



Windsor Community Builds for the Future

From hands-on projects that make kids eager to learn, to scholarships that help send high school seniors to college, school programs that go beyond the basics can often depend on contributions from a generous community.

School districts, though, aren't well equipped to take donations. For one thing, according to law, a district that receives a direct donation must spend that money within one or two budget years. "Then it's gone," says Stephen Feehan, a member of the Windsor Central School District's Board of Education. A school district can't accept monetary gifts that go on giving.

From now on, though, gifts to the Windsor school community can make a lasting impact, thanks to two special funds created within the Community Foundation. The Black Knight Fund (named for Windsor's mascot) will support short-term initiatives such as mini-grants and special capital projects. The Black Knight Legacy Fund, an endowed fund, will support scholarships and other long-term needs.

Since members of the Windsor community don't have the expertise required to manage a foundation on their own,

working with the Community Foundation is a perfect solution, says Jason Andrews, superintendent of the Windsor Central School District. "You can rest easy knowing that funds are being handled appropriately, professionally and legally."

The Community Foundation made it extremely simple to establish the funds, says Barb Mirch, a member of the School Board and chair of the Black Knight Fund Advisory Committee. "They prepared all the forms. We just had to sign some papers and then start sending them the checks."

The Windsor community launched the Black Knight Legacy Fund with an initial \$25,000 from local contributors. The Advisory Committee will raise further dollars for both funds, welcoming donations large and small from anyone who feels a tie to the district. "We're looking at trying to tap alumni who are interested in giving back to the school, perhaps former employees, and vendors and corporate partners that work with the school," Andrews says.

With the Community Foundation to administer the funds, the Advisory Committee can focus on connecting with potential donors, says Feehan, who serves on the Committee. And donors can rest assured that their gifts will be managed wisely. "The Community Foundation provides that," he says.

The funds will create important opportunities for Windsor's students, says Mirch. For some kids, programs that spark excitement about school might even make the crucial difference between failure and success, she says. "This is a great way to give them an awesome start."

The Black Knight Funds will provide mini-grants to teachers, as well as support scholarships, special capital projects and longer-term needs, such as keeping up with new educational technology. Teacher Kori Flynn and student Sydney Webb are seen here standing before an interactive Whiteboard, a computer and Internet-based teaching tool currently in use throughout the district.



Windsor CSD student Rachael LaMantia helps out in the Blue Stone Café, located in the High School's library. An example of the type of educational project the Black Knight Funds could help support, the Café serves to attract kids to the library, provides hands-on experience for business students and offers a space to display student art.