environment in the community that encourages innovative programs to enhance student and adult learning," said Superintendent Kisiel.

Indeed the scope of the foundation goes beyond Avon's public schools. "We would like to see all the residents of Avon part of an engaged learning community. We were impressed by the library program that used high school students to teach senior citizens how to use a computer and e-mail. We want to look at programs that not only enrich our schools, but other segments of our community as well," said Bertolini.

This fall, the foundation is ready to award several mini-grants of up to \$1,000 each to Avon educators for programs that enrich the existing curriculum and support innovative educational initiatives. At the same time, the AEF is working with local educators to develop creative new ideas to ensure superlative instruction and to enhance education in our schools and throughout the Town. "Avon is fortunate because we already have so many talented and motivated educators with wonderfully creative ideas. What they need to bring many of these forward-looking programs to Avon are resources. That's where the AEF comes in. Our mission is to mobilize the financial and human resources needed to make sure that the school children and residents of Avon have the best

educational opportunities available anywhere”, *commented Sara Ray, Board Vice Chair.*

In the next few years, the AEF plans to fund larger novel programs and projects which will impact multiple grade levels, schools and the broader community. The recently opened Aquaculture Center in Granby, and the state-of-the-art media laboratory for Cheshire High School, both of which were funded by the respective local education foundations, are great examples of what’s possible in Avon. The entire budget of the Foundation will be raised privately, and funding for the AEF is actively being sought from residents, concerned parents with students in the schools, other members of the community, as well as corporations, foundations and other organizations committed to excellence in education.

Since 1978, over 2,000 communities across the USA have established education foundations with similar missions. There are about 50 education foundations in Connecticut. From Maine to California where the first education foundations were originated, these non-profit education foundations have raised hundreds of millions of dollars to enrich the curriculum, improve teacher education and inspire collaborative community-school projects. The AEF is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax deductible. For more information please contact Sue Bertolini at 860-679-9236 or Sara Ray at 860-675-9966. You may visit us at www.avonedfoundation.org.