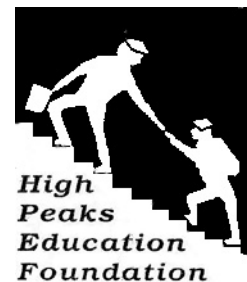


# High Peaks Education Foundation

## Autumn 2009 Newsletter



*HPEF's mission is to ensure the long-term survival and health of Keene Central School.*

*This newsletter is our progress report to the community.*

HPEF is run by a volunteer board of trustees, both full and seasonal residents. Sam Fisk is president. Cynthia Johnston, KCS Superintendent, and Board of Education member Matt Donahue are non-voting members. Funding for our work comes from charitable (and tax deductible) gifts from community members who understand the importance of a vibrant school to our town and our continuing responsibility to invest in the education of the next generation. Donations can be sent to HPEF, PO Box 475, Keene Valley, NY 12943.

### KCS Enrollment Stays Strong

KCS started the school year with the same enrollment as last year (174). This year we also have a good sized kindergarten class of 13.

### HPEF Funds Survive the Crisis

HPEF puts most of its funds under the management of the Adirondack Community Trust (ACT). Since the inception of our investment with ACT in March 2006 and through the crisis, HPEF has come out even. The account had made some gains through 2007, but these were lost during the crisis, leaving us with current balances about equal to what we deposited. Given the severity of the crisis, we are happy with this outcome.

### Two HPEF Pilots Go Mainstream

One of HPEF's primary activities is to initiate new approaches to learning and teaching. Ideas that turn out to be successful and that the administration and Board of Education want to integrate into the mainstream curriculum are then transitioned to the main school budget. Two HPEF programs have made that transition over the past year: the mentoring program and the Four Winds Nature Program. In this way, HPEF has had a lasting effect on the quality and local relevance of KCS education. Meanwhile, a much older HPEF-supported program, the Distance Learning Lab, has reached the end of its technical life span and has been retired, freeing up school funds for new projects like mentoring and Four Winds. HPEF, too, can now look to invest in innovative new programs that fit the scale and priorities of KCS.

### Teacher Grants Spur Innovation

One of HPEF's most successful programs has been the awarding of teacher grants in response to proposals for creative new educational materials or techniques. Teachers write proposals that are reviewed for relevance and impact on the curriculum.

Last year we awarded grants that included scientific instrument interfaces for physics and chemistry labs, specialized readers for 1st and 2nd graders that are designed to allow parents to read along with their kids, support for a day trip to New York City to see a musical, and rental of a pottery kiln to enable students to make raku pottery from locally gathered clay (see picture).

Already this year, the art teacher, Cheryl MacFadden, has used a grant to attend a workshop on hand-made tiles and mosaics. She hopes to use what she learned to have students across all grades create a mosaic mural on an outside wall at KCS. HPEF has also granted funds to send students to a Youth Climate Summit at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake.



## Every KCS Home on Broadband

HPEF's largest project is the expansion of broadband internet service throughout the town using the most up-to-date fiber optic technology. During 2009, our partnership with Keene Valley Video and Internet (KVVI) has strung miles of fiber and has connected about 100 new homes to the network. We have also increased the speed of all connections and improved overall reliability. We are particularly pleased to report that we met a key goal of having every house with a child, teacher or administrator from KCS connected to broadband Internet service. We are now working on ways to use this new capability to link what goes on in the classroom with what goes on at home (see article below).

Although we have accomplished all we wanted to do on the outside wires and cables, there is still more to do inside the network hub at KVVI to ensure that our internet system in town will continue to provide the broadband services people need. To this end we are continue to raise money. A great way to show your appreciation for our modern broadband network is to make a contribution to HPEF's Broadband Fund.

## KCS Upgrading PCs, Hand-Helds

With help from HPEF, KCS is upgrading its computing resources with a goal of putting more capability in every student's hands. HPEF is hoping to raise up to \$19,000 (to be matched by the Board of Education) to buy new laptops and a large number of iTouch hand-helds. Teachers will be able to offer lectures and presentations on these devices that students can replay at their own pace for better comprehension. This same technology will also allow these lectures to be viewed on a home PC by downloading them over the new broadband connections into students homes. Hands-on use of data will help give students the skills they need for college and work.

## KCS Cafeteria Gets Very Local

The KCS cafeteria has been working to grow more of its own food in a garden adjacent to the school. The program has been a great success both in terms of the quality of food and in the education it provides to students about agriculture and nutrition. But to be really useful, the garden needs to also produce during the winter months and this requires a greenhouse. So HPEF, in conjunction with other organizations, is raising money to enable the construction of a greenhouse to complement the existing outdoor garden. The more money we raise, the bigger the greenhouse can be and, thus, more food will be grown there for the cafeteria. Julie Holbrook, Cafeteria Manager, also hopes to add an orchard of fruit trees.



## High Schoolers Go to Europe

HPEF is especially enthusiastic about funding programs that introduce our students to other cultures, languages and geography. HPEF was a major sponsor of a multi-age trip (grades 9-11) to Spain in June 2009 for 16 students that was a big success. Now plans are underway for a trip to Greece and Italy in 2011 and HPEF hopes to be a major sponsor again.

**HPEF's mission** is to ensure the long-term survival and health of the Keene Central School as a critical institution in our town. HPEF supports the implementation of the KCS Strategic Plan, which covers both growth in student population through recruiting, and enrichment of educational programs for teachers and students of KCS. HPEF is a source of ideas, expertise, funding, connections and volunteers that augments the efforts of KCS administration and teachers, the Board of Education, and the Parent Teacher Association. HPEF focuses on researching feasible alternatives, disseminating accurate and clear information, and launching new initiatives. HPEF is seeking "KCS Ambassadors" who can help us to build support in the community for KCS.