



BROOKFIELD

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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Press release

October 29, 2007



From left to right: Nancy Riddle, Kellie Martone George, Governor M. Jodi Rell, Cathy Westervelt, Michele Biondi, Allison Stone, Linda McCaffrey, Debbie Helming

Foundation Holds Successful “Wedding”

The Brookfield Education Foundation, a local funding source for educational projects that benefit Brookfield residents, held a spectacular event, *My Big Fat Brookfield Wedding*, On September 29 at the Danbury Sheraton Hotel to raise funds to support on-going and new projects.

Governor M. Jodi Rell was among the wedding party participants, along with Brookfield’s government, education and community glitterati. The “Wedding” was attended by over 200 guests who energetically bid on a myriad of silent auction items.

BEF was founded by Carol Does in early 2004. A longtime resident of Brookfield with a passion for community activism, Carol saw the progress being made by other Educational Foundations throughout Connecticut and set out to create one in Brookfield. Under her direction, the Brookfield Education Foundation seeks to identify select projects that will benefit the community and then sets out to raise the funds necessary to make these projects a reality.

BEF has a project-based philosophy, supporting educational programs and projects that bring a clear benefit to the community but are outside the scope of school and town budgets. For instance, Brookfield Education Foundation was responsible for securing a Praxair grant to purchase new computers and printers for the Brookfield Library. The Foundation's largest grant has been toward equipment for the new community digital video production studio at Brookfield High School.

The Foundation raises money by soliciting local individuals, businesses and charitable foundations. BEF identifies donors interested in funding specific projects. Since there are no administrative fees, 100% of every dollar raised goes to educating Brookfield residents.

Recently, Brookfield Education Foundation was honored by the Selectmen and the Brookfield Chamber of Commerce as an organization that helps improve the quality of life for town residents.

Major projects that have received funding from Brookfield Education Foundation include a discussion with author Mordechai Gerstein, an Anti-Defamation League workshop on tolerance, Kiwanis Key Club start-up at Brookfield High School, and matching funds for Gurski Farm blacksmith shop restoration. The Foundation is currently considering requests that will provide programs for the Senior Center.

Brookfield Education Foundation provided funds for teacher training in an innovative program, "Capturing Kids' Hearts", which instills decency and respect in the high school classroom. The program has been such a success that the Foundation is underwriting the training of additional teachers. According to social studies teacher Katie Lapham, "I cannot say enough about the Capturing Kids' Hearts program. I have used it every semester since I attended the seminar. I have noticed the atmosphere in my classroom change. Students are genuinely more kind to each other and respectful to me. They accept responsibility and consequences for their actions. Most importantly, they now have people to talk to if they need guidance."

A Mini-Grant program provides funding for small but worthwhile projects. Recent grants at Brookfield High School include QuarkXpress software for design and publishing of the school newspaper and TI-SmartView calculator emulation software for math classes. Whisconier Middle School has benefited from grants toward IRIS scanning pen for enhancing special reading instruction and a visit from the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Artist-in-Residence Program for fifth and sixth grade humanities students.

The mission of the Brookfield Education Foundation is to marshal and provide resources for lifelong learning by Brookfield residents of all ages. The Foundation welcomes inquiries and requests for grants, large or small, from any community organization that promotes projects which educate and empower residents. For more information, call Carol Dores at 775-8965 or see our website (www.brookfieldeducationfoundation.org).