



## Winter/Spring 2017 Newsletter

### Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the revised edition of the Foundation for Pottstown Education (FPE) newsletter. First let me introduce myself. My name is Joe Rusiewicz, and I am the Executive Director for the Foundation. I started in this role in December 2016. Some of you may know me from a former role as the Executive Director of the Pottstown Family YMCA. I am excited to be serving in this capacity with the Foundation and in support of providing opportunities for children in the Pottstown School District.



During the past six months, I have had the opportunity to re-discover the Pottstown area, to meet new people and to reacquaint myself with others who I had the pleasure of knowing while at the Y. One of the things that I am discovering is how little people actually know about the Foundation and what we do. So in this, the first newsletter as the Executive Director, I would like to introduce you to what the Foundation does.

FPE is a not for profit organization whose mission is to support, promote, sponsor and carry out educational, scientific or charitable activities and objectives within or related to the Pottstown School District.

While we are here to support the Pottstown School District, we are our own separate organization with a Board of Directors who oversees the operation of the Foundation. Their names are listed to the right of this letter. All of these Board members are volunteers for our organization.

We solicit funding for the grants and programs that we provide as well as our operations. Any donation given to the Foundation goes directly to our grant requests for programs, equipment, tests, field trips, and educational activities as well as for our operation overhead. The list of our Donors from the past six months is listed in this newsletter.

Requests for funding are provided to the School District by way of grant applications that are submitted by teachers of the Pottstown School District. These requests are reviewed and approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors. You can read about many of the approved funding from the past six months throughout this newsletter.

Many of you may have heard about the Pottstown Promise for Early College Program that we operate and support. While this is probably the largest and most recognized program that we support, it is not the only one. There are many others as you will read about in this as well as upcoming newsletters.

During the next few months, we will be looking for additional volunteers for our committees. If you are interested in serving on a committee, please feel free to contact me via email [jrusiewicz@pottstownk12.org](mailto:jrusiewicz@pottstownk12.org) or call the Foundation office at 610-970-6616. The committees looking for volunteers are Fund Development, Marketing and PR and Pottstown Pride.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I hope that you found it interesting and enlightening. I look forward to working with our community, Board of Directors, and School District in *promoting opportunities for children.*

### Foundation Board of Directors

#### Officers:

President:  
Dr. Tracey Brown  
Vice President:  
Ed Edwards  
Treasurer:  
Scott Detar  
Secretary:  
Melissa Shainline

#### Members:

Howard Brown  
David Charles  
John Foster  
Judy Green  
Georgette Howell  
Matt Kutz  
Lisa Lightcap  
Barbara Longstreth  
Danielle McCoy  
Sue Ann Yocum

#### Ex Officio:

Mr. Stephen Rodriguez,  
Superintendent of Schools  
John Armato

#### Solicitor:

Stephen Kalis

#### Executive Director:

Joe Rusiewicz

#### Staff:

Jane Hamilton  
Cheryl Stache

Foundation for  
Pottstown Education  
230 Beech Street  
Pottstown, PA 19464  
610 970-6616

### Mission Statement

#### Promoting Opportunities for Children

The mission of the Foundation for Pottstown Education is to support, promote, sponsor and carry out educational, scientific or charitable activities and objectives within or related to the Pottstown School District.

Foundation for Pottstown  
Education is a 501c3 non-  
profit organization.

## BB&T Supports the Foundation for Pottstown Education

BB&T recently supported the work of the Foundation through funding in conjunction with the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC). The check for \$1000 will support the Early College Program which provides juniors and seniors at Pottstown High School with the opportunity to take college courses while still in high school at Montgomery County Community College West Campus. These classes will allow the students the chance to graduate high school with their first year of college completed.

EITC is a program providing tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to a scholarship organization, an education improvement organization and/or a pre-kindergarten scholarship organization. Businesses as well as organizations receiving the EITC funding must apply and be approved by the Department of Community and Economic Development to participate.

BB&T's financial support of the Early College Program aligns with one area of their mission, *making the communities in which we work better places to be.*



Joe Rusiewicz &  
Elizabeth McMahon



## Memorabilia Donated to Alumni Gallery

The Foundation for Pottstown Education showcased a few memorabilia items that were donated to the Pottstown School District Alumni Gallery. Among the items were three report cards from 1915-1916, a brick from PHS when it was located at Chestnut and Penn Streets and a pin and class ring from 1949.

The items will be placed in the Alumni Gallery for visitors to view when touring the center. The Alumni Gallery is located at the high school and was funded by donations to the Foundation for Pottstown Education. The Gallery, a one of a kind for school districts, showcases the history of the district.

The items were donated by Edith McAllister and Twyla Miller. Our thanks go out to them and to their families for the donations helping to preserve the history of the Pottstown School District.

Howard Brown, Chair of the Pottstown Pride Society and a board member of the Foundation will be developing a committee of Pottstown Alumni for the Gallery. People interested in volunteering for this committee should contact the Foundation at:

**610 970-6616**



Board members, Scott Detar, Tracey Brown and Howard Brown display items donated to the Alumni Gallery.

## Middle School Students Explore the Environment

Through funding provided by the Foundation for Pottstown Education, the Pottstown Middle School Environmental Club visited the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) from May 17-19. Twenty-nine students along with teachers made the trip to Dingman's Ferry for three days of educational experiences and fun. The students and chaperones camped at the Yurt Village. These are domed tents on a platform.

The students hiked over seven miles in two days and participated in team building activities and a confidence course. They learned about steam ecology and the sustainable

practices that PEEC has implemented.

The students went canoeing and had a campfire complete with smores. Each student took a turn in the cafeteria setting the tables for the group and cleaning up after the meals.

The students were required to journal about their experiences while at PEEC.

This has been an annual trip for the club, however this year's trip was in jeopardy of being cancelled due to a loss of funding. Mrs. Angelo, middle school teacher and club advisor, approached the Foundation for Pottstown Education requesting



assistance. The Foundation provided the \$2500 to support the trip.

The Foundation received a donation from an anonymous donor to help fund the trip.

## Class of '67 Donates to the Foundation for Pottstown Education

On April 27, the Foundation was assisted by the Pottstown High School Class of 1967. Celebrating its 50th anniversary the class along with the Montgomery Community Foundation and an anonymous donor presented the Foundation for Pottstown Education with a check for \$10,000 in support of the Early College Program. The program, called the Pottstown Promise, provides scholarships for Pottstown High School students to take college courses in their junior and senior years at the Montgomery County Community College.

The \$10,000 check was presented to the Foundation Board President Tracey Brown and Executive Director Joe Rusiewicz at the Board's April meeting. Class members Barbara Bushey Enrico and Sue Bradley Trout presented the check along with Montgomery Community Foundation's Executive Director, Virginia Frantz.



Joe Rusiewicz, Tracey Brown, Barbara Ernico, Sue Trout, Virginia Frantz, Charlie Palladino

## Dana Foundation Contributes to the Foundation for Pottstown Education

Dana Inc., Pottstown location made a \$5000 contribution supporting Foundation initiatives to the education of the students in the district.

Plant manager, Danny Aaron and Environmental Health and Safety manager Jason Pregel were on hand to present the check to the Foundation Board President Tracey Brown. In presenting the check Aaron stated that it was in recognition of the work that the Foundation is doing to promote education specifically in the area of science education.

Each year, the Dana Foundation allocates funds to each of their plants tasking them with selection of local not-for-profits as the recipients of the funding. The Foundation for Pottstown Education was one of the organizations selected to receive funding this year.



Jason Pregel, Tracey Brown and Danny Aaron from Dana Corporation.

## Pottstown Early College Program at Montgomery County Community College

The partnership with Montgomery County Community College and the Foundation for Pottstown Education is designed to provide high achieving, low income students the opportunity to finish their first year of college at the Montgomery County Community College during their junior and senior year of high school. The Foundation is pleased to announce the listed graduating seniors have participated in the program. They were recognized at a dinner on June 15 following which they were introduced to the Board of Education.



From left: Kenil Patel, Alivia Lopez, Yuliza Cruz, Khaleah Jeter, Devonna Douglass, and Nyles Rome. Not pictured: Ashley Adams, Ron Fausnaught, Alexis Martin, Casey Mest, and Javontae Tinson

## Fair Funding Resolution Adopted

How the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania funds education for the 1.7 million students in the 500 school districts in the state is an incredibly important issue which will affect future generations. It continues to be discussed in virtually every community as we search for the answer to how best prepare our students for the future while at the same time protecting the present needs of our citizens.

One way districts have dealt with the current crisis is by relying on their education foundation to raise funds to support much needed student programs. The Foundation for Pottstown Education is a proud supporter of the students of the Pottstown School District. The Foundation has funded programs including robotic, early college education entrance and nature field trips for elementary students to name but

a few. However, the Board of Directors for the Foundation for Pottstown Education have come to realize that the inadequate and unfair funding formula used to provide resources to our schools in Pennsylvania is severely out of balance and deprives our students of many educational opportunities that exist in neighboring schools. After examining this issue for months, the Foundation unanimously approved a resolution supporting a fair and equitable funding formula for students in all 500 school districts of the state.

To the best of our knowledge this is the first example of a charitable organization making a unanimous, formal resolution supporting fair and equitable funding.

The vote is a clear indication that the concept of fair and equitable funding for our schools is nonpartisan and transcends politics. Fair



and equitable funding in Pennsylvania is about ensuring equity for all our students who will become the leaders of our community.

# Calling all Volunteers!!!

The Foundation for Pottstown Education is looking for volunteers to serve on the following committees: Fund Development, Marketing, and Pottstown Pride Society.

**Fund Development:** This is our Special Events Committee with the current major event being the Annual Gala during the district wide musical. The committee will be looking at other events for the coming year. Meeting dates and times are yet to be determined.

**Marketing:** Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month 10:00 - 11:00 AM at the Administration Building. If you have experience or interests in helping us market our Foundation and

events, this committee is for you. We will be working on a quarterly newsletter, social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as well as our website. This committee will also support our Fund Raising and Special Events.

**Pottstown Pride Society:** Whether you are an alum of the Pottstown School District or a member of our local community and have Pride in Pottstown, you are welcome to join the society. This committee meets on the second Monday of the month 4:30 PM at the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation Conference Room. The committee has been instrumental in the Go Fourth Sports Carnival and assisted with the Healthy Kids Day.

Other volunteer opportunities include assisting with special events such as those mentioned above and our Annual Support Campaign which will help raise money to support the Foundation's efforts in promoting opportunities for children. For further information or to volunteer, contact the Foundation Office at 610-970-6616.



## Approval for Funding for the Pottstown High School Engineering Class

The Pottstown Foundation Board of Directors approved funding which will provide the engineering classes with a computer control unit. The grant was requested by Mr. Andrew Bachman, Engineering and Technology Instructor.

With this system students will learn how to program, operate and interface programmable controllers in a variety of industrial applications used in the automotive, packaging and technological assembly industries to name a few. The system is one of the most important developments in

industrial automation because of the ability to be quickly programmed to control a wide range of industrial processes and machines.

The system will work with the Robotics 1 and 2 Learning Systems that the Foundation funded in the beginning of the school year. This program teaches articulated arm servo robotics and how it can be applied in industrial tasks. The students also learn basic robot operation programming interfacing, flexible manufacturing cell quality control and production control.



The generous gift was given in support of the Robotics Program of the Pottstown School District. Thank you to the Greater Pottstown Foundation for helping with the Mission of *Promoting Opportunities for Children.*

## A BIG THANK YOU to our Winter/Spring 2017 Donors

### \$1-\$999

MaryBeth Bacallao  
James R. Bush  
Kathleen Carpenter  
Deena Cellini  
Christine Chew  
Matthew and Michelle Cappelletti, Jr.  
Richard Frerichs  
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center

Kathy and David Hayes  
Gerald Koren  
Sharon and Brian Kulp  
Danielle McCoy  
Britney Oxenford  
Charles Palladino  
Dulcie Rothermel  
Jeffrey Sparagana  
Michael Vought

Amy Wolf  
Beth Yoder  
Jason Kish  
Network for Good  
Dianne Fox

### \$1000-\$10,000

Scott Detar  
PNC Charitable Trust  
BB&T Bank  
United Way UWGPSNJ  
PHS Class of '67  
Dana Corporation



Follow us on.....



Foundation for  
Pottstown  
Education



@foundpted



Foundation for  
**POTTSTOWN  
EDUCATION**  
promoting opportunities for children

## **New Program to Help Teachers Buy Houses in Pottstown**

A new program is in place in Pottstown to help public school teachers and administrators purchase homes in Pottstown Borough. The program, funded by the Pottstown School District is operated through the Foundation for Pottstown Education. It allows professional employees to receive a \$10,000 forgivable loan toward the purchase of a home in Pottstown.

Each year the employee lives in the home, he or she will be entitled to 20 percent loan forgiveness and after five years the loan would be fully forgiven.

Eligible employees include members of the Federation of Pottstown Teachers and Act 93 employees and exempt employees. The School Directors have recognized the fact that when professions from the school district live within the borough, there is a natural advantage to being involved and being attuned to what's going on.

"We're extremely pleased to work with the school district in an effort to increase the purchasing homes in the Borough of Pottstown," said Joe Rusiewicz, Executive Director of the Foundation for Pottstown Education.

District employees interested in the program should contact the Foundation at 610 970-6616.

## **Foundation Provides Grants for AP EXAMS**

The Foundation for Pottstown Education has awarded a \$5400 grant to the Pottstown School District to pay the costs of Advanced Placement testing for high school students.

AP courses and exams put students on the fast track to a college degree, giving them a chance to earn college credits while still in high school. Because the AP classes are more challenging than regular high school classes, students are better prepared for the requirements of college classes.

The exams are college-level tests administered by the College Board. Each test costs \$93.

Pottstown Guidance Counselor Amanda Scholwinski applied to

the Foundation for the grant after the state cut funding for the tests. The money awarded ensured more than 100 students would have the opportunity to take the test and possibly earn college credits before they enter the college of their choice. Students may take tests in one or more subject.

According to research by the College Board, students who take AP courses do better in college than those who do not. These students are 62 percent more likely to graduate from college in four years, avoiding the cost of extra semesters.

The AP exams are taken in May and students typically are given results in July.

