

P R E S S R E L E A S E

For immediate release: December 2013



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Our Annual Appeal: Why Give?

We are all careful about where and how we give to charity these days. As we conduct our annual appeal, we know that donors want to know that their money is in responsible hands and put to good use.

Donations to the Foundation for Westwood Education support programs that directly benefit a broad cross section of our community, including school age children (from kindergarten through high school), preschoolers, seniors and families. Anyone serving Westwood can apply for a grant from the Foundation to further meaningful educational opportunities here in town, and all grants are thoughtfully reviewed for the breadth of their educational impact, innovation, creativity, and organization. The range of grants that have been awarded is as wide as the imagination of the many creative applicants who have approached the Foundation for help. While a majority of grants funded do benefit the public schools, many others are geared to other constituencies entirely. From funding 3-D printers and school technology-based curricula, to health and welfare programming at the senior center, to programs that celebrate our cultural diversity, the grants requests we receive are varied and provide educational resources for our town's youngest residents, oldest residents, and virtually everyone in between.

Over the past five years, the Foundation has awarded an average of \$61,180 in grants per year. This fall, our first grant cycle resulted in nearly \$15,000 in grant requests, and more requests will be received and considered in February and April. In addition, this fall we sought to augment the community grants funded by the Foundation with three speaking events, geared to match the interests and concerns of Westwood residents. Two of these were speakers series at the Senior Center, the first covering the history of swing, and the second diving into the holidays by exploring truths and myths of Thanksgiving and the artistry of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. A presentation open to all Westwood residents was also given to tackle one of the biggest issues we all deal with daily: how do we stay calm and coping in a world with a pace set on over-drive? This presentation was given by nationally recognized and New York Times best selling author Dr. Edward Hallowell in November in our beautiful new library. Currently the Foundation is busy reviewing and monitoring grants, preparing for our next grant cycle, and getting ready for the annual elementary school spelling bee (which will be take place on January 10th).

The Foundation conducts just one annual appeal per year. This year, the appeal was made in our November newsletter. Give it a look or visit our website to learn more about us! We see ourselves as *your* educational foundation: our purpose is to serve the town, to the best of the board's ability, by providing educational opportunities that enrich us all. Please consider making a donation this year, and know that your generosity will inspire a student, support a

teacher, or brighten a senior's day! You can donate using the envelope you received, or by visiting www.foundationforwestwoodeducation.org.

If you like to take charge and have fun, you might also wish to join the energetic residents who have stepped up and offered to host their own parties - during one month each year - to benefit the Foundation by Entertaining for Education (E4E). E4E, which will take place this year in March, is a great month of friends and neighbors gathering together in an enjoyable, low-pressure way while supporting a cause our town clearly cares about: education. We are grateful for the volunteers who have hosted these events in the past, and with some services cut and other resources for schools unavailable or diminished, any support you might give through hosting such an event this year will be timely and useful! Past parties have included bunko with girl friends, costume parties, wine and cheese tastings, dinners, and a golf themed party, among many others. They have ranged in size from a dozen people to over two hundred, and each helped support our ability to award grants. Themes hosts are considering for March include March Madness, Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day. If you are interested, more information is available on our website, or contact Abby Homiller or Linda Hunter at events@foundationforwestwoodeducation.org.

Thank you for your generous support! If you would like more information about the Foundation, please visit our website at www.foundationforwestwoodeducation.org, and watch for the many exciting programs in your children's school and throughout town this year that your donations will make possible!

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