

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Supporting Excellence in Education

MENLO-ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL

Summer Newsletter 2009

A STRONG FINISH IN 2009

When the Foundation for the Future began planning our 2008/09 campaign, we set an aggressive goal of \$1.1M. Like most people, we had no idea of the coming economic tsunami. As we look back now on the year, we are proud and relieved to have achieved all but \$30K of that goal—delivering just over \$1M to Menlo-Atherton High School.

Last year was the second consecutive year that the Foundation for the Future has been able to contribute in excess of \$1M to our high school. According to the GivingUSA Foundation, donations to educational charities were down 5.5% this past year; our results slipped by only 2.9%, significantly less than the national average.

Our generous community has continued to support the Foundation and for that we are deeply grateful.

With over 670 donors, we saw unprecedented support from current M-A families, community members and businesses who believe in the strength of our local public high schools.



All Foundation donors were honored at a thank you party in May hosted by the board. Foundation board member Celeste Chapman (R), brings home baked treats to share with Foundation donor, Chris Rivera (L).

Demonstrating their extraordinary support of M-A, The Westly Foundation donated \$50,000—double their previous gift. Pictured above (L to R), Bill Kirsch, 2008/09 Foundation Co-President, Nicole Bergeron, Westly Foundation President, Kathy Jackson, 2008/09 Foundation Co-President, Cindy Folker, Foundation Executive Director, Matthew Zito, M-A Principal.

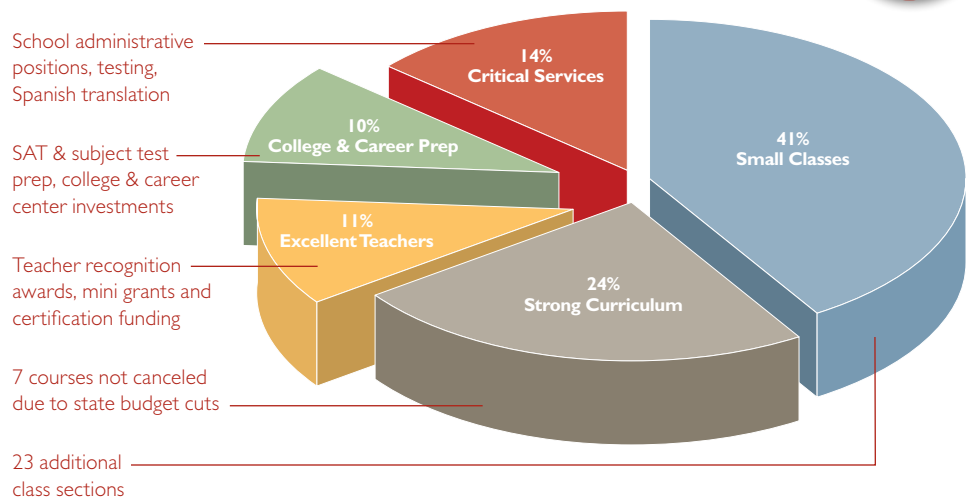
The Westly Foundation's generous gift of \$50K was a critical and welcome cornerstone of this year's campaign. When combined with overall donor participation, leadership giving helped to assure that the Foundation for the Future was able deliver much needed financial support to Menlo-Atherton High School.

The Foundation remains committed in these challenging times to raising the money we need to continue class size reduction plans and fund a variety of essential academic programs and classes. We thank you greatly for your support and look forward to your continued generosity in the year ahead.

IT'S A GREAT DAY @ **M-A!**

2008/09 PROGRAMS FUNDED

The generous support of our donors advanced our Foundation's goal of providing a better educational experience for every M-A student.





Matthew Zito dons a hard hat to tour the almost completed Center for the Performing Arts at M-A

FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Looking back, 2008/09 was a year of great achievement for M-A High School. We are proud that 97% of our Class of 2009 graduates will continue their education, with 61% attending four-year colleges, 35% choosing two-year colleges, and 1% continuing on to vocational school. The success of our graduates is a tremendous testament to our faculty, staff, students and the community.

The year ahead will also see great accomplishment with the completion of the Center for the Performing Arts. On October 10, we will open the Center and celebrate completion of major parking and landscaping improvements to the front of our school. I am delighted to have this work behind us, and am even more thrilled about what the Center will mean for the M-A and our local communities.

The budget crisis in Sacramento will have many effects across California's public education system. While uncertainty continues, the Sequoia Union High School District and Menlo-Atherton High School have remained fiscally conservative, allowing us to fund potential shortfalls in the year ahead from reserves on hand. For the 2009/10 school year, we are committed to maintaining current class sizes and levels of service. The Foundation's gift of over \$1.0M in each of the past two years has provided for additional class sections and reduced class size, important staff positions such as College Information Specialist and Dean of Students, and expanded offerings in our Advanced Placement classes and electives. It is times like these that make me particularly value the Foundation and its supporters. In good times, your generosity allows us to move above and beyond the expectations of a large, comprehensive high school. In less flush times, your gift helps to alleviate the negative impact of budget shortfalls.

We have tremendous accomplishments to celebrate and much work still to do. Together with the Foundation, I look forward to meeting the future with you and your students at M-A.

Respectfully,

Matthew Zito, Principal

"M-A ON eBAY" BEATS EXPECTATIONS!

The second annual online auction, M-A on eBay, reaped much success when it was held last March. In the midst of the economic downturn, the team was at first skeptical about their prospects for success.

Led by Trish Gump and Michele Culhane, the auction turned a corner in the days before closing to net an impressive \$91,000 in donations, a 78% increase over its first year performance. As an online event, M-A on eBay is open to all who wish to participate and is a great way to buy vacation lodging, restaurant gift certificates, parties, sports memorabilia, and events. Proceeds raised through the Foundation for the Future go directly to support educational programs at M-A.

Watch for us again next year at www.maauction.org.

ATTENTION ALL INCOMING FRESHMAN FAMILIES!

FRESHMAN PARENT COFFEE

Please join us for a parent coffee on the morning of Freshman Orientation

Monday, August 17, 8:00–9:00 AM
M-A Staff Lounge at the Front of School

*Drop your freshman off and join us for a cup of coffee and pastries.
Meet M-A Principal Matthew Zito and learn more about M-A!*

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www.m-afoundation.org

The Foundation for the Future at Menlo-Atherton High School thanks our talented photographers: M-A teacher, Betsy Snow, and Foundation board member, John Boyle.

Design by ApInUnoCreative.

FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING TEACHERS & STAFF

For fifteen years, the Foundation for the Future has annually recognized those teachers who have demonstrated excellence in the classroom. In 2003, an award for Classified Staff was introduced. Additionally, throughout the year we recognize teachers and staff who have a measurable positive impact on campus with Impact Awards. Finally, each year all new teachers receive a Foundation grant at the beginning of the school year to help defray the costs of classroom supplies.



Teaching & Classified Staff Award Recipients: (L to R) Ron Weiss, Susan Price, Jeff DeCurtins and Fran Huber

TEACHING AWARDS

Ron Weiss: Ron is a “Renaissance Man” at M-A, having served in three academic departments while also integrating his practical experience as an economist and his love of technology into his teaching style. With a background in economics, Ron has brought his passion and love of the subject to students by making economics real to them in their everyday lives. As a math teacher, Ron brings his talents to bear across a broad spectrum of classes and skill levels. He has also taught Spanish at M-A. His enthusiastic and skilled integration of the Smartboard technology into all of his classes keeps his teaching fresh and interesting to students. He does all of this while conversing in Spanish AND serving on important committees such as the Shared Decision Making Site Council (SDMSC). Wouldn't you know it—he has also been described as being the “nicest person ever in addition to being a great teacher”. Well done, Ron!

Susan Price: It is said “in Ms. Price's class, no disabilities exist.” This is because Susan treats all of her students as students first, not as students with special needs. She drives an aggressive curriculum that demands as much from her students as any of the toughest classes on campus might. Her day begins when her students arrive by bus, and runs through a full spectrum of academic and extra-curricular pursuits—from the basics of reading and math, through sports, science labs and cooking. For those that know her classroom—it is a busy and exciting place where teens can be teens despite their disabilities. Susan's work extends to the parent community too, as she works with families on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and preparing for life after high school. Susan Price leaves an indelible mark on the lives of the students and families she works with at M-A.

Jeff DeCurtins: Leadership can often come from unexpected places and Jeff has brought a lot of it to the Science Department at M-A. While science teachers tend to stick to their preferred area of academia, Jeff has introduced an element of conversation, dialogue and mutual discovery into the department that has brought staff together and brought out the best in their teaching styles. His innovation is never limited to the staff as he is also seen as “a bottomless pit of cool ideas.” With Jeff's guidance, M-A will be introducing both AP Physics and Astronomy into the course curriculum next year. He is known for his humor and his ability to contribute to everything from cleaning the Science Department shed to important SDMSC meetings. He is not only the glue that keeps the Science Department together, but also the spark that ignites the creative fire of students and staff alike.

CLASSIFIED STAFF AWARD

Fran Huber: Whether registering new students, coordinating guidance counsellors, managing class schedules or working with demanding parents, Fran Huber is a well-known and beloved figure on the M-A campus. For 20 years, Fran has been working with staff, students and parents with a smile and a positive attitude. She is an incredible asset to the entire M-A family. She received numerous nominations, each of which applauded Fran's work ethic, humor and ability to make everyone feel comfortable while getting the job done well. Fran has only been in the Guidance Office for the past few years, having done many jobs at M-A over time. Regardless of what she is doing, Fran's work is highly valued by all.



Impact Award Recipients: Seated, (L to R) Susan Price, Mark Leeper, Audrey Stevenson. Standing, (L to R) Michele Breen, Sophia Kalamaras

Not pictured: Hector Camacho, CJ Carlson, Jim Corboy, Tonya Edgington-Castillo, Karina Escobar-Weaver, Ken Gradiska, Fred Kessler, Scott Kirk, Mike Moliere, Natalie Stuart, Silvia Torres

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

MENLO-ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL

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CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS—IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE!



Take a seat! The Center's new theater is almost ready for its first performance.

M-A Principal Matthew Zito gives Foundation Sponsor Co-Chairs Gamiel Gran and Mike David a tour of The Center.



The M-A campus is abuzz about the completion and grand opening of our Center for the Performing Arts scheduled for October 10, 2009. The Center was paid for by bond funds derived from Measures G (2001) and H (2004), as well as funding provided by the City of Menlo Park. Landscaping will be paid for with funds from Measure J (2007). Housing a 492 seat theater, the Center boasts state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems, a 150 person capacity multi-use space that will double as a cafeteria, and facilities for the music program including rehearsal rooms and storage. While the Foundation did not fund the construction, we are committed to M-A's next

big challenge—bringing life to the inside of the Center. The curtain is ready to rise, but, much work remains to support a full schedule of learning and performances that will make the building sing. Watch for more information in the months ahead on how you or your business can help.