

# 2003 M F E E

## Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence



Annual  
Report

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## message from the president

MFEE has become recognized as a trusted partner in supporting the educational development of Montclair's public school children. It is a legacy we are especially proud of, and are committed to continue in the years to come.

Our methodology is one of capacity building in partnership with various constituencies within the Montclair School District. We have used a variety of strategies to enhance the educational experience for all of Montclair's students, such as: awarding teacher grants for innovative classroom activities; providing opportunities for teacher and community development; supporting district goals; and assisting the school community in leveraging resources and securing supplemental funding through grants from the private and public sectors.

Community involvement and collaboration are more than just cornerstones of successful public education; they are the foundation for public support. MFEE has worked to create a connection among the initiatives and programs developed for the purpose of guiding community involvement and collaboration; however, the work of building community involvement is fluid. Every year new families are introduced to the Montclair Schools system. Our goal is to help them to have a successful experience. Community engagement is more likely to flourish when individuals sense a genuine interest in and appreciation for their contributions.



There remains much for us to accomplish in the years ahead. Our plan is to:

- broaden our understanding of the key principles that underlie successful community engagement and collaboration;
- remain responsive to the needs of the Montclair Public School community, as defined by the community; and,
- continue to serve as an intermediary for school and community initiatives.

This year also commemorates the 20th anniversary of local education funds—as visionaries and change agents in communities across the country. The Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence is proud to be part of this tradition that has helped to supplement and transform the American educational system.

Thank you for your generosity and encouragement. With your help the legacy will continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn McCullough". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JoAnn McCullough  
President

# catalyst for collaboration

Montclair is a community rich in resources. One of MFEE's primary functions is to help channel these resources—not only financial, but also intellectual, cultural, and social resources—for the benefit of its students. To this end, MFEE has been instrumental in the development of several initiatives, each based on a model that convenes constituents from throughout Montclair with a common goal of improving local public education.

In May, 2003, MFEE sponsored the **School-Community Initiatives Forum** to explore ways in which MFEE could help these initiatives grow and thrive and ways in which they could learn from and assist one another. Presentations were made on ten different initiatives, ranging from the **Children's Literature Initiative**, now in its fourth year, to the newly-created **Arts Gold Standard Initiative**.

The role of MFEE in each of these initiatives varies somewhat, but is central to all of them. MFEE staff and board members have chaired and served on committees to establish and guide these initiatives, raised and administered funds to support their activities, and contributed expertise in the development of their goals and programs.

This function of bringing together schools and the communities they serve is fundamental to MFEE's mission, and to the success of all local education funds. The Public Education Network (PEN) calls it "convening the stakeholders." In Montclair, it's a formula for success.

# children's literature initiative

In 1999, MPS Superintendent Osnato called upon MFEE to help revitalize the elementary school libraries, which were losing resources due to budget cuts. In response, MFEE joined with the Montclair Council of PTAs, the Montclair Education Association, and the Montclair Public Library to establish the Children's Literature Initiative (CLI).

Thanks to initial funding from the Laraja Foundation, CLI hit the ground running. Montclair resident and children's literature expert Jerry Weiss got involved at the outset, volunteering to assemble and donate a prototype collection of 500 books tailored specifically to the needs of elementary school children. CLI purchased copies of the entire collection for each of Montclair's elementary schools, and then turned to the middle schools and high school, providing each with books selected to compliment the curriculum. Professor Weiss noted that books were also included that address the types of concerns commonly faced by teenagers, such as dealing with school and family issues.

Senior Librarian Doreen Corsetto described how CLI and the wealth of new material it has contributed to the school libraries has made her "proud to be a part of the Montclair community." She has received many notes of appreciation from parents and teachers, and said, "As I travel around the state representing Montclair Public Schools, I am asked about this initiative and it always brings me pleasure to talk about it."

Al Brooks, the lead teacher in the MHS Extended Day Alternate Program, is among those who see the positive



effects of CLI in the classroom. According to Mr. Brooks, access to the new books makes his students "enjoy being in school that much more." One student, he observed, a sophomore, found a book in the collection that she enjoyed so much that she finished it and wrote a report on it in one week. Usually, he said, students take a couple of months to complete a book report. The book that was so inspiring: *Ugly Ways* by Tina McElry Ansa.

Another CLI accomplishment is its Freshman Summer Reading program. This program provides two books to each graduating eighth grader to read over the summer. While it's sometimes hard to imagine students eager to continue their studies over the summer vacation, Ms. Corsetto noted that she had "heard students discussing these books in a very animated way."

CLI also established Remembrance Collections in each school, containing age-appropriate books on grief and loss, coping with stress, cultural and religious diversity, and the rescue workers and uniformed services who performed so heroically on September 11th. Each book has an emblem of the American flag with the words "September 11, 2001, In Remembrance" on its cover.

## Children's Literature Initiative Committee

Adunni Anderson  
Julie Micou Cerf  
Doreen Corsetto  
Jeanine Genauer  
Glenn Hersh  
Judith McGhee  
Joyce Michaelson  
Michael Osnato  
Maria Schantz  
Jill Walker  
Jerry Weiss  
Lois Whipple

**Flagship donor**  
The Laraja Foundation

# true blue spirit



The True Blue Spirit initiative was established in 2001 in response to deteriorating athletic facilities and to support athletic programs and services for student in Montclair Public Schools. Thus far, the True Blue Spirit steering committee has raised over \$400,000, secured in-kind donations of fitness equipment from Bally's Total Fitness valued at \$250,000, and advocated for district capital budget increases to complete field upgrades. In addition, pledges totaling \$750,000 have been made by Judy and Josh Weston, John McMullen, and John Whitehead for the purpose of renovating and expanding the Woodman Field House.

Mariann Higgins, who has four children in Montclair Schools, got involved early on because she wanted to help ensure that every student got a chance to play sports, and not only those who had been competing on teams since they were very young. With popular and established sports like soccer and basketball difficult for new players to advance in, she and her colleagues brainstormed what other athletic activities could be offered to fill the gap.

Crew was chosen as the first new sport to be introduced by True Blue. Last year, 45 students rowed in two divisions: racing and development. Ms. Higgins remembered one of the original rowers saying, "I'm not sure if I love crew, but I love the comradery." Her statement expresses for many one of the chief benefits of participating in competitive sports; she has stayed with the sport now for three years.



Another benefit of sports like crew, noted Ms. Higgins, is their college scholarship potential. As an example, she cited a college in Georgia that offered scholarships for women rowers as part of their effort to meet Title IX requirements, balancing scholarships offered for popular and traditionally male sports like football.

In addition to improving facilities and adding new sports, the True Blue Spirit initiative is helping student athletes be, in the words of MHS Assistant Principal Bruce Dabney, "students first, athletes second." In order to remain on their teams, students must maintain a minimum C average, or participate in a special tutoring program. One thing that makes the program special is that students commit to participating for 45 days at a time, during which their progress is monitored to determine if they need to continue to attend the tutoring. Another special feature is that the tutoring is provided by both teachers and students. Mr. Dabney observed that in some cases, the most effective help can be provided by a slightly older peer, which may make the youth being tutored more comfortable. Since this program started three years ago, not one student has had to quit their team for failing to keep up their grades, a fact Mr. Dabney proudly noted.

## True Blue Spirit Committee

Louise Bellace  
Mariann Higgins  
Stacey Joyce  
Ted Kastner  
Mike Osnato  
Kevin Richberg  
Terry Thornton

## Major Donors

John McMullen  
Judy and Josh Weston  
John C. Whitehead

## Special thanks to

Holly Christavao  
Ronni Levering  
Blistex  
MTV Networks  
The Stith Family  
Dave Tyree  
*for making the True Blue Spirit  
Three Mile Walk a huge success!*

# imani

In 1999, School Superintendent Michael Osnato invited a group of African American parents and community leaders to form a committee charged with making recommendations to help the district eliminate the performance gap and improve the academic performance of all of Montclair's students. This committee evolved into a group now called IMANI—Improving Montclair's Achievement Network Initiative—which today not only makes recommendations but acts on them as well, creating programs for students and their families.

MFEE's new President Jo Ann McCullough was one of the original members of Dr. Osnato's committee and serves as one of the co-chairs of IMANI. She recounted that one of IMANI's first projects was the development of an SAT Prep class for seniors at the high school. This program has grown to serve 40 students, both seniors and juniors, enabling them to increase their test scores by 30 to 200 points.

Another IMANI program Ms. McCullough described was the establishment of small study groups in the high school. In order to give minority honors students the same advantages as affluent white students, IMANI hired certified teachers to lead the study groups, each of which consists of no more than five students. Jaymar Bugg, a chemistry teacher at MHS, tutored one of these groups last year. "A lot of students don't like to ask questions in class," he said. In the study groups, they are more at ease, and thus better able to tackle challenging material.



# IMANI

Perhaps as important as the opportunity for supplementary study these groups afforded, they also began to serve as a community for their members, one which valued academics and enabled the students to support one another's aspirations.

IMANI runs programs to keep this spirit alive during the summer as well. Evelyn Gay helped to organize a program to ease students from 8th grade into high school. One of the books given to graduating 8th graders to read over the summer in preparation for the 9th grade World Literature class was Steinbeck's famous novel *Of Mice and Men*. This class is taught at the high honors level. Working with The Writers Room and Project Oasis, IMANI conducted workshops for students who felt they needed direction, helping them process this classic work and improve their own writing skills. In Ms. Gay's words, "the best part of organizing the *Of Mice and Men* workshops is knowing that IMANI is offering students an opportunity to start their high school careers confidently."

Carolyn Wells got involved with IMANI because, as she put it, "the school is so big, that if you're not an outgoing, take-charge kind of student, it's harder to take advantage of the opportunities available." One way she sees IMANI helping students is through its outreach to parents. Ms. Wells cited parental involvement as crucial to getting students to take their education seriously and commit to participating in supplementary academic programs. Parents are more responsive and more likely to get involved in the relaxed setting of the meetings IMANI organizes, where there is ample opportunity to ask questions and for sharing experiences, both good and bad.

This past year, IMANI and MFEE teamed up to develop a community-based college advocacy center. Funded by a major grant from the Bestfoods Educational Foundation, the new center will provide students and their families with information about higher educational opportunities and individual college and financial aid application assistance.

## IMANI Co-Chairs

Evelyn Gay  
Debra Jennings  
Jo Ann McCullough  
Carolyn Wells

# health and wellness



Three years ago, the State of New Jersey issued a mandate that school districts throughout the state establish systems for addressing students' physical, mental and emotional health needs. In Montclair, this mandate coincided with the Council of PTA's having already begun to explore the subject, based on the premise that it is harder for a student to succeed in school if their health is at risk. The result of this coincidence was the creation of the Health and Wellness Initiative, a collaboration between PTAs, the school district and its personnel, health professionals and others with an expertise in the field and an interest in the well-being of Montclair's students.

In a short time, Health and Wellness has accomplished an enormous amount. It has produced a Community Resource Guide, raised funds and made grants for projects in individual schools, organized programs for students and their families, and recruited outside agencies to donate counseling services. Thanks to its origin in the Montclair Council of PTAs, each school's PTA now has a Health and Wellness liaison to help ensure parental involvement and continuity in representation.

Joann Aidala, the Health and Wellness Project Coordinator and parent of an MHS student, cited one of the initiative's central strategies as being about "making connections between parents and their children." She described how school staff and PTA members at Glenfield Middle School sought to make that connection by organizing an event called "Dating 101." Held in the evening and facilitated by long-time Glenfield counselor Andrew Evangelista, the event

drew eighty parents eager to better understand what their children were going through and learn what they could do help them navigate these potentially treacherous waters. The event opened with an improvisational performance by a student group called Team Pep that presented parents in the audience with possible scenarios dealing with dating and sexuality among the pre-teen and early teen set, scenarios which led to lively discussions between the students, parents, and health professionals present.

Health and Wellness has helped organize dozens of events like this one, bringing together students and parents with the many health resources already existing in Montclair. The *Health and Wellness Community Resource Guide*, available in every school as well as at the Library and on the MPS website, is another example of using the resources available to meet the health care needs of Montclair's students. To serve students directly, Health and Wellness has helped arrange for professionals from local counseling and health care organizations to provide pro bono counseling services in the middle and high schools.

MFEE has helped to guide the development of the Health and Wellness Initiative and provides assistance by administering its funds, including its grantmaking activities.



## Health & Wellness Committee

- Diana Autin
- Joann Aidala
- Rebecca Ross
- Eileen Sweeny
- James Scagliotti

## Institutional Partners

- Mental Health Association of Essex County
- Montclair Council of PTAs
- Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence
- Montclair Health Department
- Montclair State University
- Mountainside Hospital Community Benefits

In addition to the preceding four initiatives, MFEE is an active partner in each of the following initiatives, all of which are collaborations between the diverse constituents who share an interest in local public education. In some cases, MFEE provides or administers funding for the project, and in others MFEE staff and board members participate on committees that make policy recommendations and help develop new programs. In all cases, MFEE strives to support the projects' goals and activities.

### **District Leadership Team**

Researches and makes recommendations to the school superintendent's office on policies and practices with the potential for system-wide impact.

### **After-School Community Tutoring Program**

Coordinates five community-based tutoring programs, each of which is supervised by an MPS teacher and staffed by student volunteers from Montclair State University.

### **High School Design Community Advisory Board**

Facilitated community input into the high school's reorganization plan; the board completed its work this year with the dissemination of a report on how to sustain community involvement with the high school.

### **Weston Engineering Collaborative**

Develops resources for and implements new programs in engineering education at Montclair High School, including a state-of-the-art lab, teacher training, and a partnership with Pfizer.

### **Writers' Room**

Recruits and trains volunteers to assist students with their writing skills. This program has received acclaim from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, the Tristate Standards Commission, and the Education Trust.

### **David Greenwald Challenge Course**

Provides opportunities for leadership, team and personal development training, available to MHS students as well as others in the community, through an outdoors ropes course. This past year, management of the Course was assumed by the Montclair YMCA.

### **Arts Gold Standard Initiative**

A new initiative to enhance the visual and performing arts programs in grades K-12. A needs assessment has been completed and plans for fundraising events and program development are underway. Kick-off events included two movie screenings, one of Nickelodeon's *Rug Rats Gone Wild* and the film *Holes*, courtesy of Walden Media.

# catalyst in the **classroom**

Sometimes a small injection of funds can power a big change in how a teacher conveys a lesson, how a student experiences new material, or how a principal inspires a faculty. This is the heart of MFEE's mission and the original and still primary method of its operations.

MFEE was founded with the belief that the best ideas for how to improve our schools often come from those inside them: teachers, principals, guidance counselors, librarians, PTA members, students, and other participants in each school's daily life. Teachers make up the majority of grant recipients. According to research by the Public Education Network, "grants to teachers for innovative projects or for further study help retain good teachers in the occupation and the district, provide a first step in teachers' professional development journeys, seed projects that sometimes blossom into whole-school initiatives, and train a cadre of teacher leaders."

In its 2002-2003 fiscal year, MFEE issued 209 grants totalling almost \$150,000 in its four major grant areas: discretionary grants, professional development grants, social problem solving grants, and summer scholarships. Each of these grants were made to applicants representing Montclair Public Schools for projects which would have a direct impact in the classroom.

## **discretionary grants**

Discretionary grants account for almost one-third of MFEE's total annual expenditures. In the last year, MFEE funded 155 discretionary and donor designated grants totalling \$105,554 with an average grant size of \$681. While most of these grants were made to individual educators, students, or parents, some were made to groups of the same, for a total of 167 grant recipients. The largest grant issued was \$3,000 and the smallest was \$90. Amazing but true: even \$90 can make a difference in the classroom.

## **professional development grants**

Twenty applications by teachers and other school staff to participate in professional development activities were funded by MFEE under its Greenwald Professional Development Grants program during the last year, with a total distribution of \$8,685. Grants ranged from \$75 to \$1,200 and were used to enable educators to attend conferences and workshops, conduct research, undergo specialized training, and purchase professional development resources materials. These grants are awarded in memory of beloved educator Marcia Greenwald.

## **social problem solving grants**

MFEE made fourteen grants amounting to over \$27,800 to schools as part of the Turner Social Problem Solving program, funded by the Turner Family Foundation, established to support projects that enhance student safety and well-being in the schools. These grants ranged from \$178 to \$3,200 and funded projects including teacher training, book purchases, a student retreat, and additional staffing.

## **summer scholarship grants**

MFEE's Summer Scholarships are a little different from its other grant programs in that the awards are made to school-based summer academic enrichment programs to provide scholarships for low-income students. This past year, over 100 students benefitted from MFEE Summer Scholarships worth a total of \$13,400.



# model congress club

## Montclair High School

In 1997, Montclair Councilman Don Zief contacted MFEE to say he would like to make a contribution and asked what projects were in need of funding. MFEE Executive Director Lois Whipple suggested that he might want to support the new Civics and Government Institute at Montclair High School, an idea he responded to enthusiastically.

Since then, Councilman Zief has provided generous annual support for the high school's Civics and Government Institute, Social Justice Center, and Model Congress and Model United Nations Clubs. He describes his motivation as stemming from disappointment in voter apathy, and a desire to help young people develop an interest in politics and current affairs, including local, state and national issues.

The MHS Model Congress is a vibrant example of students expressing such an interest. Fifty students from freshmen to seniors participate in the Model Congress Club, learning parliamentary procedure, improving their debating skills, and exploring the many sides to a variety of issues in current affairs and political life.



Last year, a grant funded by Councilman Zief and MFEE enabled 30 students in the club to go to Washington, D.C. to compete in the Princeton Model Congress, a four-day event. According to history teacher Tom Manos, who along with Billy Wingren serves as advisor to the club, the MHS team was one of the few public high schools to participate, and took home a couple of awards. One highlight for the team was when one of its members, a senior girl, succeeded in convincing her entire "committee" to vote in favor of reparations for slavery.

What impressed Mr. Manos most was how interested all of the MHS students were in the topics raised at the event, and how committed they were to working to resolve issues and gain consensus. Their job was made harder, but also more rewarding, by the fact that The Princeton Model Congress draws students from throughout the country, many of whom brought experiences and perspectives to the table that were very different from those of the Montclair students.

For many students, this was also their first opportunity to visit our nation's capitol, an educational experience in itself. Mr. Manos noted that they stayed in a hotel near the White House and the Mall, enabling them to see some of Washington's famous and historic landmarks up close.

**Grant Applicant:**  
Tom Manos

## dance teaching conference Hillside Elementary School

Gail Kriftner calls dance “her passion.” Since she was a child, she has been studying and performing dance, and for the last twelve years, she has been teaching it at Hillside Elementary School. One of the reasons she is able to share her passion with the third, fourth, and fifth grade students she teaches so effectively is that she is constantly seeking new ways of teaching—new ideas, new techniques, and new methods for engaging and inspiring students. She believes that attending professional development conferences helps make her a better teacher; MFEE agrees and was pleased to help her attend one such conference last summer, sponsored by Dance Teacher Magazine.

Ms. Kriftner attended this three-day conference, held in New York City, last August, and has already found opportunities to use what she learned in her own classroom. She described a presentation by a renowned dance teacher named Debbie Dee who had at one time taught dance in a school for deaf and blind students. Teaching dance to students with these types of disabilities creates a special challenge, which Ms. Dee met by developing new methods. Ms. Dee shared these methods at her presentation, and Ms. Kriftner found many, such as breaking down a basic dance step into even more basic elements, that were equally applicable to teaching students without disabilities at Hillside.

In order to inspire their students, teachers need to be inspired on occasion too. The Dance Teacher conference offered one such occasion for Ms. Kriftner through a presentation by Debbie Allen, of *Fame* fame, in which Ms. Allen spoke eloquently of the need for every student to have the opportunity to experience dance. Ms. Kriftner enthusiastically agrees, and praised Montclair’s schools for ensuring that all of its students have this opportunity.



In addition to the presentations, Ms. Kriftner found the conference valuable for its networking opportunities and exhibits. Often one can learn as much from sharing experiences with one’s peers as from conference speakers; Ms. Kriftner cited discussing ideas on how to “spark creativity in children” and themes for student recitals with other teachers as examples. The many vendors exhibiting such items as lighting, sound systems, and props at the conference were another source of inspiration for her, as well as providing information useful to the possible new acquisition of supplies and equipment at Hillside.

Ms. Kriftner noted that she was among the few attendees who teach in public schools, and that most of the people at the conference teach in private dance studios. Through its professional development grants, MFEE is pleased to help Montclair’s public school teachers to take advantage of such opportunities.

**Grant Applicant:**  
Gail Kriftner

## adding east to west

### Nishuane Elementary School

When Virginia Cornue returned to the United States after adopting her daughter Mei Ming while she was living in China, she looked high and low for resources to help teach her daughter and other young children Chinese. What she found was disappointing, with little in the way of age-appropriate programs or learning materials. A China scholar, Dr. Cornue observed that Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world, and that as the relationship between Asia and the U.S. changes, a command of Chinese will be an increasingly valuable skill. She therefore set out to work toward making Chinese language studies as integral a part of our educational curriculum as Spanish or French are already.

To help fill the gap in learning materials suitable for young children in U.S. schools, she teamed up with Yajing Li, a native of Beijing and graduate student at Montclair State University, and together the pair wrote and produced a CD entitled “Sing Together in English and Chinese.” When her daughter Mei Ming was assigned to Joy Scally’s second grade class at Nishuane, another partnership was born: Ms. Scally was already teaching a supplementary class on Chinese culture and was excited about the idea of introducing the study of Chinese language and culture to her regular second grade class. Dr. Cornue and Ms. Scally recruited Ms. Li to help them and plotted out a curriculum which Ms. Scally and Ms. Li would teach over an eight week period in the Spring of 2002.



Using the “Sing Together” CD and a variety of hands-on activities, Ms. Scally and Ms. Li succeeded in convincing their class of second graders that learning Chinese was a great thing. By listening to and singing along with the CD, the students picked up Chinese vocabulary words and, equally important, the tonal differences in the spoken language that influence the meaning of the words. Using authentic Chinese calligraphy brushes and ink, they learned to write Chinese characters and draw with the strokes proscribed by traditional Chinese art forms. To celebrate Chinese New Year, the students made paper lanterns and practiced using chop sticks to eat Chinese noodles—the dish used to end meals and signify long life and good fortune. Each child also got to select a Chinese name for themselves; Ms. Scally noted how most of the boys chose fierce-sounding animal names like “dragon” and “tiger,” while the girls tended towards more abstract and serene names like “rain” and “ocean.”

The project, which received funding from MFEE to pay Ms. Li a small stipend and to purchase supplies, helped meet new standards in the district’s social studies curriculum by addressing increased coverage of non-Western world history, as well as core curriculum standards established by the state of New Jersey.

#### Grant Applicants:

Virginia Cornue  
Joy Scally

# science olympiad

## Mt.Hebron Middle School

Three years ago, Cathlin Rozman came to Mt. Hebron to teach science to seventh and eighth grade students. Outside of the classroom, she immediately became involved in helping students prepare for the Science Olympiad, a statewide and national competition in which students from throughout the country demonstrate their skills and ingenuity in events that test their knowledge of chemistry, physics, and other sciences.

Ms. Rozman, fellow Mt. Hebron teacher Ray Savoie, and 24 students met after school every week last year to train for the 2002 Olympiad. They would spend hours devising better ways to meet the challenges the event posed: dropping eggs from the balcony in the school gym; shooting bottle rockets powered by water pressure so they would stay in the air longer; and building bridges that would hold more weight.

Even before they went to the Olympiad, the students had to compete to get on the Mt. Hebron team. Knowledge and aptitude in the sciences were only one criteria, however; positive attitudes and the ability to work as part of a team were just as important. Ms. Rozman described how two students working on building a bridge kept trying, and the bridge kept breaking, but ultimately they constructed their bridge and met all criteria of the assignment. Although they did not win the event at the Olympiad, their persistence won out over discouragement.

In March, 2002, the Mt. Hebron team, consisting of 15 members and two alternates, competed in the Science Olympiad at Middlesex County College. It was the culmination of months of hard work, and adrenaline ran high. The Olympiad included 23 separate events, with each student competing in two or three. The Mt. Hebron team won the egg drop competition, placed well in several others, and ranked tenth overall out of the 36 teams that participated. Even more impressive, in Ms. Rozman's opinion, was how supportive the students were of each other, cheering each other on and genuinely striving to help each other succeed.



Funding from MFEE enabled the Science Olympiad team to buy the many materials and supplies needed to prepare for the final competition. Ms. Rozman noted that she also uses the exercises learned in preparation for the competition in her regular classes, giving this project a life beyond its initial purpose.

This project met the Montclair Public School district's goals of improving academic performance and narrowing the achievement gap, as well as the New Jersey State Core Curriculum and National Science standards of integrating the lessons of science into everyday life.

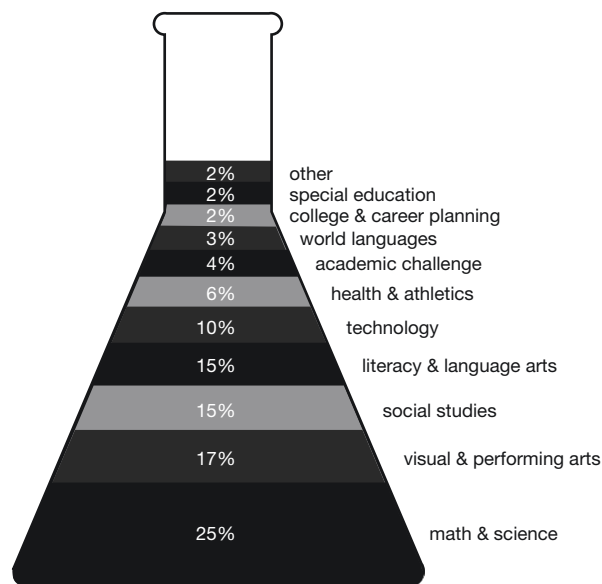
### Grant Applicants:

Cathlin Rozman

Ray Savoie

# grant summary

Of the \$150,000 MFEE awarded in grants in the 2002-2003 fiscal year, 67% was distributed under the discretionary grants program. These grants covered a broad range of academic subject areas as well as student and family support services. The largest portion of funding was provided to projects in the areas of math and science, 25%. The next three largest categories of grant spending were for projects concerning visual and performing arts, social studies, and literacy and language arts, at 17%, 15%, and 15%, respectively. Grants for technology projects received 10% of MFEE discretionary grant money, and the remaining categories—health and athletics, academic challenge, world languages, college and career planning, special education, and other—garnered the remaining 18% of funds distributed under discretionary grants.



**Discretionary Grant Distribution by Subject**



**Discretionary Grant Distribution by School**

The largest share of discretionary grant funds were issued to projects at Montclair High School, 30%, which also enrolls a third of Montclair’s students. Applicants representing Glenfield Middle School, Mt. Hebron Middle School, and Hillside each received roughly the same percentage of grant monies, 11%, 10%, and 10%, respectively. The remaining 39% of discretionary grant funds were distributed for projects at the rest of Montclair’s schools as follows: Renaissance Middle School and Nishuane (7% each); Watchung School (6%); Rand Family School, Northeast International School, and Edgemont Montessori (5% each); and Bradford Academy (4%).

Of the remaining 33% of MFEE grants, 19% went to Social Problem Solving grants, 9% to Summer Scholarships, and 6% to Professional Development grants. Summer Scholarship grants were issued to twenty summer enrichment programs at seven schools, benefitting 102 students. Fourteen grants to six schools were funded through the Social Problem Solving grant program. Twenty Professional Development grants were awarded to teachers at eight schools.

The preceding includes all grants awarded in the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The audited financial statement at the end of this report excludes those grants which were awarded in the 2002-2003 fiscal year, but not distributed until the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

# grant recipients

MFEE congratulates all those who received grants under its discretionary, professional development, and social problem solving, grant programs. Also included in this list are recipients of Health & Wellness Initiative Grants, which MFEE administered. We applaud your dedication, innovation, hard work, and commitment to Montclair Public Schools. Your projects make our schools better, enrich our students' educational experiences, and ultimately benefit the entire Montclair community. We are proud to support your endeavors.

Adunni Anderson  
Cassandra Anderson  
Michael Arace  
Amy Armstrong  
Mary Arnold  
Richard Bartell  
Andre Beauzil  
Susan Becker  
Jerry Belmonte  
Alan Benezra  
Lisa Bishop  
Jennifer Blanding  
Nicole Blank  
Susan Bleecker  
Henry Boote  
Victoria Brown  
Ann Marie Bruder  
Sylvia Bryant  
Ann Marie Bulken  
Mary Buonassissi  
George Burroughs  
Emily Burtnett  
Cheryl Caggiano  
Dana Calbi  
Rose Cali  
Alison Carrascosa  
Dorie Cerruti  
Michael Chiles  
Traci Cioffi  
Nedra Clark  
Gaetane Collins  
Virginia Cornue  
Kristen Costello  
Susan Cowan  
Irvell Penn Cowan  
Saalik Cuevas  
Dawn Cuozzo  
Bruce Dabney  
Louis D'Amico  
Judith De Wette  
Linda DeCorso  
Bridget Devine  
Elloise Dover  
Caryanne Eckardt  
Sandy Egan  
Lucille Exum  
Dawn Fabbro  
Bonnie Farbstein  
Edward Feldstein  
Jane Fiore  
Mary Fiumara  
George Fox  
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# catalyst for **community**

Like all Local Education Funds, “putting the public in public education” is central to MFEE’s mission. In Montclair, the public—individuals, families, local businesses and organizations—actively support their public schools, and MFEE, in both word and deed. Whereas funds raised from individuals by other Local Education Funds account for just 12% of total revenues, MFEE is overwhelmingly funded by Montclair’s own residents. In its 2002-2003 fiscal year, contributions from individuals and families represented 63% of all contributions to MFEE.

A substantial portion of these contributions are the result of two major community-wide fundraisers: Toast to the Teachers and the Annual All-Adult Spelling Bee. These events, however, do much more than raise money for MFEE: they bring together people from throughout Montclair to celebrate our schools, honor our educators, cheer on our athletic teams, and demonstrate their commitment to public education.

Public engagement in public education is crucial to achieving success for all students. MFEE is proud to be a catalyst for a community that supports its schools with so much energy and generosity.

While monetary contributions are certainly important, the personal participation of parents, teachers and students on behalf of the schools is invaluable. A list of MFEE toast hosts is on the following page. We also wish to recognize those who stood up to spell impossibly arcane words—some for the third year—in the MFEE All Adult Spelling Bee.

## toast to the teachers



Sixty-five Toast to the Teachers parties were attended by over 1,500 supporters of MFEE, raising a record \$38,000. Between Thursday, May 29, and Sunday, June 15, 2003, MFEE presented three festive weeks of parties, dinners, teas, barbecues, brunches, moon walks, and dancing in the street as part of the Eighth Annual Toast to the Teachers celebration. Hosted primarily by parents, these events offer the opportunity to toast a favorite public school teacher as well as others who made a difference in their children's public school education.

Among the highlights of this year's Toast season were: a special MFEE *All Hail the Chief* toast for outgoing schools superintendent, Mike Osnato, held at the Yogi Berra Museum; the NAACP—Montclair Branch Education Committee's 6th annual *Going The Extra Mile* toast; and the Montclair Education Association's Toast for the PTA Presidents.

## all adult spelling bee



The Fourth Annual Montclair All-Adult Spelling Bee was held on February 28, 2003, at which thirty-six teams spelled for their supper. Once again, hundreds of Montclair residents turned out to cheer on their friends and neighbors. The winning team, which called itself "The Spellcasters," was made up of Cindy Furlong, Bill Stein and Mack Rugg, talented spellers all. They took first place by spelling a word not long, but arcane: *coati* (a tree-dwelling, racoon-like carnivore).

This year's event raised \$20,000 to fund new purchases for the Children's Literature Initiative collections in the elementary school libraries and library carts containing books and materials to support the small learning communities at Montclair High School. Special thanks to Susan and David Bershada for continuing their support as Nobel Level sponsors and to Barbara Friedman, the original and still champion chair of the event.

# Toast hosts to the Teachers

Lisa & Alberto Alonso  
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 Susan & Tim Barr  
 Eileen Sweeny & Jay Beckner  
 Lori & Jed Beitler  
 Cynthia Stagoff & Robert Belfort  
 Risa & Sol Bernstein  
 Kathleen Cullina-Bessey & David Bessey  
 Deirdre & Joe Bigley  
 Francine & Kenneth Boone  
 Holly & William Caggiano  
 Rochelle Sandler & Joseph Campeas  
 Liz & Jeffrey Carey  
 Lauren & John Carlton  
 Dana Dimuro-Carney & Declan Carney  
 Cornelia & Robert Carrigan  
 Laura & Tom Carroll  
 Lisa Korn & Tony Castrigno  
 Donna & Len Cerame

Ellen & Steven Fishman  
 Lynda & Blaine Frantz  
 Jennifer & Carl Freed  
 Russell Furnari  
 Laura & Walter Giles  
 Jean & Samuel Givens  
 Laura & Steven Goffman  
 Judy & Edward Gold., DDS  
 Ilene & Lee Goldmeier  
 Linda Engelhardt & Michael Goldsmith  
 Charmaine & Gregg Gonsalves  
 Diane & Robert Goodsell  
 Randy Brett & William Greenhaus  
 Grace Grund  
 Cindy & Harry Handler  
 Rosemarie Ciccarello & Christopher Harnett  
 Judith & John Harrisingh  
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 Jeffrey Hays  
 Pat Berry & Mitch Heisler  
 Andrea Higbie  
 Lisa & Peter Hughes IV



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 Education Committee  
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 Linda Hughes & Steven Napolitano  
 Jane & Kevin O'Leary  
 Kimberly & Eric Ottaway  
 Beth & Tom Panucci  
 Tracy & Winfield Parsons  
 Ilana Mazur & David Peknay  
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 Irene & Joe Quinones  
 Marcia Marley & Peter Rappoport  
 Sasha & Michael Richardson  
 Katrina & Glenn Rogers  
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 Rob & Kathy Rosenberg  
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 Michelle & Joseph Santangelo  
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 Robin & Kenneth Schlager  
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Alyce Gottesman & Eric Schwimmer  
 Jody & Eric Seidenberg  
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 Emily Eldridge  
 Kathleen McCoy & Dave Skutch  
 Loria Smith  
 Darlene & Michael Sneden  
 Michelle & Matt Snyder  
 Cheryl & Gregory Spinelli  
 Jo & Lee St. James  
 Sue Hollenberg & Joel Stillerman  
 Elizabeth & James Stoeffel  
 Jennifer Reich & John Stymeister  
 Nicla Taddei  
 Karin Diana-Toder & Eric Toder  
 Leisa & John Tomchek  
 Diva & William Uscatu  
 Diane & Robert Walpole  
 Watchung School PTA  
 Freida & Colin Watson  
 Jill Cohen & Richard Webster  
 Carolyn & Claude Wells  
 Lois & Christopher Whipple  
 Margaret & Bernard Whitsett  
 Leslie & Barry Weisner  
 Linda Pasternack & Arnold Wilson  
 Diane Borradaile & David Wright  
 Katherine & Kevin Zehnder



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 Amy & Scott Claman  
 Stacy & Mark Cohen  
 Susann & James Connors  
 Diana Polack & Peter Conway  
 Bonnie & David Cushing  
 Ellie & Thomas Daviet  
 Patty & Matthew De Simone  
 Keaton Douglas  
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 Dara & Blaise Duffy  
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 Lois & Peter McKenna  
 Anne & Michael Mernin  
 Gita & Mike Merritt  
 Kate & Christopher Meyer  
 Sandra & Paul Michaels  
 Denise & Stephen Miller  
 Montclair Education Association  
 MFEE





# all-adult spelling bee worker bees

**Winning Team**  
*The Spellcasters*  
Cindy Furlong  
Bill Stein  
Mack Rugg

**Runner-Up Winning Team**  
*The Southenders*  
Tom Leonard  
Tom McDonough  
Carol Ewertson



**Word Callers**  
Imelda Campbell  
Assemblyman Willis Edwards, III  
Frankie Faison  
Debra Galant  
Ashley Hammond

Debra Jennings  
Mark Porter  
Roma Torre  
Mary Alice Williams  
David Wohl

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**Master of Ceremonies**  
Dr. Michael Osnato

**Timekeepers**  
Mike Chiles  
Stephen Miller  
Jim Shepard

**National Anthem**  
performed by  
Montclair High School Student  
Candace Bynum

introduced by  
Reverend Allen Shelton

**Spelling Bee Committee**  
Barbara Friedman, *Chair*  
Nancy Barbe  
Susan Chandler  
Alice Colabella  
Ellen Colton  
Jeanine Genauer  
Glenn Hersh  
Ronni Levering

Bibi Pasternack  
Naomi Rand  
Robin Schlager  
Fern Seaman  
Patrick Shrout  
Lois Whipple  
Margaret Whitsett  
Nina Wilson



# catalyst for **contribution**

MFEE owes much of its success to the unfailing generosity and commitment of Montclair residents. Despite a suffering national economy, MFEE supporters have demonstrated their concern for public education more than ever, contributing a total of almost \$650,000 in the last year, 36% more than the previous year.

Three contributors deserve special recognition: Judy and Josh Weston, John C. Whitehead and John McMullen. In addition to funding specific programs and scholarships, these three philanthropists have pledged \$750,000 for the redesign of the Woodman Field house, a centerpiece of the True Blue Spirit Initiative.

In addition, three MFEE grant programs are entirely funded through the vision and commitment of local and family foundations:

- Professional Development Grants are funded by the Greenwald Memorial Fund and continued support from the Greenwald family in memory of Marcia Greenwald.
- Social Problem Solving Grants are funded by the Turner Family Foundation.
- Summer Scholarship Grants are funded by The Montclair Foundation

We are also pleased to announce a major grant from a new contributor: \$60,000 from the Bestfoods Educational Foundation. This grant will enable MFEE and IMANI (Improving Montclair's Achievement Network Initiative) to establish a community-based college preparation and planning center serving Montclair Public School students and their families.

# honor society

To honor our major donors, MFEE has established the Honor Society for contributors of \$1,000 and above. Combined, gifts from Honor Society members make up 82% of MFEE contributions. To these contributors we owe special thanks.

## **\$10k And Up**

Bestfoods Educational Foundation  
E. Franklin Robbins Trust  
Healthcare Foundation of NJ  
McMullen Family Foundation  
Project Graduation 99  
William H. and Judith C. Turner Family Foundation  
Judy & Josh Weston  
John C. Whitehead

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## **\$2,500 – \$4,999**

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Zeva Oelbaum & John Reichman		Helen & Michael Dudek	Rebecca & Brent Knowles
Katerina Richardson		Maria & Robert Dyer	Debbie & David Kravitz
Catherine & Richard Riker	<b>\$50 – \$99</b>	Maureen & Todd Edelson	Lisa & Steven Kyono
Melanie Koebel & David Rimelis	Aetna Giving Campaign	The Edwin Gould Foundation for Children	Janet Donohue & Richard Lamoreaux
Joanne & David Rodgers	A.G.A. Welding Service	Sharon & Christopher Egan	Lyle & Dan Landon
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Katrina & Glenn Rogers	Laurie Lico-Albanese & Frank Albanese	Kathryn & Hillel Ephros	Isabelle & Edward Latimer
Melanie Urdang & Jose Rosado	Sheila Allen	Myla Harrison & Noam Eshkar	Sylvia Kaminsky & Bruce Leder
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Howard & Mary Silverstein	Anne Lynch & Kevin Barry	Jean Ford & Karl Cates	Carla & James Egbert
Sharon Herschlag & Stephen Simeoni	Ellen Vinkey & Stephen Baschwitz	Ann Rasmussen & Chris Cerf	Emily Eldridge
Katherine Homans & Patterson Sims		Bette Chamberlin	Ruth & Kevin Ellman
			Mary & Joseph Emanuelli

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Cynthia Gallagher	Patricia & James Hobin	Jennifer Prost & Michael Laser	Romona Pezzella & Marc Mizrahi
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Karen & David Gash	Linda Holzman	Oneida & Thomas Laws	Montclair Art Museum
Rachel Leibman & Paul Garfinkel	Sally Chan & Joseph Hoo	Carol Leach	Sonia Matos & Alvaro Montealegre
Nicole & Antonio Gary	S. Someshwar & J. Hosagrahar	Elliott Lee	Penny Weissman & Carlos Montoya
Gastroenterology Center, P.A.	Rachael Huber	Susanna Chan & Tim Lee	Karen deWilde Morales & Abraham Morales
Bonnie & Robert Gatzke	Marcy Reiter Huey	Beth & Paul Leggett	Nora Chavooshian & Joseph Morton
Lonnie & Lovette Gayle	Sharon & Mark Hurwich	Francine & Michael Legman	Motorola Foundation
Roberta E. Geddis	Olutayo & Adetokunbo Ibikunle	Sharon Szymanski & Les Leopold	Ginger Mulhern
Teresa Gil	Susan & Gregory Van Inwegen	Isabelle Lesniak	Sandra & Stanley Mullins
Lisa Giovacco	Joanne & Luke Iovine	Debbie Frank & Jeanne Lesser	Susan & Richard Murnick
Joan Gipson	Melanie Ipock	Ellen & Herbert Lev	Jill & Scott Nadison
Jean & Samuel Givens	Denise Rue & Jeff Isenberg	Elisabeth Gitelle & Jay Leve	Aaliyah Najieb
Carol & Charles Glaws	Julie & Glenn Jackson	Suzanne Smith & Robert Levendosky	Leslie Nash
Debra Glessner	Kathryn Jackson	Elizabeth Levi	Lisa Nash
Jan Singer & Jeremy Gluck	Cheryl & Robert Jackson	Felice & Donald Levine	Debra & Richard Levy
Bette Galen & Bruce Goldstein	Patricia & Loren James	Jeffery Lewis	Robin C. Lewis
Denise & James Goodwin	Pamela & Glenn Jenkins	Angeline & Francis Li	Melinda Jensen & Mark Ligos
Lisa Culhane & John Goswell	Carolyn & Sy Jenkins	Tamara Linder-Abramson	Kathy Lindsay
Theresa & Raymond Graj	Alexandra & Edward Jewett	Carol & Christopher Lippincott	Patricia S. Little
Deborah Judith Grasso	Michelle & Lars Johanson	Shelly & Stephen Lombard	Shelley & Stephen Lombard
Margaret Gravvis	Sigrid Gabler & James Johnson	Arlene London	Deborah Bessen & Edward Loos
Dawn Gray	Diane Johnson		
Marjorie Neifeld & Paul Grayson	Colleen & Mark Johnson		
Rose Green	Maxine & Lloyd Johnston		
Randy Simon & Lee Greenberger			
Randy Brett & William Greenhaus			
Amy & Loren Grossman			

Raquel Ocasio	Tamima Friedman & Daniel Rosenblum	Robin & Larry Sperber	Jeri & Eduard Will
Kumi & Colm O'Conneide	Ellen Lovtiz & Jon Rosenhein	Jill Kimball & Roger Sperberg	Paula Ochs & John Willard
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Linda Ormont	Margaret & Thomas Russo	Tameka Stafford	Deborah & Gregory Williams
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Susan Osnato	Martina Chui Sabourin	Lillie Stewart	Jean Wuensch
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Hollis & Ken Otsuka	Eleanor & Daniel Salmon	St. Mark's United Methodist Women	Diane & Lawrence Yermack
Debra Nagin & Ed Ott	Thelma & Kevin Salters	Dana Sullivan	Helen Yu & John Park
Gillian & Gary Overton	Raegan & David Sanders	Tia Sullivan	Cathy & Dan Zabrowski
Michelle Lanzet & Edward Owen III	Elissa Sanders	Cecilia & Fernando Surraco	Ellen Ziff-Resnick
Patricia & John Paine	Karen Sands	Anne Pratt & Joseph Sutton	
Lisa & Thomas Paine	Denise Powell & Anthony Sapp	Emily & Chris Swenson	<b>In-Kind Donations</b>
Beth & Tom Panucci	Leslie & David Sargent	Debi Taliaferro	A&P Supermarkets
Pauline & Nicholas Panza	Ruth & Donald Sarlin	Elena & Douglass Tapper	ARA Food Service
John Papa	Liz & Rusty Saylor	Diana & Shane Taremi	Bradford Academy PTA
Roger Paradiso	Melissa Schaffer	Teresa & Brian Taylor	Elizabeth & Randall Berman
Susan Parente	Perry Schaffer	Sharyn & Joseph Taylor	for Inca Cola
Judy Hoffstein & Joel Patenaude	Dorothy Schattner	Cathy Solomon & Ken Tensen	Blistex
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Denise & Tom Powell	Mary & Jonathan Sibley	Cora & James Vest	Walden Media,
Chantal Brazeau & George Prell	Natalie & K.B. Siemaszko	Aquiles B. Villacin	courtesy of Joel Stillerman
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Kate Pruim	Sandra Silverman	Vivendi Universal	
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Judith Scarpulla & Vincent Pugliano	Roberta Simmons	Loretta Volpe	Mary Lee Fitzgerald & Martin Comey
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Enola Romano		Leslie & Barry Weisner	

**Special Thanks** to all of the **Toast to the Teachers** Hosts for their generous contributions. A list of our gracious hosts is on page 18.

# Memorial Funds



## **Bill Adams Memorial Fund**

Established to enable high school students to participate in supplemental academic activities.

## **Antonis Anastasopolous Memorial Fund**

In memory of Tony, MHS Class of 2003, to affirm and celebrate the diverse mosaic he embraced.

## **Andriola Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of Benny Andriola, father of Watchung School Principal Rita Miragliotta, for the Centennial Greenhouse.

## **Charles Annello Fund**

Established in memory of his contributions to the Montclair Public Schools and designated for summer scholarships and middle school projects.

## **Reverend Fletcher Juan Bryant Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of Reverend Bryant, beloved husband of Sylvia and father of Shanta, Laura, and Anthony Juan, to support the Mega-Skills Parent programs.

## **Brad Budney Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of William Bradford Budney, MHS'89. Brad graduated from Stanford University, where he was class president, an All-American swimmer and a professor of public speaking. High school student leadership training and program activities will be funded.

## **Joyce Casto Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of her commitment as a teacher of special education in the Montclair Public Schools, to support summer scholarship for students with special needs.

## **Greenwald Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of Marcia Greenwald and her work in the Montclair Public Schools, and in memory of David Greenwald, Montclair High School alumnus and athlete.

## **Horowitz, Goldberg, and Podesta Glenfield Library Fund**

Established in memory of Glenfield School librarian Marjorie Horowitz, Principal Geri Jond Goldberg, and teacher Pat Podesta, to sponsor the annual Meet the Author series at Glenfield Middle School.

## **Pat Vanora Madej Memorial Fund**

Established in memory of her extraordinary love for and nurturing of children, especially those most fragile.

## **Matt Reissig Memorial Fund**

Established to benefit the soccer program at Montclair High School.

## Contributions made in memory of

Bill Adams	Virginia Turnstall Knox
Ozea Terreboune Autin	Aubrey Lewis
Bill Brach	Ann Lombardi
Roger Cozzolino	Chai Ok Lee
Paul Deckard	Mary Murray
John Patrick Dougherty	Ron Ruben
Dr. Harold Ferguson	Jeanine Ruda
Mark Genauer	Ruth Salters
Arean Gottesfield	John Shelton
Bernard Kirshenbaum	Michael James Stewart
Michael Klimick	Marie Tafaro

# financial statement

**Fiscal Year**  
July 1, 2002-June 30, 2003

Balance Sheet, End of Fiscal Period 6/30/2003

**Assets**

Cash and Equivalent	\$511,920
Investments	294,708
Equipment, Net of Accumulated Depreciation	2,435
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$809,063</b>

**Statement of Revenues and Expenses**

**Revenues**

Contributions	\$708,789
Dividend Income and Interest	9,034
Gain on Sales of Securities	(14,041)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$703,782</b>

**Grants and Program Services**

<i>School Community Initiatives:</i>	\$1,211
After-school Community Tutoring Program	5,000
Arts Gold Standard Initiative	1,848
Children's Literature	34,441
David Greenwald Challenge Course	4,165
District Leadership Team Support	41,697
Health and Wellness	46,791
High School Design for the 21st Century	14,262
IMANI	8,397
True Blue Spirit/Athletic Improvement	74,730
Weston Science and Robotics Program	61,511
Writers' Room	11,437
<i>MFEE Grants:</i>	
Discretionary/classroom Grants	84,181
Greenwald Professional Development Grants	6,450
MFEE/Donor-Designated School-based Programs	19,432
Summer Scholarships for Student Achievement	13,401
Turner Social Problem Solving Grants/Project Serve	27,841
Designated Memorial Projects	4,328
Program Development: Staff Salaries	29,438
<b>Total Grants and Program Services</b>	<b>\$490,561</b>

**General and Administrative Expenses**

Administrative Salaries and Benefits	\$28,322
Professional Services/Filing Fees	3,100
Office and Depreciation	7,008
Conferences, research, professional associations	6,390
Fundraising/public relations, printing	6,389
Annual Report/Community Outreach	4,000
<b>Total General and Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$55,209</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$545,776</b>

Audit conducted by  
Rotenberg Meril Solomon Bertiger &  
Gutilla, P.C.

Special thanks to Shelly Mania.

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$158,006
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	19,005
Net Assets, Beginning of Fiscal Year	632,052
<b>Net Assets, End of Fiscal Year</b>	<b>809,063</b>

# board of directors

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