

# 2003 M F E E

## Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence



Annual  
Report

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# 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.

# 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.

# 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.

# 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.

# 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
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