

A publication of the Naperville Education Foundation 203 West Hillside Road, Naperville, Illinois 60540 630-420-6475 • www.ncusd203.org

#### **July 2004**

## ACROSS DISTRICT 203 Foundation Grants Inspire Students

Each year, the Naperville Education Foundation reviews numerous grant applications requesting funds for innovative seed projects throughout our 21 schools, most of which are written by ambitious students and pioneering staff. Following is but a sampling of the many exciting programs our generous contributors are helping to support across the District.

#### Capturing Memories at Highlands Elementary

Highlands students simply can't say enough about "Capturing Memories," the computer video project that has allowed them to produce over 15 various movies, videos and web sites of their own creation since January alone. Under the tutelage of their fifth grade teacher, Brian Hunger, students requested \$1,600 to purchase a stand-alone computer and software that would enable them to explore the art of moviemaking, as well as capture events and images of elementary school in video format. Within just two weeks of receiving the equipment they desired, the young videographers attended the annual Illinois State Student Technology Conference and presented a movie and web site they had created about Patricia Malone, a local author who'd visited their school. Since then, they have made a Revolutionary War video, a movie about bullying, a rock climbing video and a video of their school's second grade Fairy Tale plays, to name just a few.

"[People] should really learn to work with different technology," said 11-yearold Highlands student Naveen Pokala. "It gives you a lot more options." Anisha Bhatia, 11, agreed: "This program is important because it teaches kids how to use technology so they don't get confused like my mom."







"Kids want to do this on their own time," said Mr. Hunger of the initiative he says has tapped into some students who weren't responding to traditional scholastic methods. "You try reaching them in a lot of ways. By having this technology, we've reached many more."

#### High School Mentors Boost Mill Street Students

At Mill Street Elementary, the NEF awarded resources to an after-school program in which high school mentors from Naperville North pair twice a week with third through fifth graders to provide academic and emotional support. Conceived and run by Mill Street Reading Specialist Deb Coulter, the "M&M Academy" (Mentors and Mill) was originally to have included five to eight children from the school's diverse student population. The program has expanded, however, to over 20 students with a high school mentor for each one. Getting help on homework is just one benefit to young students of the M&M Academy. Through one-on-one communication and e-mail correspondence, high school helpers offer them encouragement and friendship, too.

"They end up adoring each other," said M&M Academy assistant, Mary Glenn Ray. "What third through fifth grader wouldn't die to work with a high

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#### **GRANTS INSPIRE STUDENTS**

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schooler?" Said high school senior and former Mill Street student Nathan Singer, "I want to be a teacher when I grow up, so this gives me a challenge in a good way. It expands my patience and open-mindedness."

The idea for the mentor program first came to Coulter when a former student from Poland needed help with her studies, but couldn't stay after school because her parents worked late hours, and she had no way of getting home. Making arrangements with the girl's mother to allow her to drive her daughter home, Coulter worked with the student every day after school and on through junior high as well. Now the teenager helps out with the M&M program and remains close with her former teacher.

"I have always stewed about those kids that really want to do well, but, for whatever reason, don't have the time and/or support needed to be successful from home," said Coulter, who was thrilled that she was able to acquire free bus transportation to take students home after their studies. She is also delighted by the improvement she has seen in the students' grades. "Some of these kids are passing their tests for the first time."

#### Lincoln Lancers Build Character Through PRIDE

"We were very aggressive in pursuing these NEF grants," said Lincoln Junior High principal Dr. Dan Brace about funds for two programs at Lincoln this year, of which he and staff members are immensely proud. "PRIDE," in fact, is the acronym for the five tenets of Lincoln's school-wide, staff-designed character education program. Positive Attitude, Respect and Responsibility, Integrity, Diligence and Empathy/Encouragement are the principles that permeate every



Naperville North senior Cori Schroeder (left) helps fifth grader Amanda Torres with her homework at Mill Street's M&M Academy

aspect of Lincoln's environment, from lesson plans and student activities, to outside community service projects.

According to Principal Brace, "Lancer PRIDE" is an initiative wholly separate from a Character Counts model. "We're trying to make this part of the culture, with all teachers on the same page," he said of the program led by a core committee of four Lincoln staffers and representatives from all curricular areas. "We wouldn't get that level of commitment if we purchased a Character Counts package."

Emblazoned with posters and murals, Lincoln's walls speak loudly of the character traits that are the foundation of the "Lancer PRIDE" program. Students seem to be listening, too. Mary Cassano, Lincoln social worker and "Lancer PRIDE" committee member, reported a noticeable decrease in the number of student infractions since the inception of the program. "Integrity," added committee member and academic support teacher Patti Moore, "gets a lot of discussion [among students and staff]."

"The NEF gives us the resources we need to take good ideas and put them in motion," said

Dr. Brace. Thanks to our supporters, the Naperville Education Foundation has the ability to facilitate such fine ideas.

#### Lincoln Students Help "Bag the Big Books"

Exemplary of the "Encouragement" principle of "Lancer PRIDE," Lincoln's "Bag the Big Books" is a sixth grade literacy program designed to share a love of books with elementary students who will be attending Lincoln the following year, as well as quell their fears about entering junior high. Facilitated by Lincoln's Project Idea teacher, Julie Saros, gifted language arts students conceived and wrote a grant requesting funds to create "backpacks" filled with books they had recorded on audio tape in all the various characters' voices. Also included in the bags are reading response notebooks, stuffed animals, and other relevant items

> for use by fifth grade pupils at Elmwood, Kingsley and Maplebrook, Lincoln's feeder elementary schools. Lincoln participants narrowed countless book possibilities to those which demonstrate the six traits of quality writing and offer a current perspective on the anxieties kids experience going into middle school.

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(from left) Lincoln's "Lancer PRIDE" committee members Mary Cassano and Erica Eysturlid, P.I. teacher Julie Saros, and Principal Dr. Dan Brace

# **Breakfast Highlights World-renowned "New P.E."**

Guests of the May 12 Naperville Education Foundation Breakfast walked away with personal pedometers and a greater awareness of just how significantly the shape of physical education in our schools has changed. Gone are the tired, old gym games of the past-today's District 203 P.E. classes boast treadmills, heart monitors and high-adventure climbing walls. Praised for its example by major national media and the Center for Disease Control, Naperville's physical education program is leading the country in its emphasis on lifelong wellness over standard sports skills.

"Naperville is the number one city in the United States to raise a healthy child," remarked featured breakfast speaker Phil Lawler, a Madison Junior High physical education teacher and director of the PE4LIFE Institute of Naperville. PE4LIFE is a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization promoting daily, quality physical education for children. Madison Junior High became the site of its first national laboratory when PE4LIFE president Anne Flannery contacted Lawler after reading about his commitment to the "New P.E." in USA Today.

"Our role is to launch across the country and the world what you do in this community every day," said Flannery, another

#### **GRANTS INSPIRE STUDENTS**

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"The students brainstormed ideas and wanted to help fifth graders' transition to junior high," said Saros, whose charges put their persuasive writing skills into action when they penned the NEF grant last year.

"Writing the grant gave us a purpose for writing," said Hannah Ramsey, now a Lincoln seventh grader. "The class knew if we got the grant, we could promote literacy to younger students in the District." This year, new sixth graders completed featured breakfast speaker. At one point, Flannery had all of the nearly 400 attendees on their feet as a reminder that no one should stay seated for more than 17 minutes at a time (because your brain thinks you are asleep). When Dr. Vincent Bufalino, president and CEO of Midwest Heart Specialists and President and Medical Director of Edward Heart Hospital Cardiovascular Services, noted that a recent study indicated that Naperville students are more fit than students in California, the capacious room exploded in applause.

Held in the ballroom of Naperville's Holiday Inn Select, this year's breakfast raised over \$36,000 in support of innovative seed programs across District 203 schools. Thanks to the faithful annual sponsorship of Naperville's Harris Bank, through bank president Frank Slocumb, the entire cost of each \$65 ticket went directly into the Naperville Education Foundation. In addition, the live auction of New York Jets wide receiver Justin McCareins's football jersey fetched \$2,100, a price that was later matched by an anonymous donor. In a videotaped message, McCareins, a Naperville North alumnus, credited his family and his Naperville coaches for helping him to develop the mental and physical stamina of a professional football player.

the project and are presenting the book bags to visiting fifth graders to take back to their schools. Reportedly, the response from future middle schoolers has been very enthusiastic. But the benefit is not all to the elementary students.

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"It's good for my students to have this experience," noted Saros. "It gives them a chance to give back to the elementary schools." Added Saros of her students' invitation to the District 203 Awards Reception last April for winning the grant: "You could tell they did something important." Said speaker Paul Zientarski, Naperville Central's physical education department coordinator, "It takes a community to raise a child. Without the Naperville Education Foundation, we couldn't bring all these extras to our P.E. program." Two former Naperville Central students, Jessica Wolfrum and Jack Susin, also took the podium in testimony of the considerable impact District 203's P.E. program has had on their young lives. According to Wolfrum, now a college engineering major, the trust-building rock climbing course she took at Central was one of the most inspiring experiences she's ever had.

Another student speaker was Joanna Ng, a peer helper in Naperville Central's Adaptive P.E. Program for students with special needs. Joanna, who recently graduated in the academic top five percent of her high school class, noted that "Fundamentally, we are all so similar inside. People with disabilities have the same desire to take risks and overcome inhibitions." Joanna's younger sister, Mabel, is a special needs student, whom Joanna mentored at Central. "I'm fortunate to put someone else's needs ahead of mine," she said.

Recipients of the Dr. Mary Ann Bobosky and the Dr. Donald E. Weber Honorary Scholarships were also acknowledged at the breakfast. NCHS Special Education Assistant Mary Wilkerson received the Bobosky Scholarship and NNHS Foreign Language Department Coordinator Carrie Kuefler received the Weber Scholarship. Also recognized were Vicky Erickson, a NCHS Special Olympics gold medallist, Helen Brassington, who assisted in the establishment of the Richard Brassington Memorial Endowment Fund (in her late husband's name) to District 203's Special Olympics program, and District 203 Physical Education Coordinators Curt Wills and Jay Konrad. 🙈

# **NEF Takes Steps to Achieve Greater Visibility and Impact**

BY DENNIS MALCHOW, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

What is one of the best-kept secrets in Naperville? It might just be District 203's Naperville Education Foundation. Although we have been actively supporting District 203 for the past 12 years, it seems that we have not been as successful as we could be in getting our message out to the community. I would like to share with you the steps we are taking to change that-steps that will increase our visibility and impact our District 203 students even more



Dennis Malchow, Chairman, Naperville Education Foundation Board of Trustees

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significantly. We began our journey by determining the Foundation's strengths and weaknesses as well as creating a vision and mission that address what we are about and how we plan to achieve our goals. We developed critical success factors against which we will measure our achievements and clearly delineated the role each trustee must play in attaining success.

We also determined that we must concentrate our efforts in three specific areas. First, we must identify specific projects. Are there certain student needs that go unrecognized in our District that we, as a Foundation, could fund? A team led by Trustee Jim Oyndak has been charted to uncover those areas. Focus groups have been organized, through which we are also already investigating particular needs. In this process, we will continue to look for areas in need of the Foundation's support.

Second, we must determine ways to secure adequate funding. Where can we find the necessary resources to support future projects? We have done an excellent job of raising money

# **Designing Man Gives the Naperville Education Foundation a Fresh New Look**

The Naperville Education Foundation is moving in a new direction, taking great strides to increase its visibility in the community and its impact on District 203 students. It's only fitting, then, that the organization has also gotten a fresh look via a new logo designed by Scott Kolbe, of Icon Digital Design in Naperville. A former Madison Junior High and Naperville Central student, Kolbe did not have to look far for inspiration when creating the design that conveys the Naperville Education Foundation's creed that "it's all about the students." Arched type spans the logo, providing solidity

and strength to the image. NEF is the overarching organization providing support for all students "above and beyond" what is funded by tax dollars.

"This was more than a publicity opportunity for Icon," said Kolbe, of the job that came to him and business partner Michael Stout. Stout and Kolbe, two hometown boys, attended junior high through college together. Icon Digital Design caught the eve of the Foundation Board after the company designed the Naperville Heritage Society's Naper Days logo. "When you see how [the NEF] helps children, you can't help but

through our Annual Breakfast, Annual Golf Outing, voluntary student registration donation and, of course, our generous donors. However, as effective as our fund-raising events are, they are somewhat limiting in the amount of resources they bring in. To address this concern, current Trustee and Resource Development Committee Chair Suzyn Price has developed a team to look at more creative ways to raise additional funds. We feel that the Foundation should serve as a vehicle through which donors can support appropriate projects, grants and scholarships for the District 203 school community.

Last, we must increase our visibility in the community. To that end, we have asked current Trustee Teri Albus to lead a team commissioned with this task. Teri's group has also met with focus groups, which have provided excellent feedback regarding the measures

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be touched and want to help, too," added Kolbe, the father of two Ellsworth students. Drawing from discussions with NEF Trustee Teri Albus, Kolbe bore in mind, throughout the logo design process, the NEF's philosophy that learning is about more than just books and the act of teaching. "It's about giving students the opportunity to achieve their dreams," Kolbe noted.

To see more examples of Icon Digital Design's fine work in a variety of media, visit their web site at www.icondigitaldesign.com. 🧥



Naperville's Special Olympians train for their April 25 track meet at North Central College

# **Parent Gifts Help Enhance Education**

Every summer, when parents are registering their children for a new school year and paying the requisite fees, over 2,000 voluntarily check a box labeled the "Naperville Education Foundation." A local non-profit organization, the Naperville Education Foundation works closely with the District and the Board of Education to fund curriculum enhancements beyond those supported by regular sources of revenue.

"NEF seed projects allow teachers to exercise more creativity so students can

# Brassington Endowment Supports a Very "Special Olympic" Effort

"Their smiles of victory are just delightful to watch," said Helen Brassington at a spring practice of the Naperville Special Olympians she is helping to support through a generous endowment fund established in her late husband's name. She must have been elated when five of these special athletes snared three gold medals, two silvers, two fourth places and one fifth place at the state-wide Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games on June 11-13—all in the team's first year.

When Dick Brassington passed away two years ago, his company, Interpolymer Corp., donated a \$10,000 endowment in his memory. Wishing to do something for her grandchildren's school system, Helen Brassington approached District 203 administrators about how the resources might best be used. A former Woodridge school teacher, Brassington was thrilled with the suggestion that the fund (administered by the Naperville Education Foundation) help support the first ever District-sponsored Special Olympics team.

"I've always had a soft spot for children, and when [Director of Community Relations] Nina Menis suggested Special Olympics, I said 'That's it!" enthused Brassington.

"Let's take care of our schools first," agreed Helen's daughter, Mary Brock, a preschool teacher and District 203 parent, who is touched that her father's memory will live on in such a special way. "It seems like it was meant to be, that he's still watching over us," she mused, acknowledging the uncanny timing of an April 25 Special Olympics meet at North Central College on the second anniversary of her father's death.

Coached by Naperville North school psychologist Marta Swanson-Maschman and special education teacher Sandy Garner, as well as high school peers, "Team 203" consisted of 30 qualifying special education students from both Naperville North and Naperville Central high schools. Prior to the meet on April 25 (at which five Naperville competitors earned seven gold medals and the chance to compete at the Summer Games), the athletes trained vigorously during several weekly practices, including a preparatory invitational meet at Waubonsie Valley High School. "Some of the peer helpers had trouble keeping up!" said Brock, who, along with her mother and two children, were often out rooting for the team.

"[Special athletes] see their peers in sporting events and they can never get in," said District 203 Assistant Director of Special Education Tom Ruggio. "This is an opportunity for them to experience the excitement of a crowd cheering them on." The parent and community take learning to another level," said NEF Board Member and Resource Development Committee Chair Suzyn Price. This year, the Foundation received \$216,000 in grant requests, compared with \$90,000 last year. Though the NEF cannot fund the majority of the proposals it receives, it will nevertheless distribute \$60,000 in grants for programs in all areas, plus a \$1,000 trustee award for each of the 21 schools in the district, totaling \$81,000 outside the realm of tax dollars.

It may be "all about the students," as the NEF avows, but a big thank you goes to parents for their continued support of the programs that so enrich their children's education in District 203. For a sampling of the diverse ways in which your donations augment the education of our District 203 students, please see the article entitled "Across District 203: Foundation Grants Inspire Students" in this newsletter.



(from left) Mary Brock, Ryan Brock, and Helen Brassington watch special athletes from the North Central College bleachers

response to the Special Olympics program has been overwhelming, added Ruggio, who sees great potential for growth into more teams and other age brackets in the future.

Thanks to the Brassington endowment, the prospects for District 203's medalwinning Special Olympians seem promising indeed. "Dick would be just so pleased," beamed his wife.

## **Foundation Bids Farewell to Four Valued Trustees**

After six years of dedication to the Naperville Education Foundation's vision of encouraging creativity, innovation and excellence in our District 203 schools, Victoria Boomgarden, Loretta Karkhoff, Ray Kinney and Steve Monteith are stepping down from their esteemed positions on our Board of Trustees. Each has devoted immeasurable time, energy and ingenuity to the NEF, particularly in its current drive to increase visibility in the community and further enrich education for students. While we do not have the words to adequately thank them for their outstanding service on the Foundation's Board, we have asked them to leave us with their own words (some of them good-natured, tonguein-cheek) in answer to the following three questions:

#### What did you most enjoy about your service with the Naperville Education Foundation?

#### VICTORIA BOOMGARDEN:

"There is a great deal of satisfaction in seeing the implementation of some of the grants we have given, such as the District-wide kindergarten video."

#### LORETTA KARKHOFF:

"When I joined the Foundation six years ago, my focus was on doing all that I could to help raise money for those special teachers' projects that could not be funded by the school district. During my time on the Board, I have seen the funding of many grants that have helped bring the students' school experience to a higher level."

#### RAY KINNEY:

"That's a difficult question to answer with just one thing. I would have to say that what I enjoyed the most was the opportunity to make a difference in the life of just one student, so that he or she may have a successful educational career and, most importantly, become a productive member of society. I truly believe that the Foundation has been greatly instrumental in the success of the students, teachers and administrators. The Naperville community as a whole is better off because of the Naperville Education Foundation."

#### STEVE MONTEITH:

"I enjoyed working on projects that benefited our school district, as well as the strategic plan of where we want the Foundation to go."

# What one thing stands out the most during your time on the Foundation Board?

#### VICTORIA:

"We accomplish a lot of great work for our kids and still manage to enjoy a lot of laughs—even at 7:00 a.m. meetings!"

#### LORETTA:

"I have always enjoyed reviewing the grant applications we've received and picking the best of the best. I have read many great grants over the years, that must surely have deepened students' understanding of a variety of subjects. It has always been a strong emphasis of the Board to continually raise more money for bigger and better projects."

#### RAY:

"I believe that the Foundation has grown considerably during my time of service. We have made great strides in becoming more visible in the community, both internally and externally. The Foundation is becoming more well-known for the work we do, which will get more people involved and create more revenue to make more things possible. Certainly, my role as chairman of "Kid Booster Anonymous" really gets at the core of what we are all about: helping people when they need it. I couldn't begin to express the satisfaction of truly making a difference in a child's ability to participate in programs that, without our help, would not be available to that child."

#### STEVE:

"What stands out most to me is how the Foundation has grown, especially in its plans to expand and become even more focused. I'm always impressed with how our volunteers give both of their time and resources to benefit our community and its schools."

# What advice would you give to a new Trustee?

#### VICTORIA:

"Don't miss a meeting-you'll be designated "in charge" of something!"

#### LORETTA:

"I would advise a new Trustee to attend as many Board meetings as possible and to stay engaged. It truly is 'all about the students.""

RAY:

"Run away! Run away! FAST!"

#### STEVE:

"Don't be hesitant to jump in and help out—or even to come up with new ideas of your own."

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#### VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

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needed to raise awareness of the Foundation. Undoubtedly, there is more work to do in all three of these areas, but we are very encouraged by our early progress. Twenty-one trustees, however, cannot get the job done by themselves. We need to seek help from our business partners and community members as well. As trustees, we must tap deeper into the talents and resources of this wonderful community, if we are to attain the visibility we desire.

The Naperville Education Foundation has the potential and the drive to raise the bar even further in our excellent educational system. Our message is to encourage creativity, provide enriching learning opportunities, and assure that all students have the opportunity to maximize their individual and collective potential. The Foundation is excited to make an even bigger impact in the years to come; however, it will require a great deal of work and dedication. It will also require the continued support of our entire community. We look forward to increasing that support.

## 12TH ANNUAL EVENT July 19 Golf Outing Projected to Raise Over \$25,000

Sun, fun on the fairway, food and fellowship—what a way to spend a day, all in the name of a great cause! Slated for July 19, 2004, the 12th Annual Naperville Education Foundation Golf Outing at and camaraderie at Springbrook Golf Course; over \$20,000 was raised in support of NEF projects. As always, our sponsors were invaluable to the outing's success. Sodexho Services provided a



The Outback Steakhouse crew serves delicious, complimentary dinner fare at the 2003 Golf Outing

Naperville's Springbrook Golf Course will once again offer participants a great day of golf, as well as an opportunity to raise an expected \$25,000 that will go directly into the Naperville Education Foundation to supply grant money for innovative programs at schools throughout District 203.

"Our sponsors' contributions go to a worthwhile cause," said Golf Outing Chairman and NEF Trustee Ron Schild, who expressed heartfelt appreciation of the continued financial support of our District 203 Business Community Education Partners and golf participants. Ron encourages golfers of all ability levels to sign up to play and to consider being either a return sponsor or firsttime supporter of the Naperville Education Foundation through this event. For more information contact Nina Menis, District 203 Director of Community Relations, at 420–6815.

At last summer's July 21 Golf Outing, 36 foursomes enjoyed an idyllic day of golf

tasty lunch, while Outback Steakhouse and its volunteer employees served up a mouth-watering dinner. Gerald Nissan sponsored two hole-in-one contests, giving every golfer a chance to win a new car. Gary Baumgartner and Michael Rohr provided golf balls for our "Place Your Bet" competition on the 13th hole, while Best Travel once more donated two airline

travel vouchers for our raffle. Over 50 friends and local businesses provided sponsorships or gifts for the event.

This year, Golf Outing Committee Members Teri Albus, Sandy Benson, Bill Bien, Maureen Dvorak, Russ Gates, Laura Holada, Ray Kinney, Kevin Kretzmann, Dennis Malchow, Nina Menis, Lori Montgomery, Gail Niermeyer, Nancy Nyberg, Sally Pentecost, Joe Prestinario, Lisa Wenzlaff and Grace Woeltje, along with the Naperville Education Foundation Trustees, are working hard to acquire raffle prizes and put on another super event. Grace Woeltje, an original NEF Trustee who has helped with the Golf Outing every year, will again facilitate registration for the day.

The Naperville Education Foundation thanks all all of our us sponsors, p partici- ot pants and volunteers who help to make this such a successful fund-

"This is a fun day... Best of all, the funds raised are used to support those programs that might otherwise never get off the ground."

MIKE SKARR

raiser each year. In the words of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Mike Skarr, who has attended the Golf Outing every year since its inception, "This is a fun day that I spend with my three grown sons, including one who is a teacher in the District. Best of all, the funds raised are used to support those programs that might otherwise never get off the ground."



Last year's golfers enjoy a great day of camaraderie at Springbrook Golf Course



#### **Naperville Education Foundation** 203 West Hillside Road

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MidAmerica Bank: Paying a higher rate of attention:

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Special thanks to MidAmerica Bank for underwriting this newsletter.

# We invite you to support our schools in a special way. Your donation to the Naperville Education Foundation helps enrich and enhance programs beyond what is funded by tax dollars. Your participation in the groups listed below provides an invaluable resource to students in our schools.

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