

# Xtra-curricular

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Spring 2023

## FROM THE HELM

Yikes! It has been 25 years since the South Country Education Foundation, Inc. was conceived and began its work of enhancing and enriching the academic experience of students in South Country Central School District. It seems like a good moment to review the history of the event.

The auction, now a local summer tradition, was added the second year of SCEF's existence and held for four years at my home in Bellport followed by one year at the Masback home on Bellport Bay and then 19(!) years at the home of Chantal and Richard Berman. What is striking about our history is the constancy and always growing support in the community.

We knew we had made a significant impact when the late Hugh Brown of Brookhaven made a \$50,000 bequest to SCEF several years ago. People were thinking about us, wanting to help.

To achieve this type of connection to the community we have put out this newsletter, *Extracurricular*, at least once a year. It serves to remind and inform our community of the work we do year round. It surprises and pleases us that each newsletter results in several thousand dollars in donations. Thank you!

The generosity of the community made it possible to fund larger projects such as a grant of \$11,483 so that all Fifth Graders could visit the Long Island Aquarium this

spring. (Please look at thank you note on page 4 from Scarlet Foissett.) Trips and events of similar magnitude have also been funded. So far this school year, SCEF awarded more than \$60,000 to programs including field trips, music endeavors, reading programs and professional development for teachers.



The foundation was conceived by Tom Williams, the late Art Cooley and Bill Griffith, then principal of Bellport High School. Tom Williams was the first president followed by Art Cooley, Dava Stravinsky, Gene Westoff, Mary Mojalalli and Frank Lento, a vaulted list of locals devoted to community service.

We attribute our success largely to the personal connection between our supporters and the community. Many, myself included, are products of a South Country education. Others have children in school now or in past years. All are proponents of public education and see the promise it holds when backed by a supportive community.

The world can be a crazy place. Our supporters take comfort in knowing they can make a difference in how things work out, one classroom at a time.

– Robin Young Roe



**SAVE THE DATE**

**25TH AUCTION AND COCKTAIL PARTY**

**Saturday, July 8, 5 p.m.**

**40 Academy Lane, Bellport, NY**

## WANT TO DONATE?

We hope supporters will consider the SCEF as they plan their annual gifts. Donations may be sent to SCEF, PO Box 512, Bellport, NY 11713. Donations may also be processed at our website **SCEFONLINE.ORG**

## MARTIN LUTHER KING SCHOLARSHIP FUND

SCEF administers several special funds including one for the Martin Luther King scholarship. Nancy Marr, a member of our board, describes this fund below.

In 1968, when the assassination of Dr. King horrified many of our community residents, a scholarship fund for high school graduates was created in his honor. Since then, the funds have been contributed by members of the Bellport area community to fund advanced study to students based on academic performance, community service and financial need. The hope is to encourage students --particularly those who represent the first in their family to go to college -- to go on to advanced study.

Those who would like a portion of their giving to go to this scholarship can note this with their donation.



## BECKER-GAMBLES MUSIC FUND

For over 20 years, the Becker/Gambles Music Fund has enhanced the music education of students in the South Country school district. Founded in 2002, the fund's name honors two longtime local supporters of music education, retired Superintendent of Schools Arthur Becker whose donation served as seed money for our efforts and Mary Gambles an active community leader who supported children's music lessons and also began a valued community day care center. Through the years the Becker/Gambles Music Fund has worked with the district's music staff to provide music enrichment opportunities in a variety of ways. We have maintained a robust music scholarship program providing music lessons to deserving students entering grades 5-12 in the areas of band, orchestra and voice each summer. Prior to the pandemic, we sent numerous high school students to a variety of music camps throughout New York State and beyond to study in a pre-college atmosphere. We hope to resume this aspect of our scholarships once those programs return to full function.

This year marks our 7th summer music program, a weeklong performance opportunity for district students in grades 5-12. During this week, students participate in band and orchestra rehearsals, group projects such as world drumming and combined philharmonic ensemble. The week culminates with a performance in the Bellport High School auditorium for family and friends. We also fund tuition for this experience for a student who cannot afford the cost of attendance.

We also accept donations of musical instruments of all types for use in our schools. These donated instruments are evaluated, cleaned and refurbished if necessary and made available to students who need them.

One way we raise funds for these efforts is by holding concerts for the public. Often these professional musicians also give master classes or assemblies in the schools for the benefit of our students. Over the years, we have held private home concerts with musical ensembles, piano and voice recitals in local churches, and jazz performances. We also accept donations from supporters of music education. If you would like to donate to our efforts, please send a check to the South Country Education Foundation with "Becker/Gambles Music Fund" in the memo line. We appreciate your support.

The current Becker/Gambles Music Fund committee members are Chantal Berman, Deb Birnbaum, Victoria Hartman, chair of the South Country School District's music department, Daryl Jordan, Nancy Marr, Dava Stravinsky and Jim Uzzi.

*Students rehearsing during the 2022 Becker/Gambles summer music program at Bellport High School. This summer's weeklong performance opportunity for South Country band and orchestra students entering grades 5 to 12 will take place on August 7-11, 2023. For more information, call Victoria Hartman at 631-730-1622 or email, [southcountrysummertime@gmail.com](mailto:southcountrysummertime@gmail.com)*





# 2023 WINTER GRANT CYCLE AWARDS

We are awarding over \$12,000 in grants in this grant cycle.  
Twenty five years of community giving and going strong!

## #1. FIELD TRIP TO WATCH HILL

Emily Dis, Carolyn Kelly, Shelly Tooker,  
Heather Nolan

Verne W. Critz Elementary School • \$1,420.06

Funding requested for this grant is for 1st graders to take a field trip to Watch Hill. While there, students will explore Long Island barrier beaches, native plants, marine life and Long Island salt marshes. This is a unit of study that aligns with the first grade learning standards: Learning About Plant and Animal Defenses.

## #2. PLAYAWAYS

Trish Gallina • Frank P. Long Intermediate School  
\$886.34

The applicant for this grant is a fifth grade inclusion teacher at FPL Intermediate School. Students are reading at different levels and paces. Playaways will offer the opportunity for all 22 students to read any level book at their own pace while reading along with the book in hand. Having used Playaways for years, the teacher has witnessed how they can actually transform a reluctant reader into a confident, joyful one.

## #3. LONG ISLAND AQUATIC LIFE AND WONDERFUL WETLANDS FIELD TRIP

Donna Cimino, Christine McMahon,  
Melissa Satterly, Ashley Sagistano

Verne W. Critz Elementary School • \$1,388.00

This grant is for second grade students to experience a “hands on” interactive field trip to the Long Island Aquarium. The students will get a behind the scene tour and attend an educational program called, “Wonderful Wetlands.” This is an opportunity for many of the children to visit an aquarium for the first time. This experience will be a fun and educational way to connect what the children are learning in science, to their local community.

## #4. CEED-WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Dr. Sally Wellinger, CEED Exec. Director • \$2,000

The applicant is requesting the funding for 8 programs @\$250 each (a discounted amount from their typical fee of \$450.) This would be for teachers to book a workshop, presentation, or field trip for one class each, to enrich the science curriculum in the South Country schools. Teachers booking for the first time would be given preference. \*\*Funding for busing is not part of this grant.

## #5. LONG ISLAND AQUATIC LIFE AND WONDERFUL WETLANDS

Melissa Fels, Jill DeRosa

Verne Critz Elementary School • \$1,224.89

This field trip will provide students at Verne Critz Elementary School the opportunity to experience local marine life as well as attend a program that speaks to the value of the wetlands. This topic also aligns with the curriculum about ecosystems. Funding includes the admission to the LI Aquarium as well as busing for 37 students.

## #6. A FARM ADVENTURE

Sarah Rauch • Verne Critz Elementary School • \$833.28

Five kindergarten classes from Verne Critz Elementary School will visit the Cornell Suffolk County Farm to experience a local farm in our community and learn about a variety of farm animals. This field trip is aligned with the curriculum about living things. Busing included in the field trip.

## #7. OCEANOGRAPHY; EXPLORE THE WATERS AROUND US

Jennifer Cannone and Erica Watson

Verne Critz Elementary School • \$1,733.03

Funding will provide the opportunity for 3rd grade students at Verne Critz Elementary School to take a field trip to a charter fishing boat out of Captree. They will work with a marine biologist to discover the ocean habitat that surrounds Long Island.

## #8. OCEANOGRAPHY; EXPLORE THE WATERS AROUND US

Alissa Connell and Ashley Sagistano

Verne Critz Elementary School • \$1,915.03

Funding will provide the opportunity for 3rd grade students at Verne Critz Elementary School to take a field trip to a charter fishing boat out of Captree. They will work with a marine biologist to discover the ocean habitat that surrounds Long Island.

## #9. TEACHING TOLERANCE THROUGH REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTION

Ellen Hoffman • Bellport High School • \$375

Ellen teaches an Honors English class at the High School and is planning a unit of study on the Holocaust. The students have all read The Book Thief and she has applied for \$375 to pay for a trip to the Nassau County Holocaust Memorial Tolerance Center for them. It will culminate in a project where the students will do research in different aspects of the issue based on their areas of interest. They will have a choice of presentation methods including interviews, Google Sites, artwork, or video of presentation methods including interviews, Google Sites, artwork, or video. The objective of the

project is to provide the students with a background in the wellknown aspects of the Holocaust and also the opportunity to speak with a survivor or second generation speaker, hoping to spark classroom discussion and thoughts about how this can relate to their lives and the role it can play. Ms. Hoffman will grade the student's end projects, but students will be evaluating each other with a rubric, as well.

## #10. GET WILD ABOUT READING

Jennifer Rosario and Kreamer Street PTA  
Kreamer Street, 300 students • \$1,000

This is a program by the Kreamer Street PTA called "Get Wild About Reading." A week-long event, it incorporates daily reading at home by children, and is accompanied by a schoolwide assembly, posters and banners displayed through the building. By supplying books for parents, it hopes to encourage parents and children to read together at home and show that reading can be fun. It can develop and improve family communication and bring parents and children closer together, and can provide parents with information to help their children become better readers. If the students complete a reading log they will receive an ice cream treat. The program will be evaluated by the school principal, teachers, and PTA members.

## #11. HEATING UP LEARNING IN THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

Shannon Kulick • Frank P. Long School • \$1,999

Ms. Kulick, Librarian at Frank P. Long School, is requesting \$1,999 to purchase a Makerbot 3D Sketch Bundle (including two printers) for use by teachers and students in the media center. Prior to making the request Ms. Kulick borrowed an older Makerbot 3D printer from BOCES, and made it available to the teachers and students for a number of years for demonstration purposes. Due to its success, this year she offered four 5th grade teachers the opportunity to have their students try designing and printing for the first time. Because

of the age of the borrowed printer, it couldn't print most of the more detailed designs, but it did allow the students to design and print, and troubleshoot when there was a problem. There are many ways in which 3D printing can be incorporated into the fourth and fifth grade curriculum that will help students become creators, work on solving problems, be self-directed and work with a diverse group of students and learn to value equal participation from all team members. If the students are allowed to be printed, pictures of them and their designs will be sent to the district for publication. The project will be evaluated by the students. They will be surveyed toward the end of the school year; they and the teachers are surveyed each year about what they would like to see in the media center.

## #12. BROOKVILLE ADVENTURE EDUCATION Lindsay Fritch • Bellport Middle and Bellport High School \$1,474 (\$504) for bus, and \$970

The program will be led by the Restorative Coaches in our South Country District Restorative Practice. They have been meeting with students who have been flagged as being "at risk" due to behavior or attendance concerns. The coaches work with them to help them develop social-emotional competencies (self-awareness and regulation, self-advocacy, empathy, and problem-solving skills). They will take the 30 students to the Brookville Outdoor and Environmental Center to take part in challenge course activities, field activities, and an initiative course program that is designed to help the students instill self-confidence and a positive self-image. The project will be documented through pictures of student participation. Project documentaries will come from student reflections to be completed after the trip. The program will be evaluated by the Restorative coaches who will review individual student data to evaluate the project's impact. The Coaches will assist the students in reflecting on the experience and how it relates to day-to-day life.

## Scarlet says "Thank You!!"

"Dear S.C.E.F. –

*Thank you for taking us to the Long Island aquarium. It was VERY fun and we all had a blast. I think you should get more squids and octopi. Because they are my favorite animals. I had a really fun time there and I hope to go there again some day.*

Sincerely,  
Scarlet Foissett"





# EARLY DAYS OF SCEF

The names of people serving as president of the education foundation are all familiar community names exemplifying the grassroots nature of this organization.

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**FRANK LENTO**

**SOUTH COUNTRY  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION, INC.  
P.O. BOX 512  
BELLPORT, NEW YORK 11713-1502**

*The foundation is a non-profit  
501(c)3 organization committed  
to improving opportunities for all  
students in the South Country  
School District. Its mission is to  
promote educational initiatives  
by providing supplemental  
financial support for projects  
and programs that fall outside  
of the District budget.*

**HELP US INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN**

**WWW.SCEFONLINE.ORG**

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**APPEAL NEWSLETTER**

Samantha Fassman, Robin Young Roe & Diane Zanazzi, *Editors*

Searles Graphics, *Production and Printer*  
Title and text design by Barbara D. Knowles

**WE CANNOT REACH OUR GOALS  
WITHOUT YOUR HELP!**

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