

# Xtra-curricular

NEWSLETTER OF THE **SOUTH COUNTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION**



## **From the Helm**

There is no doubt that children need a supportive yet demanding environment in which to learn and thrive, to reach their full potential, and to become productive citizens of this country and the world. In order to for this to happen, our schools, teachers and community must offer high standards and enriching experiences to our children.

The South Country Education Foundation helps our teachers, community organizations and schools to offer these necessities. We support, through your generosity, exciting and valuable projects that enrich the educational experience for our students. These projects help excite students about learning, help make learning fun, teach students about themselves and broaden their experiences. All these things and more are needed to make sure that our children continue to be successful.

One of the joys of our community is in the immense talent our children have and are developing in the schools. Go to a play, a concert, a musical production, or a sporting event. Be amazed at what the children accomplish. Think of the achievements of our alumni who are leaders in every field of endeavor—science, fine arts, law, medicine, education, music and government. Our schools need our help, our support and our encouragement.

I want to thank you for your generous support in the past and I ask for your continuing support. Please use the form on the last page of this newsletter to make a tax-deductible donation to our efforts. —GENE WESTHOFF

## **Chamber Music America Grant— A Gift of Music for All!**

The Daedalus Quartet, along with the South Country Education Foundation, the Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area and the Shoreham-Wading River School District as community partners, has been awarded a three-year \$45,000 grant to bring chamber music to the Bellport community and the South Country and Shoreham-Wading River Schools.

The Quartet was founded in the summer of 2000 and one year later captured the Grand Prize of the 2001 Banff International String Quartet Competition, quickly establishing itself as among America's outstanding string quartets. It was named by Carnegie Hall to participate in the ECHO (European Concert Hall Organization) Rising Stars program making debuts during the 2004-2005 season at the nine European concert halls and at Carnegie Hall

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center appointed the Daedalus Quartet as the Chamber Music Society Two Quartet for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 seasons, leading to numerous performances at Lincoln Center. The ensemble was appointed Columbia University's Quartet-in-Residence for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 seasons as well.

This chamber music program will be an exciting addition to the school year. The Daedalus Quartet will perform interactive concerts and give master classes, coachings, lecture-demonstrations, and workshops for string students in the schools in the two districts. It will also present events for the public at large, many targeting the economically-challenged community of North Bellport.

All areas to be reached by this residency are underserved in the fine arts, particularly chamber music. The

**SCEF makes grants to not-for-profit institutions, students and professional staff in the South Country district. The grants can be given for curriculum development, educational equipment, exchange program sponsorship, fellowships, special assemblies and for guest speakers, independent study, artists in residence and creative teacher initiatives.**

**Want to apply? Visit our website at [www.scefonline.org](http://www.scefonline.org)**



Three members of the Daedalus Quartet who gave master classes at the high school this year.

Daedalus Quartet is especially concerned about this because three of its members grew up in East Patchogue and progressed through the South Country School District's public schools; they played together for the first time in Bellport High School's Baroque Ensemble. The South Country School District's constituents range from the very wealthy to the very poor; the train tracks of the Long Island Railroad forming a line of demarcation. The challenge in such an area is to find a force that unites rather than divides, and the Daedalus Quartet firmly believes that chamber music can be that unifying force. Its members are excited about the prospect of bringing chamber music, and its attending spirit of cooperation, to the community that nurtured them.

The plan for the residency grew out of the Quartet's relationship with SCEF. Since 2002, the Quartet has performed an annual fundraising concert for the Foundation to raise scholarship money for South Country music students, accompanied by a day of performing and coaching in the schools. After several years of following this format,

both the Quartet and the Foundation felt that the students and community members would be better served by a more intensive residency—one that allows the Quartet to interact repeatedly with the same students and to construct a multi-year, multi-layered program for them.

Chamber Music America has agreed with the Quartet and the Foundation and has generously funded the three-year program. The members of the Becker/Gambles Music Fund Committee will work closely with the music faculty and the quartet to make the next three years memorable.

—GENE WESTHOFF

## SUNY Music Doctoral Candidates Come to BHS

This spring, SCEF's Becker/Gambles Music Fund welcomed three SUNY Stony Brook doctoral candidates to the band, chorus and orchestra classes at Bellport High School. Soprano Mihaela Buhaiciuc, flutist Elena Yarritu and violinist Claudia Schaer performed solo pieces accom-

SUNY music doctoral candidate Claudia Schaer with violin student Ian Lundstrom in a master class at BHS this year.



panied by Sophie Patey who is also a doctoral candidate at SUNY Stony Brook.

Students were especially interested in hearing the suggested singing and playing techniques which would improve their own playing. They asked questions about the master teachers' lives and high school musical experiences. In each class, two or three students performed their NYSSMA solos. The master teacher listened, coached, and encouraged each student to give his or her best performance. They were very impressed with the high level of our students' performances.

For the past four years the South Country Education Foundation has collaborated with the Port Jefferson Arts Council to bring the SUNY Stony Brook master teachers to BHS. The positive response from our high school music teachers as well as from the students insures that the SCEF master class program will be continued. —DARYL JORDAN

**The Yale Whiffenpoofs**  
In Concert  
A Yale Tradition Since 1909

Tickets Available at the door  
Admission: \$20  
\*Free for all South Country Students

**Friday, April 20th, 2007**  
**7:30 PM**  
To Benefit  
Becker/Gambles Music Fund  
South Country Education Foundation, Inc.  
Walter Ebersole Auditorium  
Bellport High School  
205 Beaver Dam Road  
Brookhaven, NY 11719  
For More Information, Call 325-8527 or go to  
[www.scefonline.org](http://www.scefonline.org)

America's first and oldest collegiate a cappella group, The Yale Whiffenpoofs, performed a delightful program of songs on April 20th at Bellport High School. The proceeds will benefit the Becker/Gambles Music Fund Scholarship Program.

Our thanks go to BHS junior Christine Jaeger for her donation of time and talent in producing this handsome poster for the concert.

On April 20th, 2007 the Yale Whiffenpoofs came to Kreamer Street Elementary and put on a spectacular performance. Their repertoire consisted of everything from Broadway, to madrigals, to folk songs. The theatrical expressions, the entertaining movements, and the beautiful voices of these gentlemen were exquisite. The children laughed and cheered as the Whiffenpoofs sang their songs and acted out scenes that showed off their talents. I thank the South Country Education Foundation for bringing them here through the grant that was written last year, and also to the faculty, staff and students who came to see the sensational show.

—Michelle Stiriz, music teacher

Fund which gives grants to athletes from Bellport High School who will be furthering their education after graduation. We hope you will join us!

The members of the Bellport Clipper Classic Race Committee are: Mary Jane Cullen, Tom Cullen, Mary and John Denise, Karen and Bill Hughes, Lori Klamut, Marie Lena, Kathy Leone, Elaine Messina, Sara Morse, Dick Realander, Lorie Roth, Lou Scordamaglia, Jill Stewart, Spencer Stickley, Dava Stravinsky, Paula Tirelli and Diane Zanazzi

—LORI KLAMUT

## 24th Annual Bellport Clipper Classic on Sunday, July 8

The Bellport Clipper Classic Committee is looking forward to another successful race through beautiful Bellport Village. SCEF committee members anticipate many more participants in the One-Mile Kids Run which is being hosted for the second year.

Applications can be downloaded from our website [www.scefonline.org](http://www.scefonline.org) or found in the Bellport Deli, Bellport Village Hall and at the South Country Library in Bellport. Online registration is available at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com). All proceeds go to the Bellport Clipper Classic Race Scholarship

## Foundation Funds "Math Rocks!"

On Saturday, March 24th, the district held its second annual Family Math Day at Bellport High School. A grant from SCEF for \$5,600 provided workshop materials and supplies, T-shirts for the participants, custodians, and interactive performances by two educational entertainers. This year's theme was "Math Rocks—Math and Music" and all the activities were based on music. Students in grades K–5 accompanied by a family member began the day by sharpening their estimating skills, talking with members of the business community about how math is used in the everyday world and then moving on to a variety of age appropriate math workshops presented by teachers from the district. (Continued on next page)



Connie Havens (at left), who co-ordinates the district-wide Family Math Day, and Maryanne Brandi, who handled registration for this year's event, are all smiles.

(“Math Rocks” continued)

The culminating activity was music provided by our own middle school student musicians—ending with interactive performances by the professional entertainers, Patricia Shih and Lee Knight. Over three hundred students attended Family Math Day which had volunteer help from over one hundred people from all areas of the district. The efforts of the staff, volunteers and students made the day a huge success.

SCEF is proud to help sponsor Math Day for the second year and hopes the event becomes a South Country tradition. The following committee members spent countless hours in preparation and we applaud their efforts: Nicole Albrecht, Maryanne Brandi, Gary Dabrusky, Corrine Figueroa, Debbie Gurney, Connie Havens, Peggy Heotis, Kandy Kane, Matt Murphy, Kim Olsen, Sue Peters, Sue Schoppman, and Brenda Tejada. —MARY MOJALLALI

THE BENEFIT OF A SMILE

Tyler Healy, right, displays one of his prized photographs while Suzette Fandale, photography teacher at Bellport High School, looks on. The photograph was produced during a landscape photography workshop funded by a grant from SCEF and will be featured on this year's Benefit Auction invitation to the Foundation's annual fundraiser set for July 14 at the Bellport home of Richard and Chantal Berman.



This is the second year in a row that student art work, produced during workshops funded by the Foundation, has been featured on the invitation. We appreciate the creativity and generosity of our students and their teachers and thank all who have participated.

2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY, JULY 8 / CLIPPER CLASSIC

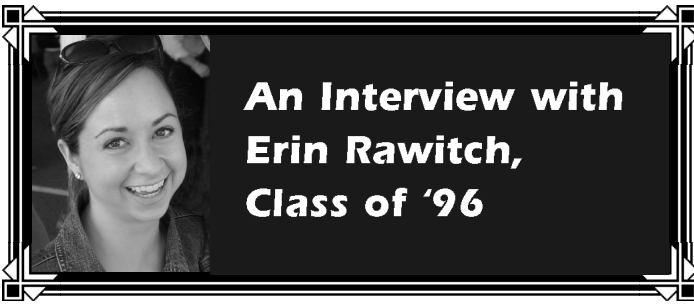
Kids One-Mile Run—5:15 pm (For students 10 years old and under)

5K Road Race and 1500M Fun Walk—5:30 pm

Contact <clipperclassic@scefonline.org>

SATURDAY, JULY 14 / Annual Cocktail Party and Auction Call 286-3760

LATE SUMMER / Fall Grants Information is available at www.scefonline.org



**Erin Sribnick Rawitch** is the driving force behind the popular new website [www.bellport.com](http://www.bellport.com). She is a 1996 graduate of Bellport High School and lives in Los Angeles with her husband Josh. (This interview has been edited for length. The full interview can be read on our website [www.scefonline.org](http://www.scefonline.org) <<http://www.scefonline.org>> under "Alumni Association/Alumni Focus")

g What is your most vivid memory of Bellport High School?

My most vivid memories of Bellport High School involve the work that I did for the Key Club. One of my favorite Key Club activities was volunteering at a weekly soup kitchen. The people that we worked with and served were incredible and it was great to know that we were really making an impact on the community!

g What was your favorite class?

My favorite class was an Economics class I took my Senior year taught by Mr. Melo. That class first introduced me to the world of "business" and was one of the reasons why I decided to go on to be a Business major in college at Indiana University. Mr. Melo was an amazing teacher—tough, yet he really cared about his students.

g What are some of your more recent activities?

After graduating from Bellport, I went to college at Indiana University, which really was the quintessential college experience; a large university in a small college town with sports, academics and a huge student activities presence. It was probably the single best decision that I've ever made. I met people from all over the country, got a great education and a received a well-respected Marketing degree.

I spent the first few years after college graduation working as a retail sales planner in California. While I loved working in the fashion industry, my job was highly analytical and I missed being creative.

It was about that time that the idea for Bellport.com came along. My father had the foresight to buy the domain name more than ten years ago with the thought of someday creating a website like Bellport.com. I had taken web design classes in college as requirements for my major, so I had a

reasonable understanding of web design. Our goal was to create a site that showcased the positive aspects of the Bellport area, including the schools, local organizations and the local businesses. There are a lot of great things about Bellport that unfortunately people just don't hear about. Our goal was to get the word out! We started the site on November 1, 2005 and now, a year and a half later, we average 15,000 visits per month and we're still growing!

Bellport.com is a family-run operation, which it needs to be in order to function with our current geographic situation. I still live in California with my husband, Josh, who is the Director of Public Relations for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Unless the Dodgers decide to move back to Brooklyn, it looks like we're staying put in L.A. for now. The beauty of the internet is that I don't physically have to be in Bellport to work on Bellport.com, which means that all I need is my computer and a good internet connection to be all set.

g How did going to Bellport High School prepare you for your life and profession?

Bellport High School taught me a lot about diversity and how there's room for everyone in this world. After going to school in the Midwest, I realized how there are large parts of this country where communities are not diverse. It made me appreciate even more my early exposure to different races and religions.

g What is your advice for BHS students?

I actually have three pieces of advice:

1. If you have the opportunity to go to college, and if at all possible, I would strongly suggest that you go away to school. You'll meet people who have had different life experiences and can teach you what they know. My best friends in college were from all over the country and my husband, whom I met in college, was from California. I never would have met any of them if I hadn't decided to try something new.

2. Learning is ALWAYS a good thing. I guarantee that you are either taking classes right now or will take classes in college that you think you will never, ever use in real life. While you might be right, you might also be very wrong. I never would have guessed that those web design classes that I took in college would ultimately guide my career, but they did.

3. Don't ever be afraid to change your mind. I never planned to go from doing profit analysis for retail companies to designing websites. It seemed like the most agonizing decision at the time to go from what I knew to the great unknown; but looking back, I was twenty-four at the time—I really couldn't make any mistakes.

## Kayak Building

SCEF has supported the local Carmans River Maritime Center with grants that allow teams of parents and children to work together to build kayaks. For the past three years twenty such teams have built kayaks under the supervision and guidance of the volunteers at the Center.

The young people are students in the South Country Schools, all from Bellport Middle and High Schools. During the thirteen Saturday programs, the team members work together and build single-person kayaks which are taken home at the end of the program. The design of the program is to bring parents and children together in an effort in which neither is an expert, to foster a good working relationship between them, to teach basic woodworking skills and to apply basic mathematics in a real setting.

During the past year, six teams completed the program and built beautiful kayaks. Some have already used them. All participants will be invited to the annual boat builders' festival in July sponsored by the Camans River Maritime Center, for informal racing, games and just some paddling around.

—GENE WESTHOFF



Putting together parts for the kayaks.

## SCEF AWARDS \$20,231 IN SPRING GRANTS

The South Country Education Foundation, Inc. board of directors awarded grants to ten applicants this spring. The successful applicants will use the funds to finance programs such as one aimed at rewarding academic achievement, several centered on new health and fitness initiatives and a popular gardening program for fourth and fifth graders. We appreciate the generosity of our donors who through their gifts of time, talents and financial contributions make all of these grants possible.

### **Small Learning Communities Celebration Breakfast, \$1,600**

*Wayne White  
Bellport High School*

SCEF will split the cost of four Celebration Breakfasts with the Knapp-Swezey Foundation. The breakfasts are run by the Small Learning Communities Program at Bellport High School and designed to help student academic success through recognition and awards. This program focuses on 9th and 10th graders. Small Learning Communities, which partially stems from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, involves teams of 9th and 10th grade teachers who work with students as they address academic and social problems involved in the transition from middle school to high school.

### **Project Adventure, \$2,173.60**

*Bellport Middle School Shared  
Decision Making Team*

The Foundation is paying for the purchase of a 24' x 8' climbing wall kit and a mat locking system to expand the Project Adventure program at the Middle School. Project Adventure is a physical education curriculum that allows students to gain an increased level of agility and coordination while bolstering the individual's self esteem. This physical education series is conducted in an environment that fosters mutual student support.

**Subscription to Brain POP and Brain POP Jr., \$2,652.17**

*Aimee Volk  
Frank P. Long  
Intermediate School*

This grant provides a year-long internet subscription to Brain POP and Brain POP Jr., internet sites that provide curriculum-based content spanning many academic subjects including Science, Math, English, Social Studies, Health, Art and Music and Technology. Students will be assigned a password and will be able to access the site from school and at home. The program is for students at the Frank P. Long Intermediate School as well as all three elementary schools in the district.

**Boys & Girls Club Steel Drum Band, \$3,000.00**

*Boys & Girls Club of the Bellport Area, John Norris, Executive Director*

This is a renewal of a grant given the past few years to the Steel Drum Band. The band, which has delighted local audiences with its calypso beat, consists of 16 members of the Boys & Girls Club ages five to 18. The grant helps in the purchase and maintenance of equipment, uniforms and the services of a part-time instructor as the band plans for the Panorama Caribbean Music Fest in May 2008.

**Boys & Girls Club Power Hour, \$3,000.00**

*Boys & Girls Club of the Bellport Area, John Norris, Executive Director*

The Foundation will fund a homework assistance program designed to increase the academic proficiency of participants between the ages of 6 and 18. This program is held Monday to Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. Power Hour was begun in 2003 with support from the foundation.

**Dance Dance Revolution at Frank P. Long, \$3,000.00**

*Alfred Nolan, Frank P. Long  
Intermediate School*

Dance Dance Revolution is an alternative to traditional exercise and will be incorporated into the Physical Education Program at Frank P. Long Intermediate School. The grant will be used to the purchase a complete school-grade dance system which includes a PlayStation 2 System, electronic platforms, practice pads and software.

**Wellness/Weight Training Program, \$650.00**

*Peter Grossi  
Bellport High School*

The grant originator is asking to purchase materials and equipment to implement a wellness/weight training program. The program integrates wellness and weight training programs concepts that students can use while participating in school athletic programs. The program will teach students to monitor their body fat composition, blood pressure as well as their weight as they grow in understanding the factors that contribute to wellness.

**Woodworkers Club, \$1,500.00**

*Peter Cisek, Frank P. Long  
Intermediate School*

The Woodworkers Club at Frank P. Long Intermediate School is receiving a renewal of its grant. Members of the club learn important measurement skills, safety procedures, how to follow explicit sets of directions and design and the uses of hard and soft woods. Students meet before the beginning of the school day for this popular program.

**Garden Club, \$1,450.00**

*Peter Cisek, Frank P. Long  
Intermediate School*

The Garden Club at the Frank P. Long Intermediate School is receiving a renewal of its grant. The club is involved in the fall planting of mums, Halloween and Thanksgiving displays and the maintenance of existing gardens in the school court yard. The club is also planning to expand the gardens.

**P.E. Safety Town, \$1,206.00**

*Sean T. Chavious  
Brookhaven Elementary School*

Safety Town is an activity to teach the rules of the road to children in all district elementary schools. The rules are taught in an imaginary town set up in the school gymnasium. The grant is for the purchase of materials need to construct the town which will include a post office, parking lot, gas station, train station and tracks and a school bus. Students will learn to interpret the rules of the road as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.



South Country Education Foundation, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 512, Bellport, New York 11713-1502

**SCEF Mission Statement:**

*The South Country Education Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to improving educational opportunities for all students in the South Country School District. Its mission is to promote and enhance educational initiatives by providing supplemental financial support for projects and programs that are outside of the South Country School District budget.*

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