

# THE LEF LEADER

SPRING 2007

A Publication for Local Education Foundation Supporters

## Principal-for-a-Day Program Strengthens Participation in LEF, Local Schools

**T**he Edmond Public Schools Foundation has found a simple and effective way to recruit new board members, attract new donors and promote the work of their foundation and the needs of their schools.

On the first Tuesday of each October, the foundation hosts Principal-for-a-Day, inviting key community and business leaders to spend the morning side-by-side with a local school principal.

“This is show-and-tell for adults,” said board member John Osborne. “It’s an opportunity for leaders in our community to get a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to run a school and also inform them of ways that citizens can help serve our district.”

Foundation Director Karen Filley said the program is a fun and low-cost way to promote the foundation and the school district. About six months before the event, she works with her board and school administrators to identify potential board members, prospective donors and strategic community leaders with whom they would like to build a partnership. They identify enough individuals to serve as guest principals in each of Edmond’s 23 schools.

On the day of the event, guests meet their host principals at the district administration building for a brief breakfast and introductions before traveling to their assigned schools. For approximately three hours, the guest principals join their hosts in their day-to-day activities, from greeting students and leading an assembly to observing classes or meeting with a group of teachers.

After the school visit, guest principals return to the administration building for lunch with the district administrators and foundation board members. During this time, they receive more detailed information about the founda-

tion and district and also take time to reflect upon their school visits.

“A lot of visitors comment about how the principals are a lot like CEOs with 500 little customers,” Filley said. “They’re impressed with all that the principals have to do to run their ‘business’ while making the most of every dollar.”

Filley said Principal-for-a-Day has been a win-win program for the community, the foundation and the school district. “We’ve recruited excellent trustees and have received many new donors – including a \$10,000 annual supporter. These people become our ambassadors in the community and among their business associates.”

Many Oklahoma LEFs have some form of Principal-for-a-Day program in place. Filley said it is simple to organize and can



Edmond banker Darin Kent joins Principal Paula Parrot in welcoming students to John Ross Elementary School. Kent was one of 21 community leaders who participated in the Principal-for-a-Day program sponsored by the Edmond Public Schools Foundation.

be done in any size school district, even as a “Teacher-for-a Day” program in a small district.

For more information on how to organize a Principal-for-a-Day program, contact Karen Filley at (405) 340-2819 or email [karen.filley@edmondschools.net](mailto:karen.filley@edmondschools.net).

## LEF Regional Meetings Set in March

Local Education Foundation volunteers from throughout the state are invited to attend either of two upcoming regional meetings in Elk City and Stillwater.

The Elk City meeting will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 6, at the Old Town Museum Opera House, 2717 W. 3rd St. Participants are encouraged to register at least two days in advance by calling Susie Thurmond at (580) 497-7394 or e-mailing [sisth@aol.com](mailto:sisth@aol.com).

The Stillwater event will be from 3 to 5 p.m. Monday, March 12, in the Board Room of the Board of Education Building, 314 S. Main St. Registration is \$3. Please register in advance by calling Gina Miller, (405) 533-6300, ext. 5006, or e-mailing [spef@stillwater.k12.ok.us](mailto:spef@stillwater.k12.ok.us).

Participants will have an opportunity to network with other LEF leaders and discuss successful strategies for fundraising, board development and programming.

## Worth Noting

The National School Foundation Association annual conference will be held April 12-13 in San Francisco. For more information on the conference and other NSFA resources and articles, visit [www.schoolfoundations.org](http://www.schoolfoundations.org).

# Director's Thoughts:



## Let's Put Education First

My grandfather, a full-blood Wichita Indian, died in 1977 at the age of 107. He saw many changes in Oklahoma during his lifetime. At a very young age, he was taken from his family, put on a train, and transported to Wabash, Ind., to be "schooled in the white-man's way." The belief back then was to "kill the Indian and save the man." Grandpa never appeared to be bitter about having to give up his native language and customs, but rather thankful that he was taught to function successfully in society. Education was a high priority for him and his family. I'll always remember how he would tell my sisters and me, "Education first!"

Oklahoma's 199 local education foundations have done a tremendous job of spreading the message "education first" through their efforts to encourage private investment and involvement in our public schools. One new way LEFs can encourage educational opportunity is by promoting the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP). OHLAP is a state-supported program for eighth-, ninth- and 10th-grade students that will help pay for their college education if their family's income is \$50,000 or less. Many qualifying families are simply not aware of this incredible opportunity, which provides full-tuition scholarships to Oklahoma public colleges and universities as long as students fulfill program requirements.

Our state needs to increase the number of college graduates, which can ultimately help improve Oklahoma's economic development. I encourage you to contact your school counselors and administrators to learn more about OHLAP and ways to increase the number of college-bound students in your community. Whatever we can do to nurture, refine and develop our young people will help lead to improvements in our state.

My hope is that all Oklahomans will put education first – a top priority – and then work together to ensure that our children receive the best possible educational opportunities. Our local education foundations have shown the positive impact that partnering can have in schools. Let's continue our quest for educational excellence in Oklahoma!

Dr. Karen Rose  
Director of LEF Outreach

## Nominations Sought for Outstanding LEF Program

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is seeking nominations for its Outstanding Program Awards for Local Education Foundations (LEFs). Nomination forms and instructions are available online at [www.ofe.org](http://www.ofe.org). Nominations must be post-marked by March 15.

In response to suggestions from LEF leaders across the state, the Foundation for Excellence began last year presenting annual Outstanding Program Awards to recognize three to five innovative programs sponsored or administered by public school foundations in Oklahoma. Plaques and monetary awards of \$1,000 each will be presented to this year's winners at the Fall Forum for Local Education Foundations on Oct. 23.

Recognized programs may include but are not limited to: mentoring, arts integration, student leadership development, curriculum enhancement, student scholarships, professional development for teachers, public relations and fundraising.

Nominations for recognition may come from any member of a community served by the foundation or from anyone knowledgeable about the foundation, including its board members. Nominators may nominate only one program for recognition.

The foundation's LEF Outstanding Program Award Selection Committee will review nominations and notify winners by May. For more information, contact Karen Rose, director of LEF Outreach, at (918) 743-5533 or e-mail [krrose@ofe.org](mailto:krrose@ofe.org).



LEF Outreach Committee Chair Cathy Render (left) and OFE President Ken Ferguson present Maggie Jewel, president of the Jenks Public Schools Foundation, with an Outstanding Program Award for Local Education Foundations during the 2006 Fall Forum. The Jenks foundation received the award and \$1,000 prize in recognition of its sponsorship of a districtwide professional development program in classroom differentiation. Other programs receiving the award were the Student Scholarship/Mentoring Program sponsored by the Bixby Educational Endowment Foundation, the Partners in Education sponsored by the Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation and Author Visits sponsored by the Putnam City Schools Foundation.

## Contact Us! Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence

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# LEF News Roundup

EDITOR'S NOTE: The LEF News Roundup is designed to recognize LEF achievements and share ideas with others. It is also updated regularly on our Web site at [www.ofe.org/lef](http://www.ofe.org/lef). To submit items for the roundup, e-mail [drowe@ofe.org](mailto:drowe@ofe.org).

To celebrate its 20th anniversary and establish a \$500,000 endowment, the **Clinton Public Schools Foundation** is partnering with Clinton High School marketing students to build the Wall of Tradition, a new brick entrance to the football stadium. Marketing students developed the idea of selling engraved bricks to fund the project, which involves building a brick wall containing a tornado design with wrought iron gates on each side of the structure.

**Jenks Public School Foundation** is playing a significant role in the implementation of Jenks High School's new program, AVID, which stands for Advancement Via

Individual Determination. The program was approved by the school board in early 2006 but required more than \$10,000 to implement, which the foundation agreed to provide. AVID was created to increase enrollment in AP classes.

To improve reading skills and generate a greater interest in reading, the Okemah High School English Department used a grant from the **Okemah Public Schools Foundation** to purchase a copy of Oklahoma author William Bernhardt's book *Primary Justice* for each high school student. Students will spend this semester reading the novel, answering comprehension questions and completing vocabulary work and high order thinking skills questions about the book. Once they have finished the novel, students will rewrite the ending and write an evaluation before meeting the author.

The **Okmulgee Education Foundation** recently held its first successful Century Club Campaign, raising more than \$20,000 to support grants for teachers. The campaign was modeled after a similar program created by the **Bixby Educational Endowment Fund**. President Holly Barris said the Okmulgee foundation challenged citizens to become Century Club members by donating at least \$100 to the foundation. Two local banks and the Masonic Lodge joined in to provide matching funds totaling \$7,000.

"The campaign was a big hit. We exceeded our goal of 100 members," Barris said. "We are grateful to the Bixby foundation for helping us get started." For information on creating a Century Club for your foundation, contact Kathleen Phillips of Bixby at (918) 369-2315 or email [jkpil@olp.net](mailto:jkpil@olp.net).



Pauls Valley students participate in last year's Missoula Children's Theatre production. (Photo courtesy of the Pauls Valley Daily Democrat.)

**Pauls Valley Foundation for Academic Excellence** partnered with several area organizations to sponsor the Missoula Children's Theater tour group. The Missoula production works with different communities to cast, rehearse and perform a play within a week. Pauls Valley and Whitebead students, in addition to home-schooled students and those from Christian schools, were invited to audition for a production of Robin Hood.

**Pioneer-Pleasant Vale Academic Foundation's** latest effort brings works by famous artists to Pleasant Vale Elementary School. The foundation, which has been operating for three years, awarded a grant to elementary teachers to purchase and frame copies of art by artists such as Monet and da Vinci. In addition to grants to teachers, the foundation also recognizes students for their academic performance.

During its fall Pride Gala, the **Stillwater Public Education Foundation** awarded the Pioneer Service Award to Ro Poindexter for 20 years of volunteering. Poindexter has spent the past two decades serving in various areas of the school district, including several years with the reading buddy program at Highland Park Elementary and her most recent stint with Friends of Lincoln, a program designed to ensure Lincoln Academy students have someone they can depend on when they need help.

To support efforts to recruit and retain highly effective and competent teachers, Oklahoma City community leaders established the Jean G. Gumerson Teachers Endowment Fund, a scholarship program for district teachers seeking national board certification. The program, managed by the **Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation**, has enabled a greater number of district teachers to pursue national certification.

## Thank you to these 2007 LEF Annual Members!

- Bixby Educational Endowment Foundation
- Blackwell Public School Foundation
- Blanchard Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc.
- Cashion Education Foundation
- Cushing Public School Foundation, Inc.
- Deer Creek Community Enrichment Foundation
- Duncan Public Schools Foundation
- Edmond Public Schools Foundation, Inc.
- El Reno Public Schools Foundation
- Enid Public School Foundation
- Frederick School Enrichment Foundation
- Geary Public Schools Foundation
- Henryetta Education Foundation
- Okemah Public School Foundation
- Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation
- Okmulgee Education Foundation
- Pauls Valley Foundation for Academic Excellence
- Poteau Schools Education Foundation
- Pryor Academic Excellence Foundation
- Sand Springs Education Foundation, Inc.
- Seiling Public School Foundation
- Shawnee Educational Foundation
- Thomas-Fay-Custer Education Foundation
- Tonkawa Education Foundation
- Union Schools Education Foundation
- Vinita Public Schools Educational Foundation
- Watonga Foundation for Academic Excellence
- Yukon Public School Foundation for Excellence

If you would like to support the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and its LEF Outreach Program, please send your gift, payable to the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, to 120 N. Robinson, Suite 1420-W, Oklahoma City, OK 73102.

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## Foundation to Sponsor May 1 Workshop On Starting a Mentoring Program

A full-day workshop on “How To Establish A Mentoring Program” is being offered Tuesday, May 1, at the Putnam City Center, 5604 N.W. 41st St. in Oklahoma City. Cost for the workshop, including lunch, will be \$50.

The presentation is designed for educators, businesses, local education foundations or anyone interested in learning how to establish a safe and effective mentoring program. Presenters will be Melynda

Stone, director of the Volunteers for Youth Program of Claremore, and Michelle Middleton, director of the El Reno School District’s Side-by-Side Mentoring Program. These were the only two Oklahoma programs to receive federal mentoring grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

The workshop is sponsored by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and its David and Molly Boren Mentoring Initiative. For more information and registration forms, visit the mentoring initiative Web site at [www.okmentors.org](http://www.okmentors.org) or call Jennifer Geren, director of the Boren Mentoring Initiative, at (405) 410-1523.

Mark Your Calendar for the  
19th Annual Fall Forum  
for Local Education Foundations

October 23, 2007

University of Oklahoma, Norman

Featuring “back-to-basics” sessions on fundraising, LEF leadership and administration, programming, mentoring and teacher enrichment.

Watch for updates online at [www.ofe.org](http://www.ofe.org).

Melynda Stone (right), director of the Volunteers for Youth Program of Claremore, shown here at the Fall Forum with national mentoring expert Susan Weinberger, will join Michelle Middleton of El Reno’s Side-by-Side Mentoring Program, in leading a May 1 workshop on “How to Start a Mentoring Program.” The event is open to LEFs or anyone interested in starting a mentoring program in their community.

