

# SOMERS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## *Newsire*

Spring 2006

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

### NEW GRANTS AWARDED

Since January, SEF has awarded multiple grants totaling nearly \$30,000. SEF has distributed more than 150 grants totaling over \$230,000 since being founded in 1994. Here are the latest grants approved (applicants are teachers unless noted):

#### Districtwide

Following the awarding of two previous grants to purchase individual SMART boards, SEF approved funding for several more. SMART boards, which have proven to be effective teaching tools, combine the capabilities of white boards, projectors, computers and the Internet to create a dynamic, interactive learning experience. The newest boards will be placed in all four schools.

#### Somers Middle School

**Steve Chetcuti** received a grant for to purchase equipment for the instrumental music department, including a “wind

controller” which plays keyboards and other sound modules to help enhance performances.

**Francesca Vespe** received funding to provide an honorarium to nine students who were winners of the International Troubadours Recitation Poetry Competition. They included **Kelly Donohue, Jennifer Gross, Michael Graziano, Caroline Horizny, Lichen Li, Sarah Luposello, Kaitlyn Nealon, Nicki Parlitsis** and **Brenda Schoenfeld.**

#### Somers High School

Student **Danielle Matsumoto** received a grant to fund the Model UN Club’s plans to attend two conferences at which students simulate United Nations committee sessions, playing the roles of delegates from around the world.

**Lisa Siano** was awarded a grant to begin to implement the Symtalk Method of instruction to foreign language students. It introduces vocabulary by using self-explanatory symbols that allow students to develop proficiency by learning to structure full sentences.

**Ann Ferraro** received a grant to help sponsor the Chamber Choir’s spring trip to Ottawa and Toronto, Canada. Included was funding to arrange three concerts and for local tour guides in both cities.

**Amy Banino** was awarded a grant to send members of the yearbook staff to participate in the Gettysburg, PA Yearbook Experience this summer, where they will learn all phases of creation and production of yearbooks.

### SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Each spring SEF awards EXCEL scholarships to several graduating SHS seniors who demonstrate their “excellent character and exemplary leadership.” This year’s winners are **Michael Choi, Marissa Humphreys** and **Rachel Vishnepolsky.** Congratulations!

*Somers Education Foundation welcomes grant applications throughout the school year. Applications are available at [www.sefny.org](http://www.sefny.org) or at the district office.*

### SEF EVENTS RECAP

#### ANNUAL VARIETY SHOW: BUMPER CROP OF TALENT



*Aliyah and Carleigh Meyer prepare to hit the stage.*

The annual SEF Variety Show on January 27 was among the largest ever, drawing 36 wide-ranging acts involving more than 65 talented performers. Comedy, hula-hooping, instrument playing, karate and many singing and dancing styles were once again represented. The audience of more than 500 was treated to an evening of extraordinary entertainment. Special thanks to **James Gherardi, Harrison Meyer** and **Henning Haggblom** for their contributions.

## GALA DINNER: HALL OF FAMERS INDUCTED

Three exceptional contributors to the success of the Somers School District were inducted into the SEF Hall of Fame at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Gala Dinner and Silent Auction on April 22 at Pinnacle Restaurant in Somers. A record crowd of more than 150 was in attendance.



*Honorees Tony DeMatteo, Fausta McDermott and Michael McDermott.*

The new honorees include longtime SHS head football coach **Tony DeMatteo** and Somers parents **Mike** and **Fausta McDermott**, who have been very active in supporting the town and the school district for many years.

DeMatteo's education career as a teacher and administrator spans nearly 40 years. The campus supervisor at SHS, he was the NFL high school coach of the year in 2003 and also carried the Olympic torch as its way to the Athens for the 2004 Summer Games. He is a member of the Westchester County Hall of Fame and Yonkers Hall of Fame. Locally, he is very supportive of district events and has been an active participant at many gatherings.

"My philosophy in coaching has always been simple. I try to teach ordinary people to do

extraordinary things, on and off the field. It's brought me a great sense of satisfaction," DeMatteo said.

The McDermotts are lawyers and partners in the New York City and Somers law firm of McDermott & McDermott. Somers residents since 1993, they have four sons in district schools and have been very supportive of community and district activities and events.

Michael McDermott has been admitted to practice law since 1984. He has served as Somers Town Justice since 2000 and started an impactful remediation program to prevent youths charged with violations in Somers from becoming repeat offenders. He also has instituted programs to promote education of parents and children about drug laws, teen driver safety, DWI laws and relate topics. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Somers Chamber of Commerce and Somers Historical Society and is a member of the Somers Lions Club.



*Westchester County Legislator Michael Kaplowitz honors Michael McDermott at dinner.*

"It's so important to teach children early on the dangers of drinking and drugs, and what can happen when they get behind the wheel under the

influence. Hopefully what we've done has had some impact," Michael McDermott said.

Fausta McDermott has been admitted to practice law since 1985. She currently serves a Vice President of the Somers Library Board of Trustees, Program Chair of the Italian-American Club of Somers and Vice Chair of the Board of Consultants for the Schools of Arts, Science and Education at Manhattan College. She is also active in Somers Chamber of Commerce and Somers PTA, participating in many panel discussions topics of legal interest to the community.

"I've always believed it's so important to give back to the community, and it's been very rewarding to watch Somers and its school district grow and change over the years with such vibrancy," she said.

## HARLEM WIZARDS THRILL IN RETURN

SEF wrapped up the school year by bringing back the famous Harlem Wizards, featuring star player "Tojo," to a sold-out SHS gym on May 12. More than 700 attendees enjoyed the antics of the Wizards as well as their pinpoint shooting accuracy, while also cheering on the determined WizBusters team of teachers and administrators. The final score was not as important as the sense of community and fun this event always generates.

## AUTHORS' DAY A HIT

A small group of famous authors visited SIS on May 5 for the annual Author's day event, partially funded by an SEF grant in honor of Vice president Kay Staplin, a retired SIS teacher. The authors spent time discussing their careers, reading and displaying their works and giving students tips on how to improve their writing skills.



*Luigi Olinto meets the authors at breakfast before the day begins.*

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS DONATE

SEF appreciates the generous support it continues to receive from many local businesses, which helps fund the innovative grants we award teachers and students. We welcome those who would like to join our more than 75 community partners.

Interested businesses can make donations to fund specific grants or to support the general grant fund.

For more information on becoming a community partner, contact Community Liaison **Marilyn Foley** at [www.sefny.org](http://www.sefny.org).

## GALA DINNER SPONSORS

Thanks to all our sponsors and donors who made the dinner and auction the most successful ever, as more than \$17,000 was raised for our grantmaking activities. The list includes the following:

<i>Adam &amp; Eve Hair Salon</i>	
<i>Ann Koplik</i>	<i>Anthony Enca</i>
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<i>Aries Automotive</i>	<i>Astoria Federal Savings</i>
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<i>Best Plumbing</i>	<i>Blazer Restaurant</i>
<i>Bowers Family</i>	<i>Brenda Friedman</i>
<i>Brewster Ice Arena</i>	<i>Brewster Theatre</i>
<i>Cathy Parlitsis</i>	<i>Chad Wallace</i>
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<i>Coach DeMatteo</i>	<i>Curves</i>
<i>Dave Levine</i>	<i>Dr. Eric Small</i>
<i>Dr. Stauber</i>	<i>First Impressions</i>
<i>Fratelli's</i>	<i>Fred Fisher</i>
<i>Gary Cohen</i>	<i>Gary Parker</i>
<i>Granite Springs Inn</i>	<i>Hair by Lisa</i>
<i>Hollywood Flowers</i>	<i>Il Forno</i>
<i>Hudson Valley Renegades</i>	
<i>Jacob Burns Theater</i>	<i>Jeff Pearlman</i>
<i>Joe &amp; Luanne Izzo</i>	<i>Judy Kunneth</i>
<i>Kailo Center for the Healing Arts</i>	
<i>Katonah Hardware</i>	<i>Katonah Nursery</i>
<i>Kellog's &amp; Lawrence</i>	<i>Lawton Adams</i>
<i>Le Fontane</i>	<i>Louise Koch</i>
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<i>Luke's Hair Design</i>	<i>Melissa Calavita</i>
<i>Mexican Shack</i>	<i>Moss Family</i>
<i>Murphy's</i>	<i>NY Sports Club</i>
<i>Old Tyme Floral</i>	<i>Oriental Furnishings</i>
<i>Paramount Theater</i>	<i>Pepsi</i>
<i>Pet Mart</i>	<i>Pinnacle Restaurant</i>
<i>Plaza Hair Design</i>	<i>Posie's</i>
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<i>Purchase Center for Performing Arts</i>	
<i>Salingers Orchard</i>	<i>Saw Mill River Club</i>
<i>Scarcella Family</i>	<i>Seasons</i>
<i>Sesame Workshop</i>	<i>Somerfield's</i>
<i>SIS 3rd Grade Teachers</i>	
<i>Somers Animal Hospital</i>	
<i>Somers Historical Society</i>	
<i>Somers Pro Fashion Nails</i>	
<i>Somers Wines &amp; Spirits</i>	
<i>Stomping Grounds Café</i>	
<i>Sterling Cellars</i>	
<i>Strathmore Bagels</i>	<i>Sunless &amp; Sandless</i>
<i>Sunset Cove</i>	<i>Sweet Delites</i>
<i>The Guide</i>	<i>Tony DeMatteo</i>
<i>Trader Joe's</i>	<i>Traditions</i>
<i>Video Box Office</i>	<i>Weinsteins Pharmacy</i>
<i>Wells Fargo Mortgage</i>	<i>White Plains Bowl</i>

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Serving as the President of Somers Education Foundation these past five years has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life. While I am excited to be taking on my new role as a Trustee on the Board of Education, it was SEF that gave me the first taste of volunteerism's own special rewards. The enthusiasm and learning that our Somers children gain from innovative teaching and creative programs certainly makes all the hard work and crazy sacrifices worth the effort.

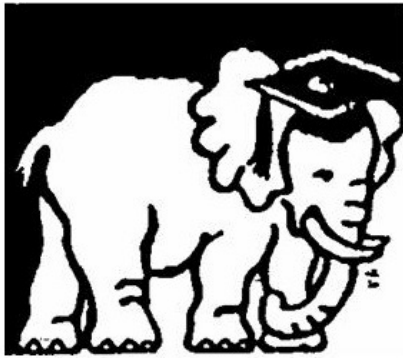
On a much more personal level, I must admit the lessons my children learn about giving of themselves and being part of our community through service are the most valuable rewards.

We live in a day when volunteerism is at a crisis level across our country and across our town. Not giving our time, when it's often easier to donate money, has threatened the mere existence of service groups everywhere.

As I write this last article, I urge each of you to consider teaching your children the lesson that only you can. Teach them the value and satisfaction that only comes from being part of a group that is working for something bigger than any individual, from giving their energy and enthusiasm to something that can't be bought.

I wish you all a safe and happy summer, and a 2006-'07 school year filled with showing our children what can be gained from giving.

*-Sarena Diamond Meyer  
SEF President*



**SOMERS  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**

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

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!**

***September 19, 2006***

Fall Golf Outing  
 Anglebrook Club  
 12:30pm

***November 10, 2006***

“Subs and Sounds”  
 Dinner and Music  
 Somers High School  
 Time TBD

***November 29, 2006***

Wine Tasting Reception  
 Traditions Restaurant  
 7:00pm

**SEF  
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