



Providing needed financial support for teacher-requested projects & learning activities to benefit our community's youth.



South Whidbey Schools Foundation
Supporting Innovation and Excellence in Education

SWSF 2009/10 Annual Update

PSE Grant Funds “What’s That Stench?” Middle School Science Field Trip

The “*What’s That Stench Project*” funded by a Puget Sound Energy grant to the South Whidbey Schools Foundation provided a fun, field-based learning experience for Langley Middle Schools students of all grade levels last spring.

Leslie Hoelting’s 8th grade classes led off the experience with a chemical analysis of the many sites in the Langley Marina near shore and deeper water environments after researching information about ocean temperature, salinity and oxygen content.

Students worked in interest groups to decide variables and procedures, and they enjoyed using the PSE funded purchases of salinity meters and oxygen test kits. Students were able to test their hypotheses regarding the source of Langley Harbor’s odors.

7th Grade classes approached the same question using nets to sample plankton and look for evidence that might lead them to the source of the stench.

Don Zisette commented, “Having the opportunity to do some biology at the end of the year was a bonus

for my students, as 7th grade is now mostly physical science. The students put together a power point for the 6th grade students to see.”

Mr. Freundlich’s 6th grade classes explored the shoreline by gathering samples and looking for clues.

After two days of gathering evidence and a day of classroom preparation, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classes shared their findings with each other. According to Jay Freundlich, “In the end, there was no smoking gun and we had more questions than answers



which leads us to believe that it was a successful scientific experience.”

A Message from the SWSF President

Children and youth are our future: our doctors and hydrologists, our chefs and our veterinary techs, our writers and builders.

Children are the dreamers of today who will become the problem-solvers of tomorrow. To support our schools is to support ourselves, our community, and the world beyond Whidbey Island.

The South Whidbey Schools Foundation, founded in 1994 by a visionary group of community members, is dedicated to supporting innovative teaching and programs to reach children of all interests and abilities. Our current financial difficulties are only a more serious incidence of the perennial shortfall of money for K-12 education. Even if basic education were adequately funded, there is



Dr. Lisa Bjork

rarely “seed” money for a promising new idea; professional development for a group of motivated teachers; or materials needed to expand the horizon of traditional curriculum.

Our SWSF continues to find new ways to raise money for these critical areas of need for teachers and administrators

who truly want to go beyond the basic, to the exciting, innovative learning opportunities which engage students.

During the past year, we initiated a number of new opportunities for donors:

- Online contributions are possible through our website
- PSE provided a two year grant
- Ed Kelley Memorial Fund for student athletes

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Spring Gala Auction Raises \$9,467 For Classroom Grants

The South Whidbey Schools Foundation held a successful Fundraiser and Gala Celebration on Saturday, May 22nd, at the Useless Bay Golf and Country Club.

The Gala, chaired by SWSF Board Member, Charlene Arnold, featured a silent auction of outstanding student and parent art works organized by art specialist, Mary McLeod. Music accompaniment provided by members of the award-winning LMS Jazz Band.

A fundraising teacher/student "Support the Dreams" auction was led by local personality, Heath Gunn. Approximately 80 community mem-



Heath Gunn, auctioneer extraordinaire

bers, including many SWSD alumni, joined to raise \$9,467 which is helping to fund this year's teacher and classroom grants.

Corporate sponsors added to the generous personal donations of those present: Island Athletic Club, Whidbey Telecom, Edwards and Associates, Off-Grid Engineering, Coldwater Real Estate, and Whidbey Island Bank.

Dr. Shannon Sumida Harvey, a 1988 graduate of SWHS and the recent recipient of the prestigious \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, inspired the audience with her personal be-

lief in the effectiveness of the South Whidbey School District, and her assertion that school reform is working here and throughout the State.

Three recipients of last fall's grants, Tim Economu, Charlene Ray, and Don Wodjenski, highlighted their work with students.

Besides raising money, the evening confirmed the Foundation's belief that the South Whidbey community does care about our youth by supporting the outstanding work of excellent and innovative teaching.



Tim Economu shows off a model solar car.

Author Amber Kizer Holds Book-Signing Fundraiser for SWSF

Amber Kizer, 1996 graduate of South Whidbey High School, and internationally successful author, designated the South Whidbey Schools Foundation as recipient of a \$540 donation from the Alderwood Barnes and Noble.

Kizer's book signing for her latest novel, *Meridian*, on September 26, 2009 was a wonderful South Whidbey Community event held at the Alderwood Barnes and Noble store. Amber Kizer and her mother, teacher Rachel Kizer provided many children-friendly activities and memora-

bilia associated with the book. The B & N Community Relations Manager, Kari Yadro, supported the event with publicity, book purchases, and delicious desserts. Student art, readings from *Meridian*, and the LMS Jazz Band, added to the festivities, and many community members attended to obtain autographed copies of the novel.

The donation was used to fund a SWSD Teacher Grant for Janet Hunter and Sara Buest to purchase new reading materials for the LAP program at Langley Middle School.



\$10,000 in Classroom Grants Awarded to 17 Teachers

Seventeen South Whidbey School District educators received grants totaling nearly \$10,000 during the 2009-2010 school year.

All schools received some portion of the grant total, and many students at every grade level received materials and support to programs to enhance their learning.

Here are a few highlights:

7th Grade social studies teacher, Heather Dubendorf, reported "...students having a wonderful time with using both the **atlases and globes** quite a bit to aid in our study of the ancient world."

A contribution towards the LMS Safe Ambassadors program helped to provide two days of **anti-bullying training to staff and students** that has strengthened a strong positive climate at the middle school.

Another new program, **Rites of Passage**, was initiated by Charlene Ray at Bayview School. Ray stated, "I believe that this Rites of Passage program is powerful work for our

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Purchase of a **specialized DVD player** allowed SWHS German teacher, Chris Fitz to use feature films produced in Germany as a spring board for informing about and discussion of history and/or culture with her students.

In addition to learning more about German culture, an "...unexpected success was that the students showed appreciation and enthusiasm for understanding some of the German spoken in the films."

Many other interesting grants allowed teachers to try an innovative project not available to them. In every case, the Grant project was intended



Bayview School students in the Rites of Passage program

to engage students more deeply in their learning.

For information of specific grants, go to our website: www.southwhidbeyschoolsfoundation.org

President's Message... Continued from page 1

■ Amber Kizer book-signing donation through Barnes and Noble

As you will read in other articles, the SWSF Board has energetically sought funding in the 2009-2010 school year, and used our money wisely to support a broad array of innovative ideas and programs.

However, our goals are much higher.

We want to begin an endowment that will guarantee sustained funding for innovative teacher grants, programs and materials that will inspire and involve all students at higher

levels of learning.

Please consider a generous donation to the South Whidbey Schools Foundation in the envelope provided or online at www.southwhidbeyschoolsfoundation.org.



The SWSF Board meets at least once a month on Saturday mornings at the Elementary School.

List of 2009/10 Classroom Grants

S.W. Elementary School

- Ipod Documentation
- Classroom Yoga & Stretching

Langley Middle School

- Safe School Ambassadors Program
- LAP: Making Reading Fun
- Learning about the World: Globes and Atlases
- Science on Wheels: Astronomy
- Diversity in Music
- After-School Sewing Club: skill and service learning
- Make Physics Fun

Whidbey Island Academy:

- Speed Stacking Materials: PE
- Music at WIA
- Gizmos: Making Math Real

South Whidbey High School:

- German Films in the Classroom
- SWHS/WCT Production of "Thoroughly Modern Millie": contribution

Bayview High School:

- Rites of Passage for Youth
- Project Me: Art Journals

K-12 All Schools:

- Whidbey Solar Model Car Race Project

Mentorship Award

David Nelson, Mathematics Teacher at SWHS

Every Spring SWSF hands out a Mentorship Award “to acknowledge and honor teachers who have contributed the most to the success of this year’s graduating seniors of the South Whidbey School District.”

David Nelson, mathematics teacher at South Whidbey High School since 2000, was the recipient of SWSF’s Mentorship Award last Spring.

Cayla Calderwood, graduating senior, wrote: *Mr. Nelson is great at interacting with students. His ability to capture math in plain English helps his students understand easily.... And he manages to capture students’ interest with his own excitement in his subject.*

Your support makes the difference. Please respond to our annual fund drive by giving generously in the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.southwhidbeyschools-foundation.org —Thank you.

WHO WE ARE:

South Whidbey Schools Foundation provides funding for projects outside the scope of the school district budget which foster educational excellence to benefit the students in the South Whidbey School District.

In addition, SWSF recognizes and rewards teaching excellence through annual awards to outstanding teachers.

SWSF also serves as the administrative agency for numerous gifts from individuals and foundations, plus state and federal grants for activities and groups supporting South Whidbey education.

South Whidbey Schools Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Gifts are tax-deductible.
SWSF / PO Box 24 /
Freeland, WA 98249. Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE FOR SWSF’S SPRING FUNDRAISER...

May 21, Saturday, at Useless Bay Golf & Country Club
Guest Speaker: Joey Shapiro Key, PhD (a SWHS graduate)
Education Specialist, Montana Space Grant Consortium

Extra-Mile Award

Jennifer Gandarias, English Teacher at SWHS

Jennifer Gandarias, now an English teacher at South Whidbey High School, was the recipient of the 2009/10 Extra Mile Award when she was teaching at South Whidbey Elementary School, where she had been teaching since 1998.

The SWSF award is given to teachers who have gone the furthest in the service of the South Whidbey Education Community.

Gandarias is well loved by students, staff, and parents who appreciate her outstanding outreach to parents so

that all students are achieving to the best of their abilities.

She is also recognized for her generosity in assisting other staff with integrating technology into their teaching and learning.

Staff nominations include comments that Gandarias has more energy than any five people put together. She is passionate about technology and spends countless hours incorporating it into her lessons, teaching other staff, and attending workshops, at her own expense.

South Whidbey Schools Foundation supports teacher-requested projects and learning activities in the areas of science, writing, math, the arts, world cultures, history, technology, and civic engagement. Classroom grants totaling more than \$80,000 have been awarded to date.



The South Whidbey Schools Foundation was formed in 1995 by a group of community members to support and enhance educational excellence in our public schools. Pictured left to right, Jenny Sankey, Becky Foote, Jamie Boyd, John Riley, Chris Gibson, Marti Murphy, Lisa, Wendy Baesler, Jean Shaw. (Not pictured: Board members John Knox, Charlene Arnold and advisory members Bev Wills, and Nancy Ruff.)