



# The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation

## ANNUAL REPORT 2010 -2011

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” - Winston Churchill

From day one, the mission of The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation has been:

*“To raise private funds in the community to support excellence and foster innovation in Winnetka’s public elementary and middle schools.”*

The funds raised are invested across District 36 to support the following: student leadership and team building programs; creative teacher initiatives and research; continuing education; and artists in residence. Examples of notable programs the Foundation has funded over the past 16 years include Star Lab, Immigration, and Civil War Days, to name a few. Having proven their value, these programs have been incorporated into the District’s

curriculum and no longer receive direct Foundation support.

Of course, our mission of supporting excellence and innovation continues. Each year, in conjunction with District administrators and teaching staff, we work to identify and foster the next set of innovative program that will enrich our children’s educational experience. Every single one of these new opportunities are made possible by the generous support of the District 36 community.

Last year the WPSF raised over \$140,000 when Winnetka residents responded to our annual report and our Phone-A-Thon. The 2010-2011 Annual Report provides an overview of some of these families that chose to support the Foundation, including

one exceptional donor named Charlotte Carlson. The report also highlights several of the Foundation’s recent and upcoming initiatives.

We are proud of the contribution the Foundation makes each year to District 36, and we would like to thank all of our donors for their tremendous and ongoing support. If you have not given in the past, we hope that reading about some of the Foundation’s recent activities and events will inspire you to become one of our valued contributors. As you’ll see on the following pages, when we all work together, the possibilities truly are endless.

*Jiji Caponi & Lisa Neild  
2010 - 2011 Co-Chairs*

### Charlotte L. Carlson – A Special Friend



Charlotte Carlson circ. 1939

The Carlson Funds are mentioned as being the source of support for several of the events highlighted in the 2010-2011 WPSF Annual Report. So just who was this special benefactor?

Charlotte Carlson was a graduate of Northwestern University earning both Bachelor and Master degrees. She was hired by Carleton Washburne and began her career at Hubbard Woods School teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Charlotte later moved on to Skokie as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher and subsequently chaired the Social Studies Department.

As a teacher, Charlotte was known to be capable and positive. A fellow teacher recalls her as a “smiling upbeat lady (who) was at ease with her students who all seemed as cheerful in her presence as I was.” She was also known for her love of gardening and was in charge of the greenhouse at Skokie School. Charlotte left a long legacy in the community, teaching in the Winnetka Public Schools from 1935 through 1972.

When Charlotte passed away in 2002 at age 90, she surprised the recently founded Winnetka Public Schools Foundation with a very generous gift of \$200,000. Half of this amount was designated as the Mary Keegan Science Funds in honor of a teacher by that name. It was specified that this money be used for the continuing education of science teachers.

The other half was an unrestricted gift that the WPSF board determined would be used to provide community education, to fund teacher initiatives and to support educator training.

The Foundation is grateful to Ms. Carlson for her generosity in providing these transformational gifts.

## What has the WPSF done for District 36 lately?

Parents often travel the hallways or listen to their children describe the events of the day without realizing that it was the WPSF who made that experience possible. Did you happen to notice some of the following activities we helped sponsor last year?

### Classroom Support:

- New computers specifically designed to aid differentiated teaching in Language Arts classrooms
- “Playaways” containing audiobooks that enhance reading for both reluctant and advanced readers
- Book sets that provide Social Studies students a deeper understanding of the era being studied and allow for “book club” type discussion
- A graphic Tablet that gives students and teachers a mobile, interactive process for presentations, lessons and brainstorming
- Fifth graders building inventions relating to the study of energy, inspired by Pulitzer prize winner Rube Goldberg
- New Legos that enhance the teaching of perimeter, area, scale and design in conjunction with the Froebel blocks previously purchased by the WPSF
- Service projects focusing on environmental issues teaching children to learn while serving
- iPod Touches being used to enhance music learning and to record and assess student performance

- On-line mathematics games to reinforce math skills through an unlimited source of practice materials

### Professional Development:

It has been said that, “*Learning is like rowing upstream: not to advance is to drop back.*” The WPSF believes this philosophy is true for both teachers and students. Therefore, each year the WPSF underwrites teacher attendance at a wide variety of workshops focused on creating better educators in the areas of writing, reading and math. When evaluating the value of ongoing education, it is important to consider that teachers can impact a whole school and eventually a whole curriculum when they return to District 36 and share their knowledge throughout our educational community.

### Research Grants:

- Monitoring first-grade students for math difficulties (Year Two) to determine the most effective interventions
- A four-year longitudinal study of student development as problem solvers in math including teacher training, literature review and student interviews
- Implementing Writer’s Workshop in the middle school curriculum (Year Two) to help students develop into strategic and thoughtful writers

## Wind Turbines

By: Jean Bierner - Science Coordinator

Imagine stepping into a science classroom and being challenged to determine how the number of blades on a wind turbine affects its ability to produce electricity. What if there was a box full of parts including pieces of plastic pipe, connectors, wires, nacelles and voltage meters sitting at your table that you and your classmates could use to test out these questions? Would you be more inspired to solve the *Question of the Day: Do the number of blades on a wind turbine change how it works?*

The WPSF thinks so. That’s why they approved my Teacher Initiative Grant requesting the purchase of six Wind



Turbine kits and six high power fans that allow students to explore wind energy engineering and design challenges firsthand.

So does the number of turbine blades make a difference? Some students based their predictions on existing designs such as the towering three-blade turbines in Indiana or the small metal multi-blade windmills in farms. However, most of the third graders immediately assumed more blades are better. But who was right? With glee and determination the students got to work, building, wiring and setting up. The teams of children then moved from station to station to study the turbines with different numbers of blades.

After all the turbines were assembled, it was time to fire up the fans. Papers fluttered and children’s hair blew as excitement built. Students settled in to concentrate on their experiments, recording voltage meter readings on a SmartBoard data chart. After all the data for each blade configuration was collected, the results were analyzed. The students were thrilled to discover that some model turbines generated enough electricity to power two or three tiny flashlight bulbs!

Demonstrating that “hands on” makes learning science fun, students couldn’t wait to try the next experiment. A grateful class is eager to open the next “box of science” provided by the WPSF.



"Thank you Winnetka Public Schools Foundation for helping our schools offer programs full of life and learning! The first grade Farm Unit was so intriguing that it inspired our daughter to attend a working farm camp over the summer. Our twins will never forget their Crow Island Pioneer experience - they are still re-reading their journals, using their pioneer family names and reminiscing about all of their adventures! We are looking forward to Immigration day and enjoying all of the other wonderful experiences that the WPSF makes possible. The Foundation's work yields invaluable enrichment for our teachers, students and families." - Stephanie Figlioli

## Early Math Screening and Intervention

By: Peggy Bourke & Betsy Steele

Math mastery is fundamental for success in education. By third or fourth grade, those with a math deficiency face the very real threat that they are likely to face long-term struggles within the education environment. It is therefore critical to identify and address learning issues at the earliest stages so this deficiency does not become an ongoing barrier to success. Through two separate Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Teacher Research Grants (2009-2010 & 2010-2011), the math staff at Crow Island were given the opportunity to seek out, implement and apply specific tools to screen and assist kindergarten and first-grade students.

The objectives in seeking the grants were twofold:

1. Provide teachers with an appropriate research-based screening tool that would identify "at risk" students in the early stages of their math education.
2. Provide teachers with the tools and techniques to help "at risk" students build basic math knowledge and ensure they do not slip behind.

Crow Island successfully rolled out its math screening program in 2009-2010. "At risk" kindergarten and first-grade students have been provided additional support and are improving their math skills. Because of its success, this pilot screening and follow up support program is now being applied district wide. The goal is to ensure that by second grade all students will have a solid foundation in number sense and are no longer in jeopardy of being left behind.

We feel receiving this grant gave our students some long overdue support in this absolutely critical aspect of early education. The ability to undertake the research that led to this program would not have been possible without the Foundation's financial support.

## What's New at the WPSF?

Following are just *some* of the many new programs to look for over the school year. These would not be possible without your support.

### New programs in many different academic disciplines:

- *iPad* innovations for Speech - Language Pathologists and Special Educators
- *Kid Wind* - a science energy kit that explores the use of wind as a power source
- *The Fun Café* - a weekly lunchtime service program where fifth and sixth graders collaborate on service projects, holiday themed activities and science projects related to the curriculum
- *Lights! Action! Camera!* - students learn to use video cameras, still cameras, green screens and other software to become technology producers
- *Guided Reading* - enhancing reading for second graders using five genres of literature - biography, fairytale, folktale, mystery and nonfiction

### Ongoing Teacher research and professional training:

- National Council on the Teaching of English Convention
- Readers Workshop: "Creating a Space for Reading Instruction, Grades 3 - 8"
- Lucy Calkins workshop "Reading, Writing and the Common Core"
- A study on the effectiveness of Early Math Screening and Intervention
- Training with neurologist and certified teacher Dr. Judy Willis to use Learning Centered Brain Research in teaching strategies
- Studying how therapy dogs affect social behavior in students
- International Reading Association Convention
- Summer Reading Institute at Columbia University to enhance the connection between Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop

After School Programs | Extravaganza | Summer Institute | Social Emotional Learning | Froebel Gifts

## “Blessed Imperfection – Learning Life’s Greatest Lessons”

An Evening with Mike Leonard

CARLSON FUNDED PROGRAM



A cornerstone of District 36’s educational philosophy is that each child learns and develops

differently. With that in mind, last April the WPSF asked Winnetka’s own NBC Correspondent Mike Leonard to speak to the community about his unique experiences growing up and raising his children in our town.

Through pictures, video clips, and stories Mike illustrated that there is no one way for a child to reach his or her potential. With humor and empathy,

Mike demonstrated that achieving a fulfilling adulthood is a long and winding process with many setbacks along the way. According to Mike, these early failures are actually the essential building blocks for creating a satisfying and worthwhile existence.

Mike Leonard reminded audience members that each child is uniquely imperfect.

## Changing Minds - Carol Dweck

CARLSON FUNDED PROGRAM



Carole Dweck is a professor of psychology at Stanford University and one of the world’s leading researchers in the field of motivation. She is highly regarded for her work on raising children who are successful learners. Accordingly, over the summer of 2010, all District 36 teachers were asked to read Carol Dweck’s bestselling book **Mindset: The New Psychology of Success** and begin to incorporate her teachings in the classroom.

To help parents and teachers better understand Dweck’s

findings, in May of 2011 the WPSF co-sponsored a widely attended community presentation by Dr. Dweck. The WPSF also co-sponsored a teacher workshop led by Dr. Dweck which allowed over 450 teachers to hear more about her research. Following is an overview of some of the major points she made throughout her visit.

According to Dweck, children learn best when they adopt a “growth-oriented” mindset. Her research has established that a growth mindset must permit both success and failure and that each are crucial aspects of the often messy learning process.

(i.e Dweck has also found that a fixed mindset -- where a student perceives that his or her capabilities are fixed -- is actually limiting.) When a child believes his skills are set at

birth he is unwilling to stretch and risk failure.

And, Dweck has documented that parents cannot give their kids the “gift” of self-esteem by praising them for being smart. In fact, her research reveals that parental praise can actually backfire causing a child to believe that effort is not important or to give up when a setback is encountered.

Parents and teachers alike were grateful for the opportunity to learn more from Dr. Dweck. *“Carol Dweck’s work has helped me reaffirm that one of my goals as a teacher is to instill a growth mindset in all my students. I want all of my students to see themselves as risk-takers, who are willing to confront/accept challenges, and keep working at them.”* – Erik Fritzsche (Greeley 4th grade teacher).



“The Suljic family is immensely grateful to the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation for enhancing our children’s educations so profoundly. As our oldest child, Emelia, was about to graduate from 8<sup>th</sup> grade last Spring, she said she was grateful that she remembered her grammar school years so completely; the sights, the sounds, the taste, the touch of all the experiences made her education come alive and has become a part of her childhood memories. Our youngest, Evan, experienced the Star Lab last year and regaled us with the stories of the stars this summer as we stared into the peppered sky. He will soon be the last in our family to be transformed into a pioneer, donned in a coon-skin cap. Their grandparents were moved to tears as they shared their painful immigration stories and listened to the heroic stories of others in front of our oldest son Aidan’s class of wide-eyed children. Most of all, we are grateful to our teachers, who never stop seeking the best way to reach and challenge our children.” – The Suljic Family

## WPSF – Helping Teachers Grow

Teacher Professional Development Endeavors – by Peggy McMorrow, Betty Manley & Tifani Daly

CARLSON FUNDED PROJECT

How do we build better readers? Attending the Teachers College Reader's Workshop Institute last August was an experience that greatly influenced how we answer this question.

At the workshop we learned that good readers are built when four basic premises are accepted:

- children enjoy reading
- children can select "just right" books
- children can read for extended periods of time
- the teacher models a strong reading life

At Teachers College, we learned that reading silently and building the ability to read for longer periods can only be achieved when students select a "just right" book. A "just right" book is one that the student can decode with accuracy, read aloud with expression, comprehend at both a factual and inferential level, and actually *want* to keep reading. Students reading "just right" books are able to move beyond simply making sense of the text and into critical analysis of deeper issues having to do with characters and themes.

We know that all students benefit when these principles are adopted. But how do we make sure that they are applied across the continuum of reading skills? The reader's workshop focused on helping us be better teachers for *individual* students. Measuring reader progress is a critical way to ensure each student is building the appropriate reading skills. This assessment is

conducted through one-on-one conferences that help us understand our students better and form instruction plans.

To learn more about our students as readers, this year we introduced running records where we assessed each student's reading fluency, word accuracy, literal comprehension and interpretive comprehension. These assessments provide us with a benchmark of student capability at the start of the year and will assist with goal setting and progress monitoring.

Empowering students to take ownership of their reading lives is another critical aspect of their development. To encourage this growth, we now have students log their reading daily, reflect on their reading lives (patterns and habits), and make adjustments to how and when they read in order to set appropriate reading goals. In addition to their logs, students are asked to write about reading in their reader's notebooks.

After learning more about the benefit of students supporting one another as readers, we have also introduced "partner talk" which is improving the way students internalize and practice reading strategies.

Attending the Teachers College Reader's Workshop has given us the opportunity to look at our students as readers in a whole new way. By taking this experience back to the District 36 educational community, we are putting Foundation funds to use in a way that enhances the education of all our readers.



"We support WPSF because of all that it has given and will continue to give to our children. From Star Lab in 2nd grade to the Pioneer Room in 3rd to the Immigration study in 4th grade, the Extravaganza in 5th, and Civil War Day in 7th, I am amazed at the opportunities our sons have had to learn beyond the traditional classroom - all through the generosity of the WPSF. The Foundation's Teacher Research Initiatives are a particular favorite of mine. Every teacher in each of the five Winnetka schools has the opportunity to take an idea, run with it, then present their findings to the Winnetka community, all funded by the WPSF. What better way to support the education of all our children than by nurturing the intellectual curiosity of their teachers!" - The Schuldts Family



"Our family has been enriched by the Winnetka Public Schools in numerous ways. Our support of the WPSF is just one way in which we feel fortunate to join with other parents to give back to our school community. At Hubbard Woods School, our children have benefited from the funding of the Kindness Connection and the phenomenal Mosaics project directed by Artist In Residence Mirtes Zwierzynski." - The Wigdale Family

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 Mr. & Mrs. Rashpal Singh  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard H. Solomon

<b>WPSF Financial Statement</b>		
<b>(unaudited)</b>		
	<b>July 2010- June 2011</b>	<b>July 2009- June 2010</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Donations Received	\$ 144,769	\$ 148,716
Investment Income	125	517
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>144,894</b>	<b>149,233</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 8,447	\$ 9,496
Administrative Expenses	4,407	5,979
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 12,854</b>	<b>\$ 15,475</b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ 132,040	\$ 133,759
Current Plan Year Disbursements to District 36	156,000	150,000
<b>Current Year Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ (23,960)</b>	<b>\$ (16,241)</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 218,749</b>	<b>\$ 242,840</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>		
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 242,840	\$ 259,081
Current Year Fund	\$ (23,960)	(16,241)
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 218,880</b>	<b>\$ 242,840</b>

Andrew & Dawn Ratts  
 Mindy & Brad Rendell  
 Sharon & Tony Rettino  
 Karin & Chris Rigg  
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**Corporate Gifts & Matching Contributions**

AXA Corporation  
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**Goods & Services Donated by**

Coldwell Banker  
 Winnetka Community House  
 Judy Archambault and Associates  
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## Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Annual Plan 2011-2012

The Annual Plan for the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation identifies programs that are designed to provide unique learning opportunities for students in District 36. Each school year several groups meet to analyze staff and student needs and to establish priorities. These groups include: the Superintendent of Schools; members of the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Board; members of the School Board; and members of the District Leadership team. After this assessment, the Superintendent proposes projects to the Foundation Board for approval and then to the School Board for endorsement. When final authorization is received, the WPSF begins its annual fundraising process. The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Board proposes the following projects for the 2011-2012 school year:

### Proposed Projects

Leadership and Team Building	\$ 25,000
Artists in Residence	\$ 40,000
Teacher Initiative Grants	\$ 40,000
Teacher Research	\$ 20,000
Summer Institute	\$ 10,000
After School Clubs	\$ 15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>



[www.wpsf.org](http://www.wpsf.org)

The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization

## Winnetka Public Schools Foundation P.O. Box 97, Winnetka, IL 60093

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