



Foundation plans all-year reunion

Members of graduating classes invited to attend festivities



photo | Emma Vitale

Reunion 2.0: The mural in the foyer of St. Louis Park High School was painted by the class of 1990, when the first all-year reunion took place. Now, 22 years later, SLPPSF is bringing it back.

By Caroline Ahlgrim & Kayla Goldfarb

Ordinarily, a St. Louis Park graduate of 1955 would not be found talking to a recent 2012 grad. However, this will all change on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2012.

The St. Louis Park Public Schools Foundation (SLPPSF) is planning an all-year high school reunion for this date.

The reunion will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Louis Park Senior High. Rain-or-shine festivities will include performances in the auditorium by returning classmates, a track meet for all ages, affinity group tables to reunite with teams and clubs in the old gym, a chance to tour the school and meet some staff, and a silent auction by the District Office.

Graduates from all years (and from both the old and new school building) are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Reunion organizer Joan Brinkman said this event will provide an opportunity for Park grads of all ages to reconnect with former classmates and enjoy a day in the Park with friends and their families.

"Plans are being made for hotels and restaurants to offer specials to Park alums during the weekend of the reunion," Brinkman said. "We hope to see hundreds of SLP supporters at the reunion."

The activities offered at the reunion are meant to be both fun and meaningful. For example, all graduates will have the opportunity to sign a large banner that will go on display in the high school.



E-Network manager Melissa Worthington said she thinks the talent show will be especially entertaining and hopes alums will volunteer to perform in the auditorium.

"We're hoping for a variety of performances showcasing as many grad classes as time allows," Worthington said.

For those interested in participating in the talent show, Janice Feinberg is organizing the event, which can be signed up for on the SLPPSF website <http://www.slppsf.org>.

Both Brinkman and Worthington are working on arranging the event and distributing information to possible attendees. Brinkman hopes to get some help from members of each class.

"We need to secure reunion organizers from as many classes as we can to spread the word," Brinkman said. "If we can get information to 50 class chairs, then they in turn can alert their classmates. Facebook groups have been an amazing way to spread the word about this event."

Worthington, who herself is not a Park alumna, said she hopes the reunion will offer activities for all ages of the community and not just those who attended the school.

"I'm looking to see everyone from preschool to retirement out and enjoying the events," she said.

Because the reunion is still months away, Worthington and Brinkman can only speculate as to how many will attend. However, Worthington, who is leading the efforts to publicize the event, hopes to see as many as 500 Park residents for the first reunion.

Those interested in attending the celebration can visit <http://www.slppsf.org> for more information, ticket purchases, and volunteering at the reunion.



Foundation's mission statement and goals

By Emma Vitale

The St. Louis Park Public Schools Foundation (SLPPSF) has one simple but very important goal: to enhance the education experience for students of St. Louis Park.

The Foundation funds over \$30,000 of projects each year for Park schools to support programs that would otherwise be unavailable due to budget constraints.

Established in 2001, the Foundation has given over \$200,000 in grants to the district in efforts of improving students' school experience.

"St. Louis Park has a really incredible school system," President Peter Levy said. "We simply enhance what is already a great system with the grants we give."

SLPPSF focuses on four main areas of concentration: reading, math and science, the arts, and transitions. The transitions are aimed at helping students with the changeover of schools, such as from middle school to ninth grade. Through various grants, the Foundation helps the district fund projects in these areas.

"Transitions were huge this year because of the new structure of our schools," Levy said. "We were really able to provide a lot of help to the incoming sixth and seventh graders in the Junior High."

SLPPSF has two funds, an operating fund and an endowment fund. The operating fund is used for annual grants and operating expenses, while the endowment

Fast | facts

- Has given over \$200,000 in grants
- Focuses on reading, math and science, the arts and transitions
- Funded by donations

fund provides for the Foundation's long-term support. "A donor can give a donation that will be used for specific goals during the year, but a larger, more sustained gift might be placed in the endowment fund," Levy said. "Either way, people can give donations and be assured that 100 percent of their money will go ex-

clusively to the kids."

In the process of raising money to support school projects, SLPPSF aims to keep people connected to St. Louis Park and renew relationships through donors' support to the schools.

"Our alumni have a fond spot in their heart for St. Louis Park and its schools, and they like the opportunity to reconnect to their hometown and give back to the schools that were such a big part of their life," Levy said. "The legacy of Park, and feeling like Park is and will always be home, is a huge part of the Foundation."

As a non-profit organization run by volunteers, SLPPSF relies on the St. Louis Park community to show its support for the schools through donations. St. Louis Park is consistently regarded as a high-achieving school district, and its students perform extremely well thanks to its guidance and quality. Donor support is vital to SLPPSF's ability to provide students with enhanced education, and makes St. Louis' Park schools the very best they can be.

Gratitude Greetings raise \$4101 for Foundation

By Abigail Tupa



The SLPPSF was able to generate a total of \$4101 dollars from 2011 Gratitude Greetings. These notes provided an opportunity for students and their families throughout St. Louis Park to thank influential teachers and school staff for their support and guidance. All schools within the district participated in this opportunity to extend appreciation to its educators, from the elementary level to the high school. The money raised by the Foundation will be used to support education throughout the district. Gratitude Greetings for the 2011-2012 school year will be made available in April so as to continue the tradition.

Park after Dark event returns for second year

By Hannah Sieff

As a continuation of last year's success, the Park after Dark event combined a delicious evening with a growing consciousness of the SLPPSF.

According to Fall Event Coordinator Curt Rahman, the event was almost identical to last year.

"It was simply a fundraiser and a friend-raiser. The goal is raising awareness and getting people to come to the event to learn about the Foundation," Rahman said. "The foundation gave away almost \$40,000 to the schools this year and this event is just one way we can fund those grants."

The fundraiser was held at Perspectives Café Sept. 10 from 6-9 p.m. The menu consisted of Florida pickled shrimp, a blue cheese wedge salad, roast tenderloin of beef Wellington with mushroom demi-glace, roasted fall vegetables, pommes Duchesse and a fresh fruit trifle. Surly Brewery and Steel Toe Brewery donated beer for the event.

Similar to the event last year, chefs Joe



photo | Ted Brinkman

Cooking for community: Fall Event Coordinator Curt Rahman and chefs Joe and Dotty Zahner pose for a picture at the Park after Dark event Sept. 10. The Zahners prepared the meal, along with Tom and Christi Miller.

and Dotty Zahner cooked for approximately 75 guests, including the Foundation members. Thom and Christi Miller also assisted.

The event raised just over \$7,000, and after cover food and event space expenses, it provided the SLPPSF a total of about \$5,000.

"(The event) absolutely was a success

because we achieved our goals to fill the place up, get a bunch of people together and have a fun and enjoyable evening and bring awareness about the Foundation," Rahman said.

Rahman said they will continue the Park after Dark event in some form next year, although it may be in a different venue.

List of 2011-12 Grants



School and department	Project	Amount	Concept
Aquila Kindergarten through second grade	Listening Stations	\$10,000	Literacy, listening, fluent reading
Central Community Center Early Childhood and Community Education	Creative Play	\$3,000	Math and science; reading and language arts
Central Community Center Early Childhood and Community Education	ECFE Family Literacy Grant	\$3,000	Reading and language arts; transitions between or within schools
High School English, Social Studies and Special Education Department	Interdisciplinary Unit on Civil Rights and Jim Crow Laws	\$1,000	Reading and transitions within schools
High School Music	Spring 2012 Gala Musical Fundraising Performance	\$3,000	Arts
High School Career Services HAP Advocate	Press Start	\$1,000	Transitions
Junior High School Sixth through eighth grade	Middle Level Career Guidance Initiative	\$3,000	Transitions
Junior High School Sixth through eighth grade	Response to Instruction Program	\$3,000	Reading and math
Peter Hobart First grade	Listening Centers	\$1,324	Reading
Park Spanish Immersion Second through fifth grade	English	\$3,000	Literacy, listening, fluent reading
Peter Hobart Kindergarten through second grade	Math Activities Collection	\$2,000	Math
Park Spanish Immersion Third grade	Improving Reading Fluency with Mp3	\$3,000	Reading
High School Ninth through twelfth grade	St. Louis Park Digital Youth Media Project	\$2,700	Technology

How to donate:

1. Go online to the website at <http://www.slppsf.org> and click on "Donate Now."
2. Send your check to SLPPSF, P.O. Box 26393, St. Louis Park, MN 55426.
3. Volunteers are welcome to donate their time. If you are interested in becoming a reunion volunteer, visit the SLPPSF website and contact president Peter Levy.

Give to the Max Day

On Nov. 16, money was raised for thousands of Minnesota nonprofits, including \$8130 for the SLPPSF. Donations can still be made at <http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Saint-Louis-Park-Public-Schools-Foundation>.

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Staff:

Caroline Ahlgrim
Kayla Goldfarb
Katie Johns
Hannah Sieff
Abigail Tupa
Emma Vitale

Advisor:

Joan Brinkman

Edited by:

Mim Kagol

Special thanks to Lori Keekley for allowing staff to use resources and to board members contacted for information.

Board Members

Title	Name	Contact Information
PRESIDENT	Peter Levy	pblevy@gmail.com
TREASURER	Bob Hendrickson	rhhendrickson@hotmail.com
SECRETARY	Mim Kagol	kagolm@aol.com
FALL EVENT COORDINATOR, PLANNED GIVING	Curt Rahman	curtrahman@gmail.com
SCHOOL LIAISON	Joan Brinkman	brinkman.joan@gmail.com
GRANTS DIRECTOR	Lorraine Boyle	lboyle5@comcast.net
EMAIL MARKETING	Melissa Worthington	mw@worthington.com
FUNDRAISING	Charles Goldstein, Matt Stangl	charles@fmylaw.com matt_strangl@hotmail.com
WEBMASTER	Tracy Vig	tracy.vig@honeywell.com
SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE	Bruce Richardson	brichardson@mnrubber.com
GRANTS COORDINATOR	Ed Skelly	edskelly@comcast.net

Parenting presentation features new book

By Abi Tupa

The SLPPSF sponsored a parenting presentation that was open to the community on Tuesday, Oct. 4. Acclaimed child-development author Julia Espy led the event, speaking on the concepts within her book, *If I Were Your Daddy, This Is What You'd Learn*. Special guest Paul Scheele, a father featured in the book, also participated in the event. As a single mother, Espy wrote her book to bring wisdom to her son about the gift of fatherhood in his dad's absence.

Special thanks to reunion classes

- The class of 1961 donated \$4000 to the SLPPSF, and
- The class of 1971 collected \$1000

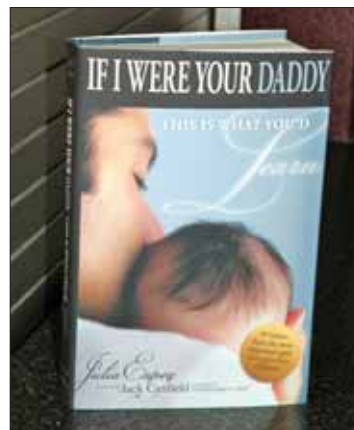


photo | Joan Brinkman