



To protect and enrich quality  
public education in Claremont

# CEF News

Claremont Educational Foundation



## A Message from the CEF President

New beginnings. Fresh starts. The anticipation of great things to come. The commencement of a new school year offers a host of opportunities. It is as true for the children in our schools as it is for us as community members.

This September, the Claremont Educational Foundation (CEF) presented the Claremont Unified School District with a check for \$100,000.00 to support art and music education in our elementary schools and technology at our secondary schools. This gift was made possible due to the contributions from people in our community who share our vision of protecting and enriching public education in Claremont. It's a wonderful start, but we can do better. We **need** to do better because our already under-funded schools will continue to face budget cuts by the state for the foreseeable future.

Educational foundations across the state share our mission of helping to bridge the gap between the needs of our schools and the funding they receive. Please join us in this opportunity. These are our community schools and they need their community's support.

Thank you!  
*Jessica Marchant*  
Jessica Marchant

## CEF Grants Two \$1000 Scholarships

*Congratulations to Katie Frazer and Katrina Shore, CHS 2008 graduates and winners of CEF's Teddie Warner Community Outreach Scholarship and David L. Rose Instrumental Music Scholarship, respectively.*

Katie is an exceptional young lady who has demonstrated years of leadership at Claremont High School and years of dedication to helping others and making a difference. Katie organized six blood drives at the high school that generated 780 pints of blood. She also spearheaded the high school's Relay for Life team for three years. Her teams brought in more than \$26,000 for cancer research. She also organized Pennies for Patients at CHS as well as six dances, whose proceeds

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## Seen this around town?

This van is one of two 8-passenger vehicles that CEF, along with CUSD, purchased for Claremont High School in 2008. These vans are used to transport small school groups to various activities such as sporting events, speech & debate meets and field trips.

were donated to various charitable organizations. Outside of CHS, Katie has been an active member of the National Charity League for six years. She donated at least 30 hours per year of her time to organizations such as the Foothill Family Shelter, the American Red Cross and through tutoring at the elementary school level. Katie has demonstrated leadership, academic excellence and dedication to community service; all while playing varsity athletics throughout her four years at CHS. CEF is proud to honor Katie Frazer for her outstanding community service!

Katrina is a talented and dedicated musician. Her musical career began at the Claremont Community School of Music in the fifth grade. While she began as a piano player, she played clarinet for the high school and has performed in the CHS Jazz Band, CHS Jazz Combo and the CHS Percussion Ensemble. Her experience and leadership skills landed her the position of Pit Captain of the marching band and percussion ensemble. She also led the CHS Jazz Combo; a group that has shown immense growth over the last year due to her curiosity and passion for music. Katrina's talent has opened up many exciting doors for her future. She was accepted at three prestigious universities with musical scholarships and plans to attend Lawrence University this fall. CEF is proud to honor Katrina Shore for her outstanding musical talents!

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## 2008-2009 Annual Campaign Kick-Off

CEF will hold its annual campaign kick-off party at the beautiful Claremont home of Dr. Ivan and Beth Misner on Friday, Nov. 21, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. We invite you to join us for cocktails and appetizers, as we discuss all the exciting things happening in our district, and the various ways in which you can help to protect and enrich public education in Claremont. Please RSVP to (909) 399-1709 or [claremontedfdtn@yahoo.com](mailto:claremontedfdtn@yahoo.com), as space is limited.

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## Claremont Unified School District Educational Technology Plan

*The following articles were submitted by Dr. Dave Cash, CUSD Superintendent. These articles are meant to educate the Claremont community on the districts technology plan, as well as our current status as a "low wealth" district.*

### **Plan Development:**

The State requires school districts to develop or revise their District Technology Plan every three years and review the plan every year for benchmark achievement. Last year a committee composed of teachers, classified staff, administrators, parents and a student totally updated the previous District Technology Plan. The committee reviewed articles, student and teacher National and State technology standards, current and future hardware and software and District data on student achievement, staff technology proficiency, and hardware and software access.

### **Plan Goals:**

The committee developed thirteen goals that directly relate student achievement to the use and integration of technology into curriculum. Each goal has one or more objectives, a set annual benchmark for each of the three years in the Plan, and a design for implementation. These goals are ongoing goals because it may take more than three years to ensure that the goals are met for all students and all staff. The goals fall into five main categories:

- Student achievement as enhanced by technology integrated curriculum.
- Student technology use, global communication skills, information literacy skills and emerging technology skills as defined in the National Educational Technology Standards for Students.
- Technology equipment for effective workplace and educational use.
- Professional development to provide teachers with technology skills to communicate with parents, integrate with curriculum, and support student learning as defined by the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers.
- District technical support for infrastructure, equipment, networks and personnel.

### **Plan Implementation:**

In order to begin to accomplish these goals, the District must focus on several tasks to implement the plan goals.

Technology woven into the classroom through the use of projects that:

- Have embedded technology standard skill components.
- Allow students to learn about, locate, manipulate, evaluate and synthesize digital resources to enhance understanding of curriculum content.
- Enable students to apply word-processing, presentation software skills, social networking, email, chat, blogging and other means of digital communications.
- Ensure that students understand ethical and safety standards.

### **Ongoing professional development for teachers on:**

- General computer knowledge. Presentation hardware, software, video streaming, and social network reflective tools as indicated by the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers.
- Emerging technologies and their integration into standards-based curriculum.
- District software that analyzes District, school, class and individual student achievement and provides the knowledge for data-driven instruction, enhancement and intervention at least three times a year.
- Development of new or enhanced curriculum-based projects for grade levels and subject areas.

### **District infrastructure including:**

- Hardware, networks, software and personnel to support student learning with technology.
- Communication through phone, email, voicemail, Zangle Parent Connect and ConnectEd mass or group message calls.
- Improved District website, connected school websites and teacher developed web pages for ease-of-use and quality information.

### **Classrooms equipped with:**

- Teacher networked computer for attendance, record-keeping, assessment, lesson design and classroom management.
- Minimum set of technology tools such as presentation equipment (LCD projector, receiver, speakers, DVD), printer and network access.
- Other additional 21st century classroom technology

tools such as digital cameras, document cameras, digital camcorders, adequate software, online subscription licenses, interactive white boards and pads and student response systems.

- One up-to-date computer for every four students to promote student-centered learning, multi-sensory stimulation, multi-path progression, multi-media, collaborative work, active/exploratory/inquiry-based learning, and critical thinking and informed decision-making within authentic, real-world context.

### **Plan Result:**

The Plan promotes the direct engagement of students with technology to enhance their learning environment and conceptual understanding. It also comes with a large price tag, which is needed to support the District infrastructure, 21st century classroom, and professional development. The cost though is an investment in the future of the students of the Claremont Unified School District.

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## **Claremont USD's Status as a "Low Wealth" District**

School districts in California are classified as "low wealth" districts when they receive a per pupil funding amount that is less than the statewide average per pupil funding amount. The Claremont Unified School District is considered a low wealth school district because each year it is receiving an amount per student that is less than the average amount received per student in districts throughout the state. For example, in 2006-2007, Claremont USD received \$5,526 per student, while the average received by districts statewide was \$5,569. This difference of \$43, when applied to the nearly 6,800 students of CUSD, equates to over \$292,000!

So why do California school districts have different funding levels? The explanation has to do with how school districts were funded historically, and how, in an effort to address the differences in funding, legislation was enacted that form the basis of today's funding formula.

Before the early 1970s, schools were funded primarily through local property taxes. Keep in mind that these were pre-Proposition 13 property taxes; if property

wealth was high in one community and low in another, the funding for local schools would reflect the surrounding area's assessed valuation – high or low. A lawsuit in 1972 (Serrano vs. Priest) attempted to force the state to address the obvious inequities that existed in school district funding levels. The Serrano case made its way through the court system and was ultimately upheld by the Supreme Court in 1976. Accordingly, the state then developed a very comprehensive package of equalization formulas. "Equalization" however, did not mean making per pupil funding actually equal across districts, it meant simply lessening the disparity that existed. In fact, the judge on the Serrano case established \$100 as the maximum amount of disparity that should be allowed. In 1978, just before these equalization measures were set to take affect, Proposition 13 was enacted. Proposition 13 resulted in huge cuts to property taxes throughout the state, and the state then imposed funding cuts to all local governments, including school agencies. Even so, in recognition of the Serrano decision, the state attempted to continue its efforts at equalization of school funding levels.

The next major occurrence related to school funding levels involved the Serrano case going back to court once again in 1983. However, this time, the Superior Court judge ruled that the goal of reaching disparities of less than \$100 that was established in the 1970s, needed to be adjusted for inflation, thereby allowing a much greater level of disparity to continue to exist. By 1997-1998, the \$100 allowable range for differences in school funding levels had grown to \$324 per pupil.

The State continues its attempts at equalization, however, the years when districts actually receive equalization funding are sporadic at best. It is also interesting that each time equalization funds are distributed, they add to lower funded districts' per pupil funding, and then the statewide average target moves upward as a result. This means that a district that was just allocated equalization funds in an amount sufficient to bring it up to the level of the statewide average, will once again be below the average when the average is re-computed in the subsequent year. This helps explain why so many districts continue to fall below the statewide average and are therefore low wealth districts – it is a moving target!

The most important thing to understand is that even a small amount of disparity in per pupil funding, when multiplied by the number of students in a given district, results in a significantly lower dollar amount of funding for the low wealth school district.

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## CEF and Its Save Our Schools Campaign – Spring 2004

*by Ken Corhan*

*Former CEF Board Member and Past President.*



After several years of declining revenues at the Claremont Unified School District (CUSD), the District found itself facing drastic cuts in several important and popular programs in its K-12 curriculum during the 2003-2004 school year. This dawning realization became a topic of heated local discussion - - especially when it appeared that the popular K-3 class size reduction program (i.e., 20:1 ratio) was at serious risk. CUSD went so far as to take the unusual step of creating a Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) to seek out public comment as to which threatened programs should be cut in order for CUSD's budget to balance.

The only practical alternative to severe budget cutting was community fundraising, therefore this was the strategy that the Claremont Educational Foundation (CEF) undertook. Many discussions took place over the late fall and winter, as a group of nearly 120 parents and community members accepted the challenge to put together a fundraising plan that would address the funding of specific programs threatened with extinction. These volunteers were organized under a CEF committee

that then became known as the Save Our Schools (SOS) Campaign Executive Committee.

The plan was simple: identify educational programs over the entire K-12 curriculum that were in danger of being cut; quantify the approximate funds necessary to protect or restore those programs; and solicit gifts from the parents and the community at large. Volunteers were recruited from each school site to coordinate communication and activities, and recruit support. The BAC graciously welcomed representatives of the SOS Campaign to appear at their outreach meeting to explain how the budget cuts being discussed might be avoided through the SOS Campaign's fundraising efforts. Solicitation letters were mailed and a follow-up Phonathon was organized.

These efforts touched a nerve in the community. Support poured in from all quarters. Local merchants, working with CEF/SOS volunteers, organized a "Shop & Dine Claremont" event to assist in the efforts. Children sold lemonade, did chores and raised money in the thousand and one little ways that children do, and then contributed their proceeds to the cause. SOS coin jars were everywhere throughout the community; families who contributed proudly announced their support with SOS's "little yellow school bus" yard signs; and local realtors organized an Honor Roll and contributed generously.

Amazingly, close to \$700,000 was raised in just 51 days of active fundraising. The crisis turned out to be not quite as dire as it appeared in the late winter of 2003-2004 - - but it was still severe enough to require \$400,000 from the SOS Campaign to allow CUSD to meet all of its program goals for the 2004-2005 school year. The remaining funds are held - - and some have been dispersed to CUSD in following years - - to fund the SOS Campaign's priority programs as needed.

In the end, however, this is the story of a community that refused to become a victim of forces outside its direct control, a successful story of many families contributing cash gifts - - large, medium and small - - and a huge amount of time and effort under CEF's leadership to a goal the whole community embraced: to secure educational opportunities for our children!

## An Interview with Donna Marie Minano – CUSD Music Teacher

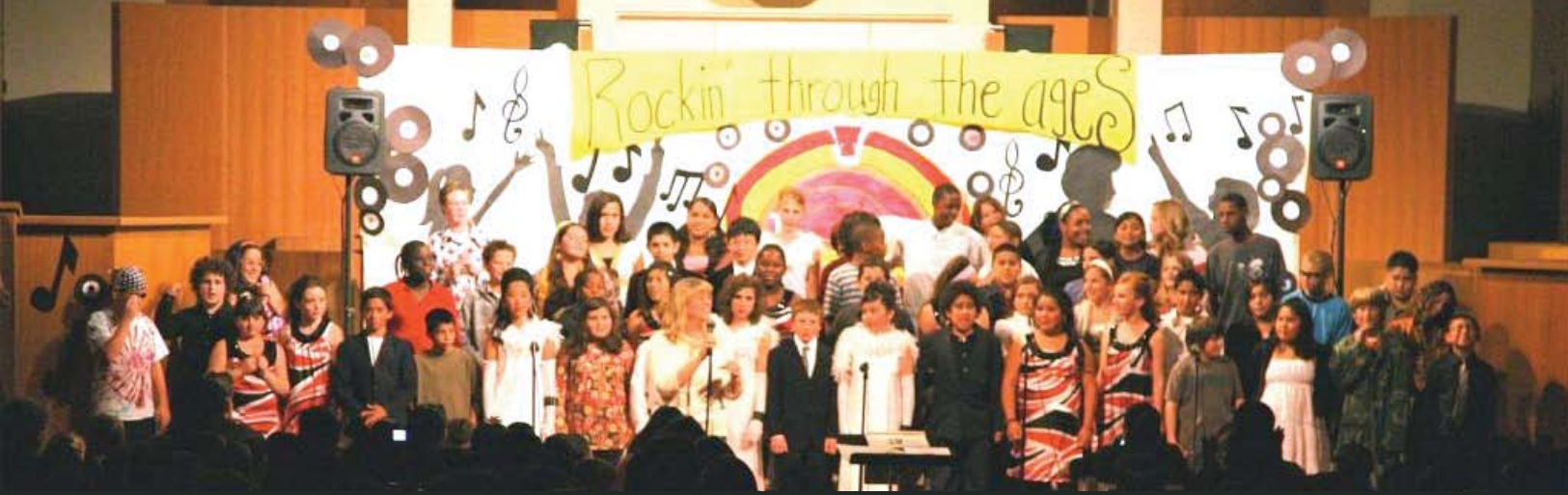
*Your CEF donations go to fund important music programs at all seven elementary school sites. Below is an interview with Donna Marie Minano, music teacher at three Claremont schools.*

### *What is your background?*

I was born in Southern California, and moved many times before settling in the Arcadia School District. I begin the story here because this was the time of Prop 13, yet Arcadia had a strong value for music education. I started playing the Tonette (which is sort of like the recorder) in fourth grade before I moved to Arcadia, and then I began playing the flute in Arcadia's elementary school music program. We were bused once a week to Holly Avenue Elementary School (it had the largest auditorium!) and we rehearsed there until after school hours. Our elementary school music program fed one of the state's top band programs, and it was because of my elementary and secondary school music education that I became a musician.

I attended Occidental College and Cal State Long Beach and hold a Bachelor of Music degree in Oboe performance. Oboe is considered one of the "scholarship instruments" because it is so hard to play, and few people do. I began playing the flute, but switched to oboe in seventh grade because the junior high band director said he needed an oboist in the advanced band. The band director had me sitting outside the classroom with my oboe, just trying to get a sound out of it. No small task – the oboe is one of the most difficult instruments to play! The sound I finally started making sounded like a duck quacking, and when I took a break I could hear all the kids inside laughing! I kept with it and eventually made the high school advanced band, and have been playing ever since. I received a scholarship and went on to major in music in college. Upon graduating, I freelanced as an oboist in Southern California for many years.

As an adult, I began singing. As a vocalist, I have performed in local community theater including the Candlelight Pavilion, Inland Valley Repertory Theater and Victoria Gardens Cultural Center. I also performed with the chamber trio Seamless Achord and the IVRT Dickens Carolers. As music director and conductor, I have worked on "Bye Bye Birdie", "The Song of Mark" and "Side By Side By Sondheim" for the Victoria Gardens Cultural Center. I was Director of Music Ministries and choir director for Our Lady of the Assumption Church for eight years. While at OLA, my adult and children's choirs traveled to Rome where they were given the honor of singing alongside



## Oakmont students performing at the January 2008 Winter Sing

the Sistine Chapel choir for the first ever Papal Mass for the feast of Divine Mercy, on April 22, 2001, televised on Vatican TV.

### *How long have you been teaching music?*

I began teaching music in 1995 at OLA, and I have been teaching music for thirteen years. I have been with the Claremont Unified School District since 2004. I began at Mountain View Elementary, and the following summer received a call from Kevin Ward, inviting me to teach at Oakmont Elementary. Later that school year I received a call from Frank D'Emilio, who invited me to teach at Sumner Elementary.

### *What is special about your music program?*

Everything I do has its foundation in the California State Standards, and is designed with the students in mind. I have recently learned of the Artful Learning model, designed by the late Leonard Bernstein, which is a wonderful model based on students being able to experience, inquire, create, and reflect. A lot of what we do, it turns out, is based on these concepts. In the classroom, we sing, dance, and play instruments. I have written a few grants, which have been used to obtain Orff instruments (xylophones, glockenspiels, etc.), recorders, and percussion instruments. These are all very popular with the kids.

I have found that the students love to perform, even the older kids. I use opportunities like "Shop and Dine", assemblies, and open houses to showcase what the students are learning. At Oakmont, we do a Winter Sing every year. For last year's show, I wrote a rock and roll retrospective from the 50s to the 70s. The sixth graders sang a medley of Motown classics. They were so terrific that the rest of the students are looking up to them as their inspiration for this year! I try to introduce the students to as much of a variety of music as possible. We listen to everything from mariachi to Beethoven to Korean folk music to American standards

to jazz to opera.

I have used the movie "Phantom of the Opera" as a medium by which to teach upper grade students about opera. We learn some opera terms by playing the "dictionary game" and the students make up their own definitions for things like "coloratura" and "opera buffa." We write our own opera by making up a story and using familiar tunes as arias and choruses. We sing songs from the score and learn some tunes to play on our recorders. The older students analyze the literary devices in the song "Music of the Night." Finally, to culminate the unit, all the upper grade students attended the movie. They loved it, and even sang along!

### *Why do you feel that music is so important to a child's education?*

It was elementary music education that inspired me to do what I am doing today, and I do believe that music education is really important! Following are just a few facts regarding the ways in which music enhances education:

- Students who play instruments have higher test scores ...
- Music enhances general memory and concentration ...
- Children who learn music tend to handle stress more easily...
- Learning music significantly facilitates development in mathematics and English...
- Students who have regular music lessons are inclined to learn foreign languages much more easily...
- Children in a musical program tend to develop superior social skills and to manage their time more effectively...

Music is not really a universal language, but it crosses over boundaries in ways that language cannot. I feel music is for life, and is a gift that we can give our children that will last their entire lives.

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2007 - 2008 DONORS

In addition to the contributions listed below, CEF also receives many donations in-kind, while countless volunteers give their time processing donations, managing the website, and participating in Shop & Dine and other functions. CEF would especially like to recognize Pomona College's contribution of Renwick House for our use during CEF's May 2008 Phonathon.

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## The 6th Annual Shop & Dine for Claremont Schools

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