



PEEKSKILL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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# PEEKSKILL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## Enriching & Enhancing Local Education

### Background and Mission

The Peekskill Education Foundation (PEF) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3), community based organization dedicated to enriching and expanding the educational experiences and opportunities of students within the Peekskill City School District. It was started in November 2002 by a group of concerned citizens working in close cooperation with the Peekskill City School District. The PEF's goals are to raise funds to support and develop new program initiatives designed to:

- Improve academic achievement in reading, science and math;
- Expand cultural enrichment experiences and opportunities in music and the arts;
- Create new opportunities for higher education for the district's students;
- Assist with equipment purchases and physical improvements to the district's schools;
- Identify and foster partnerships between residents, business and the Peekskill City Schools in order to develop a higher level of community involvement and financial support.

### Programmatic Support Areas and Accomplishments

To meet its goals, the PEF funds and initiates a wide variety of academic and cultural programs within the Peekskill City School District. The timing and initiation of such programs is dependent on the Foundation's ability to raise funds and the needs identified by the PEF's funding/grants committee and the Peekskill City School District. Some of the specific types of programs that the PEF has funded, or intends to support in the future, include the following:

- **New and Expanded Arts and Science Initiatives.** The PEF seeks to establish high quality, distinguished speakers series in sciences and engineering, bring in nationally known dance or music performances, and sponsor in-residence artist, musician, and author programs in order to enrich the local education experience and to expose students to all realms of future endeavors.

*In 2004, the PEF funded an Artist-in-Residence Program at Uriah Hill that provided hands-on art assistance and support for the school's pre-K students. In 2005, the PEF brought the internationally known, and Peekskill-based, Rebel Baroque Orchestra to the Paramount Theater for a special music education and appreciation concert for students in grades K-9. The program introduced the students to a form of music and instrumentation not typically heard by today's students. Rebel was also brought to Peekskill High School in 2007 for specially designed performance and work group session with Middle and High School music students.*

# PEF MISSION & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

page 2

- **Teacher Incentive and Education Grants.** The PEF provides mini-grants to teachers to foster innovation in the classroom and to keep Peekskill teachers at the forefront of their field.

*In 2004, the PEF awarded over \$4,500 to support programs such as a Parent-Child Book Club in the Peekskill Middle School, a Tree Identification and Mapping project for 4th grade students, and an artist-in-residence program for pre-K students at Uriah Hill.*

*In 2005, the PEF formalized its classroom grant program for teachers and administrators by creating the PEF Promise Grant Program, which offers grants of up to \$1,000 to both teachers and administrators to create innovative classroom projects that foster new learning and cultural enrichment opportunities for Peekskill students. The PEF awarded more than \$4,000 under the Promise Grant program for projects such as a World Drumming and Percussion Instrument Music program for 3rd and 4th grade students at Woodside School, a Terrestrial Ecosystem Study Program for special education students at Peekskill High School, and a Reading and Beading Literacy program for High School students that combines the art of beading with listening to and discussing books.*

*In 2006, the PEF awarded \$3,850 through its Promise Grant program. This included funds for a highly innovative program at Oakside School that taught art and science skills to 1st and 2nd grade students by planting and growing Monet's Garden, as well as the teaching of business and marketing skills to 3rd and 4th grade students through the creation of an in-school store, operated by students, at Woodside Elementary School. Other projects funded included a Dinosaur Museum for pre-K students at Uriah Hill and the continued funding of the highly successful Reading and Beading program at Peekskill High School.*

*In 2007 the PEF awarded another \$4,000 to Peekskill teachers to purchase equipment and materials needed to run a CSI studies program for 5th & 6th grade students; to teach 3rd grade students science and math skills by studying plant growth and vermicomposting; to conduct school-wide surveys to determine the heritage of students at Oakside Elementary School, along with more in-depth research on each of the represented countries; to purchase art supplies and hire a local artist to create a "hands-on" interactive zoo for pre-K students; and to increase the reading fluency and skills of 2nd Grade English Language learners by having the students become "experts" by reading a books on a particular topic.*

- **Special Equipment Purchases.** The PEF seeks to raise funds to purchase, and/or support the purchase of, needed educational and recreation equipment not included in the school district's budget or where sufficient funds are not in place but a pressing need is identified. Types of purchases that the PEF will consider include musical instruments, so that every student can have the opportunity to participate in this enriching and important educational experience, playground and athletic equipment to enhance physical education and health, and technology related equipment in order to provide students with state-of-the-art educational opportunities.

# PEF MISSION & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

page 3

*In 2004, the PEF awarded \$3,500 to the Peekskill City School District for the purchase of new library books for the District's six school libraries. In 2006, the PEF awarded \$3,000 to the High School Music Department for the purchase of music equipment and helped the district secure close to \$10,000 in computer equipment through local IBM employees.*

*And, in 2007, the PEF, with the assistance of Wheelabrator Westchester LP, provided a \$30,000 grant to the School District for Science and Technology equipment for the High School. The grant included funds for laptop computers, mobile computer carts with wireless capabilities, and scientific probes and cameras.*

In addition to the programmatic areas described above, the PEF's long-term plans also include undertaking initiatives in the following areas as well:

- **Academic Scholarship Programs.** As the Foundation's resources grow, the PEF intends to provide small incentive scholarships for talented students who need extra funds to pursue a college education.
- **Enhanced Advanced Placement Programs.** To further foster and encourage academic achievement, the PEF will seek to supplement and/or enhance the high school's Advanced Placement programs with specialized programs that meet nationally recognized standards.
- **New Program Initiatives.** The PEF will also serve as a catalyst and funding vehicle for new program initiatives identified by teachers, administrators, or the public. These may include, but not be limited to, preparing grant applications to government agencies or private foundations to support specialized reading programs, health and nutrition initiatives, mentoring programs, or other needed programs and services that will have a direct and positive impact on the educational enhancement and success of Peekskill students.

## Organizational Status

The Peekskill Education Foundation, Inc. was incorporated as a New York State not-for-profit corporation in November 2002 and received its designation as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization from the IRS in June 2003 (see attached IRS determination letter).

The PEF is managed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, each of whom serves a three-year term. The PEF Board also has 4 ex-officio members: the superintendent of the Peekskill Schools; the current President of the Peekskill Board of Education; a teacher representative from the Peekskill City School District; and a representative from the City of Peekskill Common Council. Seven distinguished members of the Peekskill community also serve as Honorary Board members.