

# THE CORNERSTONE

*News from the Charter Foundation*

Issue III

October 16, 2006

***“A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is but drudgery. But a vision with a task is the hope of humanity.”***

***--R. Steiner***

## **WHAT IS THE CHARTER FOUNDATION?**

The Charter Foundation is the non-profit organization which receives and disburses all funds donated to the Sebastopol Independent Charter School. It also owns the school's main asset, the building on Main St.

## **WHY DOES OUR SCHOOL NEED DONATIONS?**

Although our school receives the same amount of money per child as other public schools, the local district is not required to give us any facilities. In addition, our Waldorf program requires teachers to be State-credentialed AND Waldorf-trained. And finally, our educational system requires teaching many topics that normal public schools do not offer (Specialty teachers for Handwork, Woodwork, Games, Chorus, and Music, for example). We simply cannot offer the kind of education we currently do without a significant contribution of money from the parent body.

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

We rely primarily on a Parent Pledge Program to raise funds for our school. By filling out a Pledge Form, you let us know what we can expect from your family and you make a commitment that works for your financial situation. The

most helpful participants do the following:

- ◆ Fill out a green *Pledge Form*
- ◆ Make regular payments.
- ◆ Volunteer for one of our fund raising activities: Rummage Sale, Auction, Calendar Sales, etc...
- ◆ Make sure you are signed up for E-Scrip and Community Smart. This program could generate much more than it currently does.

## **AUCTION FUNDRAISER FEBRUARY 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Our normal Fall Fundraiser has been moved to this February. We need a very active crew of volunteers to make this a successful event. Please contact Carey Wheaton for more information. We need YOU!

## **COMMUNITY MEETING WED. OCTOBER 18th**

This week at 7:00, we will host a Community Meeting. The following topics will be addressed:

- ♥ *The Search for our Permanent Site.*
- ♣ *What our future home will be like.*
- ◆ *How do we get from here to there.*
- ♠ *Current Fundraiser Activity.*
- ♥ *The February Auction Event*
- \$ *Our Financial Situation.*

## ***How did we do last Fiscal (school) year?***

<u>Fundraising:</u>		<u>Expenses:*</u>	
Pledges:	\$298,013	Mortgage Interest:	\$ 75,790
Festival/Auction:	\$ 14,501	Professional Svcs:	\$ 3,390
Calendars:	\$ 8,385	Facilities/Repairs:	\$ 5,244
Rummage:	\$ 4,872		
E-Scrip, etc.:	\$ 4,768	Fund-Raising:	\$ 3,388
Retail Rent:	\$ 55,129	Taxes/Insurance:	\$ 10,335
School Rent:	\$ 102,000	Other:	\$ 1,413
Other:	\$ 5,120	Total Expenses:	\$ 99,560
Total Income:	\$ 492,788		

Net Income = \$393,228 [Savings: \$150,000; School: \$150,000; RSF Principal: \$93,228]  
\*Note: All utilities are billed directly to tenants and do not appear here.

We were able to grant the school **\$150,000** last year, which it used as part of its general funds to support the salaries of our teachers and specialty programs. We also saved **\$150,000** to be used for our eventual permanent site purchase. Our savings are invested with the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, where they make a fair interest rate, support great socially responsible causes AND generate cash grants directly to the school each year.

We did not make our pledge goal, and there were over 25 families who did not participate in the pledge program at any level. Most of these families claimed financial hardship, but we know of many families who are barely making ends meet that were able to donate a small amount of money, so we know that this is possible for almost everyone out there.

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## ***How are we doing so far this year?***

Here is a summary of the Pledge Program for this fiscal year (July through June):

Number of Families in School:	182
Number of Families Who Have Pledged:	134 (73% pledge rate so far)
Total Amount Pledged This Fiscal Year:	\$254,800
Amount of Money Given to School This Year:	\$ 40,000
Amount of Money Saved for future Site:	\$ 40,000

If you are not participating in the Pledge Program due to financial constraints, won't you please try to make an effort at some level? Perhaps you could ask a relative to donate on behalf of your child.

If you are well-off financially, would you consider donating even more? Alternatively, investing in the RSF Collaborative Investment Fund helps your money earn interest while funding great projects and directly benefiting the school.

We need to get our Pledges up to at least \$300,000 in order to continue supporting our programs and our savings plans. Land is not getting any cheaper and our teachers are worth the extra effort. You can make a difference by participating at your maximum level.

## **HOW MUCH IS EXPECTED FROM OUR PARENTS?**

We ask for a monthly donation of **\$170/month/child**. This equates to **\$2040/year/child**. In addition to the state money, this means that we are hoping to be able to spend about \$7000/year/child. For comparison, **one local private Waldorf school charges an average of over \$9000 per year for tuition** – and that doesn't count additional "giving" campaigns. As you can see, just pledging our suggested donation of \$2040/year is an incredible bargain compared to private school costs.

## **WE ARE STILL BUILDING OUR SCHOOL!**

Every year we struggle to design and staff a program of exceptional benefits for our students. We pay our teachers higher than most other comparable schools. We hire an array of specialty teachers. And we strive to make the best of our two campus school.

Even though our main campus looks complete it is too small. There isn't enough playground space. We can't even invite the entire school community to an event at our school.

As we save for a future home, we are equally committed to making our education program as full as we can. Hold an attitude that says "I am building the school for my children" is the attitude that helps us all keep this process going.

## **MAKING A COMMITMENT.**

Why do we have to commit to a certain amount for our pledge donation? Quite simply, our school board has to deliver the salaries it promises to its classroom and specialty teachers when it commits to hiring them plus create a reasonable

budget at the start of each school year. They need to know how much money they can work with to create the best program possible. Please make every effort to make a commitment and honor it all through the school year. If your circumstances change midyear, please let us know.

## **E-SCRIP AND COMMUNITY-SMART FACTS**

By registering our credit cards, and the cards of friends and family we have been able to contribute **\$4,768** last school year through E-scrip and "Community Smart". But less than half of our families are participating. We need all families to sign up for these almost effortless fundraisers for our school. Please make sure your cards are updated! We are also looking for a new E-Scrip Helper to take over from Emily Flouten, who has done a great job over the past few years. Contact Jim Wheaton if you are computer savvy and like to help people.

## **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING WITH R.S.F. BENEFITS OUR SCHOOL**

The Rudolf Steiner Foundation Collaborative would like to set up a meeting with interested parents to explain their investment program which provides financial vehicles for investors who wish to support organizations and individuals practicing economic, environmental, and social sustainability. These investments would generate about 1.5% interest **to our school** in the form of a grant (distributed after 1 year). In addition, it generates money for you at modest rates (last rate was 4.0%). There will also be a discussion of Steiner's view of money and how attitudes about money can shift realities. See [www.rsfsocialfinance.org](http://www.rsfsocialfinance.org) for info, or contact **Jim Wheaton**.

## **PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE PAGE**

***In this issue we present comments from parents whose children are now in High School.***

*I was a little concerned about Amber making the transition from our warm, cozy and insulated school into the hustle and bustle of Analy High School, but my fears were soon dispelled when I saw how quickly she integrated into her new environment. Her artistic and musical abilities that have been nurtured from the beginning have, of course flourished, and equally importantly, her strong sense of self, which has been a cornerstone of her Waldorf experience, has proven quite valuable. She loves school, is scoring A's and B's and is captain of the JV soccer team. If there is a deficiency, it appears to be in the areas of math and science, though that may be an individual issue. Overall I am very thankful for the education that she has received at the Sebastopol Independent Charter School.*

*- Brett Fenex*

*Just a quick note regarding my son's first year at El Molino public school. He took a heavy class load including three advanced classes. These classes were considered the hardest classes offered at this school. To give you an idea, he had to write over 100 pages of information (yes 100) comparing non-western literature (i.e. short stories, poems etc.). The paper that was produced was professional and bound. And this was just the first semester.*

*The point is his schooling at SICS really helped prepare him for this and other classes. He was behind in some areas, how to use a computer, what do you use a school locker for, how to use a textbook and how to effectively take a multiple-choice test. By the end of the first semester he was competent in all these things. But where I saw the biggest difference as compared to kids that had always been in public school was in thinking outside of the box. He and his other SICS graduates (four others went to El Molino) that took the integrated humanities course I discussed above in general received the highest marks on their papers and in the class. I had a few conversations with a couple of his teachers who were impressed with both the knowledge and attitude of these teens that graduated from the SICS. In general they found them helpful, had a desire to learn, a fresh attitude and creative thinking abilities. This also carried over to his love for baseball. His coaches like his attitude, sportsmanship, and desire to try.*

*To make a long story short, he graduated his freshman year as a scholastic athlete (3.5 or better and playing at least one sport). I attribute this to both his desire to work hard, but also to a large extent to the experiences he received at SICS. He learned more than just the basics of reading and writing, but was given many life experiences, loving teachers and a class room environment that fostered creative thinking. I could go on and on, but the bottom line is his first 8 years has provided a solid foundation for him not just in school, but also in life.*

*-- Jeff Mathias*

*My sons are enrolled in the Montgomery High School / International Baccalaureate program. They are currently taking challenging pre-IB Honors courses in preparation for the Junior year diploma courses which can provide them with a larger 'world' perspective as well as university credit . They are very self-motivated to complete all assignments timely, stay on task, contribute to the class and challenge themselves by taking extra classes. Both of my children attended Waldorf pre-school and SICS for their entire elementary school education. The quality of the teaching staff, the intimacy of their peer bond, the community of families, the continuity of relationships - these all contributed greatly to the solid foundation they received in their early years. Academically, they are prepared to think and work through any challenging situations maturely, confidently and competently. Of course they are still 'teenagers' and I am grateful for the learning I've gained from all those parent meetings and Rudolf Steiner insights. I would like to share that my boys have chosen optional activities in Art, Band, Latin, Dance and the Crisis Team. In terms of grades - the Montgomery HS Spring '06 - 9th grade class honors roll boasted all five Sebastopol Ind. Charter School graduates who attended! I miss SICS, the wisdom of the Waldorf teachers, the rich experience of sharing in a growing community - and I will be forever grateful for the deep and unique lifelong learning that enriched our whole family.*

*Love, Marsha Greenfield*