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South Lake Educational Foundation

In the News

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South Lake gets boost from community

New foundation seeks donations to enhance student education

BY JULTE STEVENS
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Former South Lake School Board member Verlyn Rebelein said a year of organizing has resulted in the formation of a group to ensure that district students are guaranteed a quality education.

The former South Lake parent and school board member said that in light of state funding cuts over the past several years, many schools in the area have been facing difficult times funding improvements in such areas as technology and reading.

This fact was the springboard in launching the South Lake Education[al] Foundation.

"It's an opportunity for the community to work together to help fund various activities for the students not paid for by tax revenues," said Rebelein, whose wife, Charlotte, is a teacher at South Lake High School.

"The foundation will not replace taxpayer funding, and monies collected will not become part of the general budget," said Rebelein. "The foundation's goal will be to help fund creative initiatives that will benefit our students and help them be more successful in life."

Rebelein said the business, civic and community leaders that comprise the foundation will focus solely on raising some much-needed dollars for programs not currently funded by the South Lake Schools' general budget.

The foundation will concentrate on five basic areas: technology, the arts, cultural enrichment, professional development, and overall scholastic enhancement, Rebelein said. The 15 members of the foundation, which is separate from the South Lake School Board, will solicit gifts in the form of cash contributions, will bequests, insurance policies, and memorials and tributes, all of which are tax-deductible, he said.

"It would all be raised through donations from individuals and businesses," Rebelein said.

South Lake Schools Superintendent William Putney said the foundation will likely become an essential asset to the entire district.

"The initiation of the South Lake Educational Foundation will help to offset the continuing negative impact of declining revenues to fund public education," he said.

"It will add a layer of quality because with budget reduction, we're having to tighten our belts," said Putney, adding that the district had to cut \$30,000 out of its professional development fund last year as a result of state funding decreases.

"A good active foundation can fill that void."

Plans to help finance a Small Grant Program to pay the costs of innovative classroom projects and the development of major projects are key goals under discussion for foundation sponsorship.

Rebelein also said that a Small Grant Program will be used to supplement projects and programs such as specialized computer software, equipment and materials for new ventures, and a wide variety of other creative ideas suggested by South Lake faculty.

"I am proud that the trustees represent parents and leaders of our business community whose efforts will contribute to the educational achievement of our students," said Putney.

Tax-deductible contributions to the South Lake Educational Foundation, and requests for more information, can be sent to: South Lake Educational Foundation, 23101 Stadium Blvd., St. Clair Shores, MI 48080.

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