

Newsletter

Avon Education Foundation 

Fall 2011

www.avonedfoundation.org

Avon Teachers Laura McDonnell & Lisa Fenn FINALISTS 2011 US Partners in Learning



Message from the Chair

The Avon Education Foundation (AEF) was incorporated in 2004. Since then, we have awarded almost \$200,000 to 58 projects ranging from small to large in varied subject areas and technology. Learners of all ages have benefitted. In 2011 the Town of Avon was awarded its first grant to pilot iPad® technology at the Avon Senior Center where senior citizens are being taught by student volunteers from Avon High School.

We believe that our accomplishments are not measured in terms of what we did this year but by the contribution we are making over time to the success of public education in the Town of Avon:

- **Avon High School (AHS) was recently ranked 281 out of the top 500 schools in the country** by *Newsweek*.¹ Only 12 Connecticut high schools made this list, and Avon placed 5th in that group. In addition, AHS was ranked the number 1 non-magnet public school in the region by *Hartford Magazine* for the third year in a row.²
- **The only teachers from Connecticut selected as second round finalists for the 2011 US Partners in Learning Innovative Education Forum are from Avon: Lisa Fenn and Laura McDonnell, first grade teachers at Roaring Brook School.**³ They were selected for their “Leap into Learning” project which started with a 2008 grant from the AEF. This 4-week lesson in scientific inquiry for first graders investigates the frog life cycle filling a void that previously existed in the curriculum.
- **Thompson Brook School was selected as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2010.** Of the 10 Connecticut schools receiving the honor last year, only Smith Middle School in Glastonbury and Thompson Brook School are public schools.
- **Avon Middle School was named Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Middle School of the Year in 2006-2007** because its “students consistently...lead the way in academic success in state and national exams and competitions such as the national French exams, word masters and the New England Math League.”⁴

In 2011, all of the classroom teachers at Thompson Brook School (TBS) partnered on a grant application, “Classroom Access to 21st Century Technology,” winning the largest grant award we have made to date. The grant provides funds to upgrade technology in every 5th and 6th grade classroom.

Why does a school that opened just 9 years ago need to upgrade its technology? Consider what has happened since TBS opened in 2002:

- In 2005, Google Maps and Google Earth were launched, the first video was uploaded to YouTube, and Skype introduced videotelephony on the web. Skype has 929 million registered users as of September 2011.

(Continued on page 3)

M I S S I O N

To promote and enhance excellence in education in Avon, CT by providing funding and other resources for public programs which encourage, recognize and facilitate educational providers and students who initiate innovative and creative learning projects.

Learn more about us by visiting our website: www.avonedfoundation.org,
and our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AvonEdFoundation
Contact us by e-mail at info@avonedfoundation.org.

Classroom Access to 21st Century Technology
The Hudson Family, Richard W. Kiesel, Ed.D, UNICO and Oh Family Grants



Ardith Franklin and Mike Netkovick accepting on behalf of all 5th and 6th grade teachers at Thompson Brook School



Avon to Appomattox: Lives and Legacy of the Civil War
The Hyatt Family Grant



Joanne Beers and Thirza Hyatt with Tina Panik and Patrice Celli at the Avon Free Public Library



Document Cameras & Problem Solving
The Flaxman Family Grant



Tracy Andreaana, Avon High School, with Jody and Sam Flaxman

FROM THE GRANT COMMITTEE

Grants totaling \$33,195 have been awarded to 5 new programs!

At **Thompson Brook School**, all of the 5th and 6th grade teachers signed the grant application for “Classroom Access to 21st Century Technology,” requesting over \$30,000 to purchase DLP projectors, speakers and hardware to connect to their existing classroom computers. This project was funded by **The Hudson Family Grant** going to the 6th grade, **The Richard W. Kiesel, Ed.D. Grant** (in honor of his retirement) going to the 5th grade Yellow Team, **The UNICO Grant** going to the 5th grade Red Team and **The Oh Family Grant** going to the 5th grade Blue Team. The upgraded technology will engage students by directly connecting learning to the real world. Teachers and students will be able to use Google maps, collaborate with classes around the world using Skype, take online virtual field trips to museums or famous landmarks and instantly explore answers to questions posed throughout the school day. In addition, they will be able to use SMART Board™ interactive software they already have even without the SMART Board hardware. Ardith Franklin, Library Media Specialist, and Michael Netkovick, 6th grade Teacher, are directing the project.

Avon High School teacher Tracy Andreaana was awarded **The Flaxman Family Grant** to purchase portable document cameras for the math department. A document camera can visually display objects placed on its platform so a teacher can model problem solving and measuring techniques, introduce graphing calculator programming and usage, work with algebraic tiles and geometric solids. All of this can be done from the front of the classroom optimizing actual instruction time and learning. Work completed in class can be captured for additional use including uploading to teacher websites and sharing with other classes.

The **Roaring Brook School** Library Media Center, under the direction of Linda Miller, received **The Robert, Brian & Matthew Duffy Grant** to purchase a Mobile Overhead Projector Set-up. The equipment will be shared by all teachers to enhance students’ learning by allowing access to a broad array of internet-based teaching tools. It will add depth to the curriculum in a visual and modern format and promote creative and innovative teaching.

Jennifer Bennett, coordinator, was awarded **The Mary Durant Grant** to pilot iPad® technology at the **Avon Senior Center**. Avon High School student volunteers will help the seniors learn how to use the iPads. This is the first grant award received by the Town of Avon. Before applying for this grant, Ms. Bennett learned that Brookfield, CT was using iPads in its senior center very successfully. The technology seems to be well suited to older citizens since they do not have to be seated at a desk or use a traditional keyboard, mouse and monitor.

The Hyatt Family Grant was awarded to Tina Panik and Patrice Celli at the **Avon Free Public Library** for “Avon to Appomattox: Lives and Legacy of the Civil War.” This project demonstrates the role of CT in the Civil War and its impact on its citizens, economy and social fabric. It will include a display of letters from Pvt. Eugene Hawley from Avon who served for 3 years as well as a number of events occurring through the year.

—Beth Zweibel, Grant Chair

iPads for Lifelong Learning
The Mary Durant Grant



Evan Dorsky, Avon High senior, teaching iPad skills at the Avon Senior Center



Jennifer Bennett accepts the first grant awarded to the Town of Avon

Mobile Overhead Projector Set-up
The Robert, Brian & Matthew Duffy Grant



Linda Miller, Roaring Brook School, and Karen Haberlin, RBS PTO Grant Committee, accepting the grant

(Continued from page 1)

- Amazon released the first Kindle in 2007 and the Barnes & Noble NOOK™ was introduced in 2009. Over 2 million e-books are available today. Barnes & Noble has launched NOOKstudy™ to deliver e-textbooks to Macs and PCs.
- On June 12, 2009, digital TV replaced all analog TV in the United States. On that same day, Thompson Brook School lost its ability to watch live TV.

With the upgraded technology, teachers and students will be able to integrate Google Maps into geography and history lessons, interact with other classrooms in the building or around the world via Skype, take virtual field trips and access internet based content to enhance learning in all subject areas. They can use the SMART Board interactive software the school already owns even without the touch screen hardware. And they will again be able to watch live TV programs from the Discovery, Science and History channels as well as breaking news stories.

Since our founding, our goal has been 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. We value innovation and creativity, and we encourage collaboration across departments, schools and the community. We believe the Avon Education Foundation has contributed to the recognition our schools, programs and teachers have received locally, regionally and nationally.

Please help us continue creating opportunities for innovation in public education here in Avon. Volunteering is a great way to get to know more about us and use the skills you have to advance public education in Avon. Your generous donation goes even further when you give through your employer's workplace campaign and request employer matching funds. Many companies match contributions by retirees and spouses and some even donate if you just give your time. If you would like to take a leadership role in our community, we are always looking for people who might want to join our board of directors.

Look at our list of donors and our list of volunteers to see who has already gotten involved. We would love to add your name next year. If it's already there,

THANK YOU!

—Joanne Beers, Chair

Visit us: www.avonedfoundation.org & www.facebook.com/AvonEdFoundation
 Contact us: info@avonedfoundation.org.

¹ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/features/2011/americas-best-high-schools.html>
² <http://www.hartfordmag.com/archives/index.html>
³ <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/microsoft-announces-second-round-finalists-for-us-innovative-education-forum-2011-06-08>
⁴ From CAS press release, September 2006



The only finalists to represent Connecticut

Lisa Fenn (L) and Laura McDonnell, teachers at Roaring Brook School, were selected for the 2011 U.S. Partners in Learning Innovative Education Forum (IEF) (www.microsoft.com/education/uspil/USIEF/default.aspx). In July, they joined 100 other educators representing innovation in K through 12 classrooms across the United States.

Of the applications received, 102 stood out as addressing tangible, real-life issues for students including blended learning, service learning and civic engagement, working with social media, creating entrepreneurship opportunities, assistive technologies, and the application of gaming to learning. Applications are evaluated based on the learning philosophy and goals of the project submission, the use of technology, and the ability to demonstrate examples of student work and achievement. "The school leaders selected to attend IEF are the best in the nation at incorporating technology into their classroom curricula to enhance each lesson and really break through with students," said Andrew Ko, senior director, U.S. Partners in Learning, Microsoft. "It is inspiring to see these educators use technology to get students excited about learning and connected to the issues impacting their lives while developing the skills they will need for a successful future."

Their project, Leap Into Learning, was awarded the 2008 Avon Junior Women's Club Mini Grant. It uses a multimedia approach to examine and understand the life cycle of a frog. First graders are introduced to a Life Cycle web quest designed through PowerPoint, track the tadpoles' life cycle in Excel, and participate in a Multiple Intelligence Day to learn through a variety of intellectual modes. Students observe the life cycle first hand as they raise live tadpoles and watch them metamorphose into frogs. To conclude the unit, students become reporters and use Movie Maker to create a news show about what they learned.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK!

Workplace Giving makes donating easy and Employer Matching Funds make your generous donation worth even more.

Many companies give employees an opportunity to support the United Way through payroll deductions, and you can designate some or all of your gift to go to the AEF by writing us in:

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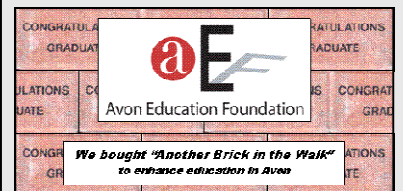
Employers often match the gifts their employees make to non-profit organizations, and many match donations by spouses/domestic partners and by retirees, too. Some companies even "match" volunteer hours with dollars. These programs go by a variety of names, so check with your employer and your spouse's to see if they will match your gift of money or time to the Avon Education Foundation.

The Avon Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALK

**Inspire your student everyday
 Recognize someone special
 Honor your business**

This spring, the AEF rolled out a new way for you to donate personalized engraved bricks for the walkway at Avon High School. Our goal is to sell at least 100 bricks each year to help us continue to fund high quality, innovative and diverse programs and performances for our community.



Donations made to Pavers for Posterity will continue to be used to support arts education.

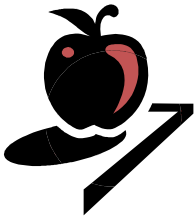
Back-to-School is a great time to
C.H.E.E.R! for Great Educators

*Would you like to tell those great educators
 just how great they are?*

The AEF C.H.E.E.R! program is just the ticket.

Visit our website, www.avonedfoundation.org, to download the C.H.E.E.R! donation form, pick one up at any Avon Public School or use the form, below. Fill it out, add your note, include a minimum \$10 contribution per request, and mail it back to us. AEF will deliver a letter and a C.H.E.E.R! Certificate to the honored educator sharing your appreciation. We'll also notify the campus principal or supervisor.

All C.H.E.E.R! contributors are acknowledged as Friends of the Foundation. C.H.E.E.R! recipients are listed on the AEF website, in each school and in AEF newsletters and publications.



Your tax deductible funds will go towards grants for exciting and innovative projects benefiting children at all public schools and our community as a whole.

The AEF runs the **Celebrate and Honor Exceptional EducatoRs!** Campaign throughout the year. Remember, it's always a good time to send C.H.E.E.R! to a teacher or staff member.

C.H.E.E.R! Honorees
 2010-2011

"Thanks for all you do!"

"You're the best!"

"You are an inspiration."

"I'm so glad you are there for my child each day!"

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SAVE THE DATE—Saturday, March 31, 2012
AEF & Avon High School PTO Gala at Avon Old Farms Hotel

I'd like to support AEF, too!

- I want to volunteer: I would like information about volunteer opportunities at the AEF.
 \$5,000 to name a Program Grant \$1,500 to name a Mini Grant
 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____
 C.H.E.E.R! (\$10 min./honoree)
 Another Brick in the Walk (\$100/4 X 8 inch brick or \$225/8 X 8 inch brick)
please download the order form from our website

Check here if you are making this gift anonymously.

This gift is in honor of _____
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Name _____
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Address _____

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- I am a graduate of Avon High School, Class of _____
 Check here if you would like to receive AEF e-mail updates.
 My/my spouse's employer will match this gift. *Please enclose matching gift form.*

Mail with your check payable to: Avon Education Foundation, P.O. Box 548, Avon, CT 06001

You may also donate online at www.avonedfoundation.org

The Avon Education Foundation (AEF) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, tax-exempt organization.



AEF THANKS OUR DONORS!



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 Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness in these Honor Rolls. If you discover an error or omission, please report it to the AEF.

Every contribution will be used to promote educational programs in your town—for Avon school children and residents of all ages.

Thank You for Your Support



We are continually looking for new and innovative ways to thank you, our valued supporters, for your commitment to our mission. Without you, our work would not be possible.

We are excited to announce a new fundraising program that will reward you for your support AND generate much-needed funding for the Avon Education Foundation.

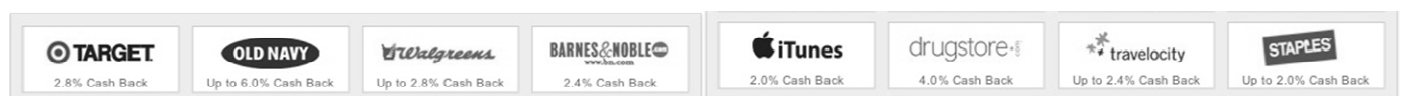
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"The wise person will tithes of one's time as well as of one's income"

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Gayle Bieluch our photographer and baker;

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Mardelle and David Pena, hosts of our annual Volunteers Party;

Gary Mala, Superintendent, for bringing us the reverse auction; **Jody Goeler**, former Assistant Superintendent, for his support;
and **Nancy Boccuzzio** for reserving the meeting room and for distributing our e-mails;

Natale Messina and **Patricia Rodgers**, **Murtha Cullina, LLP of Hartford, CT**;

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and each of our current **Directors**.

~~ We'd love to see your name here, too. Please volunteer! ~~



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Avon Education Foundation

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