



...Ready for the Challenge!

(January 2010 Wilson's Pride Lead Article)

As we enter the third year since the original inception, we felt the time was right to re-introduce the Wilson Education Foundation.

In short, the Wilson Education Foundation (WEF) is a 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to engage in strategic philanthropy to purposefully connect parents, alumni, and businesses to invest in the future of the greater Wilson community. The Foundation is not a part of the district, but rather a partner to the district.

It has become increasingly difficult to fund the programs that contribute to an outstanding school curriculum which facilitates a high quality, well-rounded educational experience.

As state budgets become tighter, it is all the more important for our district to be as proactive as possible looking outside of traditional revenue streams. The Wilson School District has established a reputation for innovation and excellence, and as the economy struggles, we are finding that the traditional tax based funding falls short of the present and anticipated revenues that support our District's commitment to educational excellence for our students. Private support is an invaluable asset that can make a positive difference in providing learning opportunities not otherwise possible.

Education foundations like ours have been developed in thousands of communities across the country, and they are playing an increasingly important role in shaping educational opportunities. We want to meet the changing demands of education and the especially pressing needs of today's students in our local schools. We feel that it is important to outline some of the areas which we feel a vibrant educational foundation could potentially support:

1. Diminish or eliminate barriers that prevent some students from sharing experiences that require funding outside the scope of the approved budget.
2. Diminish or eliminate barriers that prevent teachers from accomplishing certain goals for improved student achievement. (e.g., tutoring programs, teacher venture grants, academic coaching programs).
3. Assist in the funding of enhanced facilities that can be utilized by both the school and the surrounding community at large.
4. Assist in supporting innovative educational programs that will enhance student achievement and wellness throughout the school and the community.

Over the past two years, the Foudation has financially supported creative and innovative programs in our district. The K-12 Fast ForWord reading intervention program and the Elementary After School World Language Program are just a few

ways that the Foundation has assisted to bring otherwise unfunded programs into the district. WEF has also funded numerous classroom grants of \$500 each to help our teachers bring in special projects otherwise unfunded by the school budget. And this is just the beginning! The Foundation Board has been discussing several ideas for major projects...ideas that go beyond a single classroom and benefit large numbers of our students in technology, the arts, cultural enrichment and other scholastic and extracurricular areas.

We continue to believe and communicate that the Wilson School District is an integral part of the health and well being of the surrounding local community. As the school district operates in a model of continual improvement the surrounding community benefits from having a district where people who share our goals want to become contributing members. Many of us have lived our entire lives in the Wilson School District, and now have children attending the same school system. Others have moved to Wilson because of the quality of our school system. Our scholastic and extracurricular excellence is one of the main attractions for us as homeowners and for families who desire to become part of the Wilson School District. Our top-quality school system is one of the factors that has helped ensure premium property values for all of us fortunate to live here, whether or not we have school aged children.

All of us share in the pride of the outstanding performance of the Wilson School District. We hope you'll see the many benefits of the Wilson Education Foundation - not just for students and teachers, but for our community as well. Our purpose is to raise money to encourage new, creative programs, providing our children with educational opportunities that would otherwise be difficult to support through current school budgets, and to strengthen community participation in the district.

In today's world, it takes more than our tax dollars to provide a quality education for our students...it takes the involvement of private citizens who understand that our children are our future. We want to emphasize that the Foundation is an autonomous corporation with a 501 (C)(3) tax-exempt status, separate and distinct from the Wilson School District. The Foundation supplements, not replaces, State, Federal, and local tax funding.

How can you help?

There are many ways you can help us both financially, and by volunteering. Become a part of one of the most important movements in our local community! We invite you to:

Get informed!

Contact the Foundation's Executive Director, Tracy Caputo at 610-670-0180 or at CapTra@wilsonsd.org. Or, sign-up for the Wilson Education Foundation E-newsletter @ www.wilsonsd.org/EdFoundation. Join WEF on Facebook – group name: Wilson School District Education Foundation.

Get Involved! Here are some ways:

Celebrate Wilson! Soirée – This spring, the Wilson Education Foundation will host the “Celebrate Wilson!” Soirée...an evening of hors d'oeuvres, mocktails, raffles, silent auctions, entertainment and honors. We are in need of interested community members to help with planning, decorating, securing auction items, selling tickets, and mostly having fun as we take some time out to celebrate Wilson's successes and achievements. All proceeds will benefit the Wilson Education Foundation. If you would like to assist, sponsor a table, donate tickets to students, or provide auction items, please let us know!

Tributes: Creative Ideas for Remembering Others - There are so many tangible things that can add value to, and enrich, our lives. But most important to many of us are the people who are closest to us - those we admire, respect, cherish,

and love. We all have special relationships with people whose impact on our lives is priceless. One of the ways a number of people choose to honor the special people in their lives is through charitable gifts.

Because so many have all of the material things they need in life, people are supporting worthy organizations and institutions as a way of honoring that special person "who has everything." Whether given in memory of a friend, loved one, teacher, or mentor who has passed away or as a tribute to one still living, these special gifts can touch friends and family deeply while they improve the world around us.

Making "occasional" gifts - Gifts made in honor of loved ones at times such as the holidays, Mother's Day or Father's Day, at the birth of a child or grandchild, on a birthday, wedding, anniversary, graduation, or other special occasion can be sincere reminders to friends or family members of how much you care.

Annual Campaign Request – The Wilson Education Foundation will embark on an Annual Giving Campaign in 2010 to secure a base of funding on which to grow. As a community member, you will be asked to share a gift with us so that we may continue to grow the benefits of the district in which we live. Please remember us at this time, and remember that no donation is too small to add up and count! Also, we need volunteers to help collect donations, send out acknowledgement letters, and keep everything organized. If you can donate a few hours of time, please let us know!

Unused Reunion funds – Sometimes, graduating classes find themselves at a point where they wish to no longer have class reunions, but there is still money left in the account. This money can be donated to the Foundation to benefit a new generation of Bulldogs coming up through the ranks. What better way to use those funds than to offer today's students more opportunities for accomplishment?

Educational Improvement Tax Credit program - the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), provides companies with a 75% tax credit for donations to an approved non-profit educational improvement organization. The tax credit increases to 90% if the company commits to making the same donation for two consecutive years. By participating in the EITC program, an organization accrues the public relations benefits that occur whenever a company supports a worthy cause in the area where it does business. By supporting an education organization in which employees have a special interest, an employer can gain the appreciation of the people who make the business work.

Bequest – Bequests are the transfers of wealth that occur upon a donor's death and that include transfers by means of a will or a trust. Bequests can take several forms such as:

- Specific bequest - a certain amount of cash, securities, or property.
- General bequest - property that is similar to all other items distributed, usually cash.
- Percentage bequest - a stated percentage of the donor's estate.
- Residual bequest - all or a portion of what remains of the estate after specific and general bequests are distributed.

Besides a straight bequest, you can also set up a trust that will benefit charitable organizations during or after your lifetime. Another way to leave money is to name one or more nonprofits as beneficiaries of an insurance policy or as the recipient of your IRA or retirement fund.

In closing, we want to reiterate that the Wilson School District continues to not only strive to offer the best educational program possible but also to be an integral part of the surrounding community in order to do our part to make the Wilson School District the location of choice for all the members of the surrounding community.