

# REFinsight

A PUBLICATION OF READINGTON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

SPRING 2009

## Anonymous Donor Challenges Readington To Support Two Ed Foundation Projects

*Will Match Up to \$2,500 in Contributions*

An area business that wishes to remain anonymous has issued an intriguing challenge to the Readington community: It will match up to \$2,500 in donations – in any combination – targeted toward two major projects being undertaken by the **Readington Educational Foundation (REF)**.

The money would help fund the Foundation's two large initiatives, one to build a new music-composition laboratory at Holland Brook School and another to install heart-monitoring equipment at Readington Middle School. Trustees are in the process of submitting applications to large companies and major foundations for grant money to help finance these large projects.

Upon hearing about this generous offer, REF Chairman Robert Nonni said he hoped other area businesses would extend the offer, once this challenge is met. "Our mission of improving the educational opportunity for Readington students cannot be accomplished without the assistance of the local business community," he said.

In addition to its large-grant program, the REF funds small grants for inventive projects that are unlikely to receive funding from the school district. Since its inception in 2007, the REF has awarded nearly \$30,000 in small grants.

The music-composition lab would allow students to write, record and produce their own unique songs using portable workstations equipped with the most up-to-date music notation and composition software available on the educational market. So far the Foundation has submitted three applications for grant money from large corporations and expects to submit more before the end of the school year. The entire project will cost nearly \$27,000.

The pioneering heart-monitoring system is one of the first of its kind in the nation. It will allow physical education teachers to monitor effort – in a private and non-threatening way – by students while doing a variety of exercises. The students will aim to maintain their workout in a target heart zone, thus maximizing their workouts and reducing the chances of oversteering their hearts. The REF has already submitted four applications for grant money from large corporations and expects to apply for additional money from large foundations. The entire cost of the system will amount to about \$40,000.

For more information or to make a donation, please contact Rob Nonni at 507-6133.



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## Books Everywhere & Music in the Air!

*REF Benefit Set For May 21  
At Barnes & Noble in Somerville*

As part of its goal to raise money for a new music-composition laboratory at Holland Brook School, the REF is working with Barnes & Noble Booksellers on a fundraiser called "Books Everywhere & Music in the Air!"

The event, which will feature music by a variety of student groups and readings by some of your favorite Readington teachers, is set for 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 21, at the Barnes & Noble store at the Somerville Circle. For each sale made using a special REF voucher, the bookstore will contribute a percentage to the HBS music lab project. The project is one of two large-grant proposals undertaken by the Foundation this year.

Vouchers are available online at [www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us) under the "Organizations" tab, or in the front offices of all four Readington schools. In addition to the Somerville store, the REF vouchers will be accepted that day at all B&N stores except for college bookstores.

The event will also feature door prizes from local merchants. For more information about the event, contact Pat Deseno at 908-872-9287 or Michelle Lee at 908-295-1192.

## Foundation Selects New Trustees

Readington resident Megan Atlasman is the most recent addition to the board. Atlasman, who co-chairs the HBS Cultural Arts Committee and serves as a homeroom representative, decided to join the board to offer her expertise in event planning. She has lived in Readington for 13 years.

Michelle Lee, a proud resident of Readington for the past 13 years, has spent most of her career in retail and marketing management. She has been a sales associate at Coldwell Banker Residential in Readington for nine years.

New Trustee Donna Brandt said she saw the Foundation as a way to do her part to build a stronger community. Brandt, an active school volunteer who co-chairs the RMS Bookfair, has lived in the district for 10 years.

Greg Smith, president of Radiant Community Athletic Productions LLC, said he wanted to join the board to give back to the community and help spread the word about the positive changes happening in the district. He has lived in Readington for 16 years.



YOU CAN FIND THE FOUNDATION ONLINE AT  
[www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us)

UNDER THE "ORGANIZATIONS" TAB.

With your partnership, we hope to further enhance the learning opportunities for every student. If you have questions or would like to become involved, you can reach us at [info@readingtonedu.org](mailto:info@readingtonedu.org) or 908.534.1515.

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Your contributions to the Foundation have touched large numbers of students in all four Readington Township schools. Some of the grant success stories this year include:

Fourth-graders used scientific probe-ware purchased by the Foundation during their field trips to the Raritan River. The gauges, which measure temperature and pH levels, were used to assess the health of the river.



The instruments are also being used in fifth-grade classes in their Mixtures and Solutions and Environments and Oceans units.

TBS teachers are turning lessons that used to be boring drills into exciting "game-show style" sessions with the help of their new Turning Point Student Response "clickers," provided by the REF. The software was recently demonstrated to parents at a Family School Council meeting. When asked to use the clickers to rate whether they were a valuable teaching tool, parents' responses were 100% "Yes!"

WHS students are experimenting with the editorial and technical processes involved in producing hard-copy books using technology from Apple Computer. First-grade teacher Michelle Gravett, a model technology member, worked with students to produce a book about their "dream house." In addition, students are using iPhoto and new supporting equipment to create an insect book and plan to construct a book about time before the end of the year.

The REF purchased a new traversing mat - a portable, horizontal "rock" climbing mat system that can be taken down and moved to different positions to present unique challenges. The system is working so well at HBS that RMS will borrow the mats for use in its physical education classes.

For the first time, the REF sponsored a Poet-in-Residence, bringing in well-

known poet Luray Gross to conduct four workshops with fourth-grade students in November. The project challenged students to use their senses, feelings and visualization as they learned to write and appreciate poetry. HBS teacher and grant recipient Donna DeGrau added, "It was amazing to watch this very talented poet help the children use their words to create beautiful, thought-provoking poetry."

At RMS, science teachers used an REF grant to buy high-end environmental testing equipment. The equipment will be used in sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade science classes later this spring.

Several classes are using newly purchased iPods to help students with independent reading. The iPods allow HBS students to follow along with a book on tape while reading on their own. This strategy has been shown to improve comprehension in students.

**"Listening to books on the iPod while I read them helps me make better mental pictures" of the story.** *-Katie Mahoney, HBS 4th-grader*