

# August 2008 Newsletter

1 message

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## Norwalk Education Foundation Newsletter NEF Matters

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### \$30,000 in Grants Awarded for After The Bell

GE Commercial Finance and The United Way of Norwalk & Wilton recently awarded grants of \$25,000 and \$5,000 respectively, to the NEF for After The Bell, a new before and after school program of The Norwalk Public Schools.

After The Bell will be piloted this coming year at Kendall and Rowayton Elementary Schools.

Program goals are to support academic achievement, to provide a wide variety of high quality activities and enrichment programs, and to provide a safe, nurturing environment.

### Norwalk Teacher Grants Half Funded by The Fairfield County Community Foundation

You can bring a Norwalk teacher grant to life at half the cost thanks to the Fairfield County Community Foundation.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation will fund 50% of Norwalk teacher grants on our DonorsChoose Challenge Page.

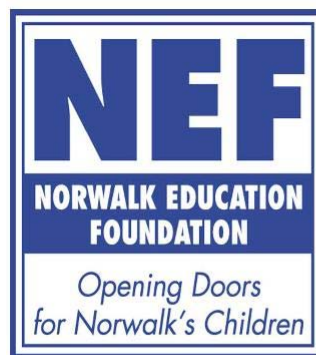
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### FALL TASTE FOR EDUCATION

Please Join Us!

The Fall Taste for Education is a fundraising event involving generous participation of Aitoro, Via Sforza, Jeff's Cuisine, The Brewhouse Restaurant, Norwalk Public schools students and several community members.



## OCTOBER 23, 2008

Tickets: \$40.00 prepaid, \$50.00 at the door. Sponsorships available.

[Purchase advance tickets here](#)

### After The Bell

### A new before and after school program of The Norwalk Public Schools

The Norwalk Public Schools is working closely with Child Guidance of Mid-Fairfield County and the The Norwalk Education Foundation to provide Kendall and Rowayton families with a high quality before and afterschool program 5

What a way to make a Norwalk teacher's day!

[Click here to fund the other half!](#)

***WHERE WE STAND***  
**Watch it - Sept. 15,**  
**10:00pm on PBS**

THIRTEEN/WNET provides an historic assessment of U.S. Schools in *WHERE WE STAND: America's Schools in the 21st Century*.

Premiering SEPTEMBER 15, 10:00pm on PBS.

Hosted by Judy Woodruff, Senior Correspondent for The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.

Where We Stand is a documentary that visits a range of socioeconomic and geographic school districts, and introduces students, parents, teachers and administrators whose stories illustrate the overwhelming odds and shining successes of education in America.

Nationally recognized education experts and leading proponents of educational reform will put individual stories in context. They include Geoffrey Canada, CEO of the Harlem's Children's Zone, Diane Ravitch, education historian, Wendy Puriefoy, President of Public Education Network; and Sharon Lynn Kagan, Associate Dean for Policy, Teacher's College at Columbia University, among others.

Major funding for this program was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Our Mission**

The Norwalk Education Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to quality public education for all of Norwalk's children. We effect positive change by providing programs and funds for innovative classroom instruction, teacher and technology training, and a variety of learning

days a week while school is in session. The before school program starts at 7 a.m and runs to the start of school; the afterschool program runs until 6 p.m.

After the Bell assures that your children have a safe, fun environment before and afterschool. A variety of enrichment activities will be offered throughout the year as will academic supports. The program will work closely with Kendall and Rowayton teachers and families so that our staff will know how to best support children attending the program.

The program came about as an extension of the After School Achievement Program (ASAP) which brought an after school program to every Norwalk elementary school in 2004. A year-long planning process was undertaken in 2007-2008, facilitated by GE Commercial Finance, and managed by the Norwalk Public Schools and the Norwalk Education Foundation. The planning process was undertaken as a result of a 3-year evaluation of the After School Achievement Program, and included community partners, parents, school staff, administrators, and private funders.

**Workshop Helps Parents Keep Kids Safe on the Internet**

MySpace, Facebook, Friendster. Most middle school and high school students are familiar with these social networking sites and can navigate them easily. Because of the popularity of these sites and the potential for their misuse (inappropriate pictures, cyber bullying and interference with homework and academic performance), parents need to know how they work. But for many parents, these are strange and even scary new worlds. This past spring, NEF held several workshops to help Norwalk middle school parents learn about social networking on the web.

The "MySpace to Your Space - Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet" workshops were run by Norwalk middle school teacher, Sara Vogel, and a middle school guidance counselor, Sara Callahan. Vogel says the idea came from talking to her own students. Many of them already had their own MySpace accounts, and a number of their parents were unaware of this.

"Parents need to be aware of the dangers on the Internet, aware of what their children are doing, seeing and reading on the Internet and also need to be able to help guide their children as they begin to participate in this world of on-line networking," says Vogel. "They are not going to keep them off of the sites, so my feeling is to join them and be a part of their kid's technology world and work together to help them stay safe."

opportunities beyond the school day.

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Participant Rosemary Ganino, mother of a 5th grader, agrees. "There's a whole lifetime in between when I was young and my soon-to-be middle schooler. I need to know what's out there." In fact, Ganino said when her daughter is interested and wants to get online, she would set up a MySpace or Facebook page with her. "I'd rather my daughter learn about it from me than from others."

The classes gave parents an overview of the fundamentals of how these social networking sites work. Participants learned about these sites in a hands-on way; how to set up a MySpace account, personalize settings, maneuver around the site, search for a friend and join a group. They were also given a crash course on the language kids use in texting and IMing and sites that can keep them updated on this ever-changing lexicon.

Instructor Sarah Callahan says the hands-on aspect of the workshops is one of the most beneficial. "They loved that they could actually walk through the set up with us and see the tricks to privacy and notification. Parent Amy Eichenberger agrees. "What I found the most valuable is playing around with the site, knowing how to get in, and navigate."

Pat Czako, mother of a middle school student, says the workshop helped her to talk to her son about his use of the Internet in general. "I enjoyed reading the 'contract' between parents and children that was included in our packet. I have sat down with my son and asked him to show me what he was looking at on YouTube. He thought it was weird at first, but then he relaxed. I realized it is important for me to watch how he uses the Internet and to not assume everything he is doing is 'bad'."

Callahan says research suggests that an involved parent has the power and influence to keep kids safe online. "By providing parents with the knowledge - benefits and risks - of social networking we're helping them to communicate with their children and have proactive conversations about safe Internet usage."

THANK YOU for your support.

**Sincerely,**

The Norwalk Education Foundation (NEF)

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