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South Lake Educational Foundation

In the News

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SLEF has new tool for student success

Web site an opportunity to reach out to the community

BY JULTE STEVENS
C & G STAFF WRITER

Members of the South Lake Educational Foundation made some major headway this month in their efforts to educate the community about their mission.

The foundation, which supports South Lake Schools and its teachers and students, now has a new Web site — www.sledfound.org.

According to foundation Chairman Verlyn Rebelein, the Web site debuted in March following months of planning, design and development.

“The sole purpose of the Web site is to get information out to the public about the foundation, so members of the community know what we do, and to show them that they can contribute online as well,” he said.

Visitors to the Web site can learn more about the South Lake Educational Foundation, including the Small Grant and Teacher Tribute programs.

Through the support of donors, the foundation has been able to award eight grants through its Small Grant Program since the program started in the 2005/2006 school year.

Rebelein said the foundation was officially launched in late November. [2005]

The Teacher Tribute Program that began in December is an opportunity to honor or thank a teacher or staff member who has had a positive impact on a child by making a contribution to the foundation in the respective individual's honor.

“The Web site comes at a great time as we get set to embark on our annual campaign next month,” said Jeri Griffin Buboltz, foundation vice chair and editor of the Web site.

"This technology will also enable the foundation to make e-solicitations in the future," she said.

The new Web site offers the foundation an opportunity to highlight its donors, too. Businesses that donate \$5,000 or more can also choose to have their company's logo placed on the foundation's Web site, with a link directing visitors to their company's site, Buboltz said.

The South Lake Educational Foundation was founded in 2004 by a group of business, civic and community leaders to raise funds for programs and projects not currently funded by the South Lake Schools' general budget.

The foundation is an autonomous, nonprofit corporation, separate and distinct from the Board of Education. The district contains parts of St. Clair Shores, Eastpointe and Lake Township.

South Lake Superintendent William Putney said he sees the site becoming an excellent tool that will allow the district the opportunity to offer more educational services to its students.

"Now, more people will learn more about the foundation and what it does," he said. "We're really excited about this."

Rebelein said the foundation's webmaster is South Lake parent Jeff Dunn, who works as an applications analyst.

Dunn is an independent Web page developer with more than 25 years of computer programming experience, and has developed many computer applications for Wayne State University and Web sites for organizations including Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Society of St. Vincent de Paul and South Lake Schools.

A dedicated and talented volunteer in the district, Dunn is donating his services to help the foundation, Rebelein said.

Jeff and his wife, Ellen Dunn, have been involved with South Lake Schools since they moved to St. Clair Shores 14 years ago.

"I knew that my experience in Web site development could help South Lake, and I am honored that they asked," Dunn said.

The Web site marks another milestone in realizing Rebelein's dream of creating an educational foundation in the district.

"I think this is a fantastic Web site," said Rebelein, a former school board member and president. "I'm very pleased with its development. It's a great way for people to learn about the foundation and to make contributions to help enhance the education of South Lake students."

Rebelein, whose wife Charlotte is an educator at South Lake High School and at South Lake Middle School, said the annual campaign that Buboltz referred to entails foundation members looking to local business owners and the community for contributions.

Tax-deductible contributions to the South Lake Educational Foundation can also be mailed to South Lake Educational Foundation, 23101 Stadium Blvd., St. Clair Shores, MI 48080.

You can reach Julie Stevens at jstevens@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1039.

