

For immediate release

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BEF grants make a difference in local schools

Birmingham, Michigan – January 21, 2008 – “I’ll miss working with you every day, and seeing your smile,” wrote one middle school student to another.

An ordinary message between friends becomes more poignant when the note is written by a general education student to her LINKS pal, a student with autism. LINKS is a peer-to-peer support program made possible at several schools in the Birmingham Public School (BPS) district as a result of grants made in November 2007 by the Birmingham Education Foundation (BEF).

In addition to funding two LINKS programs, the BEF Board of Trustees approved 14 grant requests totaling more than \$30,000 to benefit a variety of BPS programs. Many of the grants enable the purchase of new technology, which school budgets can not afford.

Highlights of other grant requests approved at the board’s November meeting include:

- The Bingham Breakfast Club – a program that helps new students, who are entering Bingham Farms elementary school in the upper grades, work on essential skills such as reading, math, and organization.
- New Laptops for Berkshire Middle School’s Media Center – to allow more students the opportunity to access online databases and encyclopedias for research.
- Automated Robot Workcell project – purchase of a reusable CNC mill, the final piece for a robot being built by Seaholm High School engineering students.
- Purchase of DSO tickets – provides all fourth grade students in the district with the opportunity to attend an educational concert created by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

The grant requests approved in November 2007 represent only a portion of the projects the BEF will fund during the 2007-2008 school year. In the fall and spring, the BEF awards Foundation Grants of amounts greater than \$500 for programs developed by district staff. Great Idea Grants of up to \$500 for smaller projects are awarded on a rolling basis throughout the year. Great Idea Grants serve as pilot programs that test new initiatives on a small scale.

By raising private funds for public education, the BEF is able to award grants and fulfill its mission to identify projects, together with the BPS district, which will enhance learning for all students in the areas of Academics, Arts and Athletics.

To learn more about the BEF and the grant making process, visit www.supportbef.org.

The Birmingham Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to enhance learning for all students in the Birmingham Public Schools. Since its inception in 1993, the Foundation has provided privately raised funds to support innovation and excellence in the areas of Academics, Arts and Athletics.