



## Rockland Education Foundation

### *This coming year brings many changes*

to the Rockland Public Schools. Dr. Alan Cron, former Rockland High School Principal, has been appointed Superintendent of Schools following the retirement of Superintendent John Retchless. Assuming the leadership role at Rockland High School is John Harrison, who comes to us from the Dighton-Rehoboth School District. We wish them both well in their new positions and look forward to an exciting year of discovery and learning. One thing that HAS NOT changed, however, is the Rockland Education Foundation's commitment to Rockland teachers and administrators. Since the Foundation was created in 1996, over \$500,000 has been awarded in the form of grants to facilitate programs and provide services to students in the Rockland Public Schools. Money raised through donations, an annual golf tournament, and corporate and individual sponsorships provides the means to bring the staffs' ideas to fruition, and goes above and beyond what can be provided through the regular school budget. Last year alone, over \$44,000 was distributed to the staff in all schools at all levels.

*The following is a brief summary of those grants and the impact they had on the students of the Rockland Public Schools.*

**MARY MORGAN**, Early Childhood Coordinator, along with preschool teachers **ELISA REINBOLD**, **MAUREEN BARRETT**, **HEATHER MACDONALD**, and **JENNIFER ROBACK**, submitted a grant which enabled them to purchase books and materials to create **Take Home Literacy Bags** for preschool students. These bags were taken home weekly and provided parents/guardians the tools to build comprehension skills. This grant also allowed for the purchase of books to expand the family resource library located in the preschool hallway.

Kudos to Esten School teacher **KATHLEEN FERRY** for bringing **In House Field Trips** to second grade students. From High Tech/High Touch they learned about simple machines, solids, liquids and gases.

Also at Esten School **CAROL HOCKING**, Special Needs Teacher, provided **Sensory Tool Kits** which she made available to classroom teachers to access, as needed, for those students struggling with sensory issues. Those students who had trouble settling down, focusing, or staying alert oftentimes requested these tools to manage their own sensory needs.

**MARABETH LAWRENCE**, Speech and Language Pathologist, received a grant for a **Story Grammar Marker Program**. Using this system, students were able to identify and retell parts of a story.

Esten first grade teachers **KAITLYN JUFFRE**, **DARCIE MACDONALD**, **JULIE MCDONNELL**, and **ANGELA SULMONTE** provided **Dinner Books for First Graders**. These books were kept in the children's book bins at all times for easy accessibility. Geared to their independent reading level, they gave them confidence to practice reading skills.

**MS. MCDONNELL** was also awarded a grant entitled **Leveled Books for Little Learners**. With newly purchased books, students read with their teachers during guided reading time resulting in increased fluency and comprehension.

**JEFFREY POPADIC**, Elementary Music Teacher, introduced **African Drumming/Drum Circles** to Esten School students. Six tubano drums were utilized by all students during music classes. In addition, those students who were non-verbal and/or had physical issues were able to use the drums to express themselves rhythmically and gain confidence.

At Jefferson School, Kindergarten teacher **KRISTINA JOSSELYN** submitted a grant asking for five **Mini iPads for Kindergarten** students. Her grant was funded, and, when members of the Rockland Education Foundation saw these iPads in action, and the benefit they had in the learning process, the grant was extended to include providing five iPads in all of the Kindergarten classrooms for a total of thirty-five iPads. Lessons on how to properly care for the technology taught respect and responsibility, and, as the students became more familiar with them, they were integrated into literacy and math lessons during center time.

**JESSICA KITCHEN** was **Reinforcing and Enriching Mathematical Concepts with Technology** in grades three and four by providing those students with on-line IXL student math accounts. The one year subscription has proven to motivate and engage students, and its alignment with the Common Core, level of applications, and feedback for students set it apart from other on-line programs.

**KAREN MACKINNON**, District Literacy Coach, offered **Guided Reading - An Instructional Approach** that Makes a Difference to make a difference in first, second, and third grade classrooms. The Schloastic Short Read Kits she was able to purchase helped teachers in the instruction of guided reading groups using short text as required for PARCC testing. The wide variety of reading materials exposed students the many types of writing outlined in the Common Core.

**LAUREN PARKER**, Speech Pathologist, encouraged her students to **Take It! Rock It!** This interactive music-based language program improved oral language skills in students from Kindergarten to grade four using music, audio, video, and hands-on materials to target all areas of communication. Compatible with SMART boards, laptops and iPads, the target areas of speech articulation, grammar, sentence structure, reading, writing and storytelling were addressed on multiple devices.



First year Principal **MICHELLE SCHEUFELE** took advantage of all the Rockland Education Foundation had to offer by receiving multiple grants for her school. She was able to **MAXimize Learning in K-2** by subscribing to Moby Max, a motivating on-line program reinforcing concepts in Reading, Math, Vocabulary, Science and Social Studies. The subscription was extended school-wide, so students in all grade levels were able to benefit. **MRS. SCHEUFELE** also let it be known that **Engineering is Elementary** using Lego engineering materials in an after-school program. This program was attended by over one hundred students in grades K-4. Students learned to work cooperatively with their classmates, to create structures and displays, and, in the case of the older students, write descriptively about their creations. Thanks to **PRINCIPAL SCHEUFELE'S Pedaling to Perseverance** grant award, students were using exercise bicycles located in "cool-down spots" to help them regain attention and focus throughout the day.

Grade three teacher **KATHY SULLIVAN** purchased **Bilingual Books** in an effort to help her Portuguese speaking students acquire the English language through vocabulary and story construction. Bilingual books allowed for partner reading and created a sense of community as a result.

Memorial Park teachers were busy last year as well. **MICHELE BISSONNETTE**, along with **MARIA COVENEY**, **JENNA SULLIVAN** and **HANNAH NASH**, offered a **Snuggle Up and Read Night** to first and second grade students and their families. Sitting on blankets and snuggling with pillows, those attending listened to stories from several readers. Each child was given a book to take home in an effort to encourage building home libraries and promoting lifelong reading.



**MARIA COVENEY**, together with second grade teachers **MICHELE BISSONNETTE** and **JENNA SULLIVAN**, brought the Boston Museum of Science *Digging for Information* program to their second graders. Together with parent guests, they learned about dinosaurs and fossils through hands-on activities and an animated presentation. Students then wrote their own narrative describing what they learned.

Grade four teacher **KELSEY HOLBROOK** purchased TigTag elementary science video subscriptions for grade four teachers in each elementary school as a result of her grant *District-Wide Grade 4 Science Online Resources*. Complete with worksheets, images, quizzes, and diagrams, this program has over six hundred videos with footage from NASA, CBS, the BBC, and other sources. This was a collaborative effort to bring the science curriculum in line with the new Next Generation Science Standards.

**KAREN MACKINNON**, District Literacy Coach, purchased *Leveled text - A Must for Successful Guided Reading* to be used district-wide. The purchase of these instructional leveled texts allowed teachers to create groups based on individual needs and abilities. Reading these books in small groups allowed teachers to identify students with reading challenges and move them towards more independent reading.

**KRISTINA ORTLOFF** brought *Fourth Grade IXL* to her students at Memorial Park School. This math website was used both in school and at home, and allowed families to see what their children were learning in school. Teachers were also able to track student progress and identify areas of concern. This user-friendly site was a favorite of the students as evidenced by the following comments: "I like going on IXL because I can move at my own pace and challenge myself." Another wrote: "IXL is a great way to practice skills I know I need help with. I really like the explanations they give when I get a question wrong."

Last, but certainly not least, second grade teachers **JENNA SULLIVAN**, **MICHELE BISSONNETTE**, and **MARIA COVENEY** had *Rocking Readers with Raz-Kids* in their classrooms. Students had books read to them electronically and also had the opportunity to record themselves reading, which increased their fluency, comprehension and self-confidence. This on-line program was particularly helpful to their ELL (English Language Learner) students enabling them to practice their reading skills both in school and at home. Seventh and eighth grade students at John W. Rogers Middle School participated in an *Upper Middle School History Fair* thanks to teacher **JOAN COSTELLO**. Students worked for three weeks to create writing portfolios, models and tri folds for their peers, faculty and community to enjoy. Visitors were encouraged to cast their ballots for "viewers' choice" awards. To quote **MS. COSTELLO**: "With the

additions made possible by the grant from the Rockland Education Foundation, the future of the Upper Middle School History Fair looks as bright as the future of its young participants."

Fifth grade teachers **SUSAN LONERGAN** and **TERRI WALSH** were *Bridging the ESL Gap* by providing dictionaries and reading books to assist struggling English Language Learners.



**BRAINPOP ESL** was another of **MRS. LONERGAN'S** grants and it allowed ESL students the opportunity to participate in the BrainPop interactive computer site available to all students, but in the language native to the ESL students. Working collaboratively with the other students, they were able to follow along in the lessons and thus were able to accelerate their grasp of the English language.

**MRS. LONERGAN** also made *JogNog for All* available to all students in grades five-eight. This online, science-based site was used in all science classes weekly. It allowed students to visualize concepts in more than one situation, and it is credited with improving testing scores.

accompanying, they introduced the creative process of making Jazz music.

The event was filmed and played on local channels to reach a wide and varied audience.

At Rockland High School, **ANGELA ARMSTRONG**, science teacher and RHS Environmental Club Advisor, submitted a grant entitled *Rockland High School Garden and Compost Program*. This grant award enabled students to build a compost bin and start a garden to learn organic and sustainable gardening practices. They hope to grow herbs to be used for cooking in the school's Grille, and also to recycle the cafeteria's food waste in their compost pile. This project was part of a national award, and was written up in the *Boston Globe*.

In an effort to promote reading in our technological age, RHS English Department Chair **CAROL CAHILL** facilitated *Literature Circles and Classroom Libraries*. Multiple copies of various books were purchased that were of a genre interesting and relevant to the students. Student groups read the same book, and, upon completion, they would assume different roles in the ensuing discussion such as Summarizer, Travel Tracker, Illustrator, Discussion Director, etc. The list of library sign-outs recorded as a result of these discussions and book additions were a testament to the program's success.

RHS Social Work Department Head **FREEA LEAHY**, along with social workers **LAWRIE DONOVAN**, **LAUREN DONOVAN**,

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There is *Water All Around Us* and **MRS. LONERGAN**, working with the North/South River Water program, showed students the need for water bans, differences in water taste, and the impact of erosion and contamination. Students made a connection to their summer reading selection *A Long Walk to Water*, and visited the water plant in Pembroke for a tour of the facility.

**PATRICIA NETTO**, middle school SPED teacher, purchased *Two Adult Tricycles For Adaptive Physical Education* for her special needs students which made it possible for young adults with physical disabilities to enjoy this therapeutic activity. Balance, endurance, and self-esteem were just a few of the benefits this equipment afforded the students.

Music Teacher **JOHN PIAZZA JR.** brought a *Gary Smulyan Clinic* to the Rockland Public Schools. Six time Grammy award winner Gary Smulyan performed in the Rockland High School lecture hall with the Kenny Hadley Trio. With Mr. Piazza and Dr. Alan Cron

**JEFFREY GORE** and **DENI HOWLEY** were part of *The Stress Free Student Project*. Therapeutic tools were purchased to help reduce stress and improve students' coping skills. They have been successful in improving concentration and de-escalating crisis situations.

*From Kindergarten to high school, from dinosaurs to iPads, Rockland Public School students are studying the past, with the tools of the future. The Rockland Education Foundation is proud to be a partner in this educational journey and applauds the administrators and teachers who have gone the extra mile to prepare, submit and execute these grants.*