

Norwalk Education Foundation Newsletter

NEF Matters

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NEF Golf Classic Update

The 11th Annual NEF Golf Classic held on May 4th raised \$56,000 to help NEF continue our mission of improving public education in Norwalk.

Thank you to our sponsors: [American Transit Insurance Company](#), [RBS Sempra Commodities](#), [Sullivan Schoen Campane & Connon](#), and [McMahon Ford](#).

And thanks to all our faithful foursomes, auction vendors, auctioneers, dinner attendees, committee members, and [The Shorehaven Golf Club](#) who worked so closely with us to make the event a tremendous success.

Save The Date More GOLF for NEF!

The [Brewhouse Restaurant](#) presents its 7th Annual Charity Golf Outing to benefit NEF.



Monday, June 22nd
Oak Hills Golf Course
Norwalk, Conn.

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United Way of Coastal Fairfield County to Recognize NEF

Chosen for Live United Award

The United Way of Coastal Fairfield County has chosen to honor NEF at their LIVE UNITED Awards and Celebration Breakfast on June 10th. NEF will be awarded the Education Community Partner award, and will be recognized along with the Education Corporate Partner honoree, [JPMorgan Chase Foundation](#).

JPMorgan Chase Foundation has been a supporter of NEF's work in teacher quality for [TechSmart Teachers](#) and its upcoming expansion program, [Teacher to Teacher](#).

Research proves that the single most important factor in the quality of education in any classroom is the quality of the teacher.

NEF believes that by providing professional development to Norwalk teachers, we can positively affect the quality of education given to our district's 10,500 children.

Other Norwalk award recipients include Pepperidge Farm, Beiersdorf, and The Center for Youth Advocacy at Brien McMahon High School.

[Click here for all award recipients](#)

Successful Extended Day Program Faces Uphill Battle

"After the Bell," a newly piloted extended day program of Norwalk Public Schools, has been met with rave reviews by parents, teachers and students alike. The innovative before and after school program, which was rolled out in September in both Kendall and Rowayton elementary schools, was created to connect the school day to out-of-school time by encouraging school staff to participate in the after school program and to communicate regularly with after school staff and parents. "After the Bell" was designed in part, to address the lack of communication pervasive in the district as identified in the Cambridge Report, commissioned by the State Department of Education because Norwalk is a district labeled in need of improvement under No Child Left Behind.

\$160.00 per person
\$75.00 dinner and drinks only
Sponsorships Available

For information contact:
(203) 853-9110 or
mail@sonobrewhouse.com

In Memory of Donald Reid

The family and friends of Donald F. Reid, Esq., Corporation Council and Board of Education Member for the City of Norwalk, have donated more than \$3,000 to NEF. This will be combined with a recent grant of \$1,850 from the **Fairfield County Community Foundation** for Classroom Innovation Grants for Norwalk teachers.

NEF TechSmart Classes Spring Session - Round 2

- Smartboards Intro, II, Next Steps
- PowerPoint I & II
- Excel for Data Analysis
- Word for Classroom Use
- Genesis Gradebook I & II
- Study Island
- Outlook Email
- Digital Photography

TechSmart Registration

With special thanks to
JPMorganChase Foundation,
CitiFoundation and **GE Commercial Finance** for their ongoing support of NEF's TechSmart Teachers.

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 opportunities beyond the school day.

One of the report's main findings was that Norwalk schools are *in need of improving and enhancing communication*.

Communication between teachers is made simple due to their proximity and familiarity with each other and the student body. Every effort is made to ensure that pertinent lessons and strategies are reinforced throughout the extended day. Along with the integrative academic support provided by "After the Bell," numerous enrichment activities are provided to students along with homework help and free play: sports, art, drama, crafts, languages, theatre, music, and dance are examples of the extended day package and have attracted students who don't typically attend extended day programs.

A centralized payment system to accommodate a sliding-scale pay structure so that *no child is left behind* has greatly increased the number of low income children participating in extended learning. This also aligns with a major goal of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's education stimulus funding: *to identify effective strategies to turn around underperforming schools*.

Due to the success of the "After the Bell" program, NEF asked the Board of Education to consider changing its relationship with current before/after school providers, from contracting them to operate their own independent programs, to contracting them to partner in "After the Bell" next year, for those schools and parents who want it. The move would ensure consistency and equality among elementary before/after school programs and make it possible for all programs to adhere to, and abide by the same quality standards and guidelines.

Though NEF's arguments were compelling, the Board of Education was not ready to risk the long established relationships they've had with after school providers who declined participation in "After the Bell", so no changes were made.

The Norwalk Education Foundation stands behind its drive for excellent educational standards throughout the Norwalk School system. We don't believe our students' before and after school needs are being met adequately by all programs, and that extended hours need to be managed strategically for our students if we are serious about closing the achievement gap. At the very least, we would like to see the Board of Education create a list of guidelines and quality standards that all program providers must meet in order to continue as a provider of record. Ideally, though, we would like to see a system where parents and schools have a voice in the choice and types of programs provided at their schools, and where all schools offer comparable extended day programs of superior quality that are accessible and appealing



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to all.

If you would like to voice an opinion on the after school program at your Norwalk elementary school, [please click here](#).

Understanding ARRA and Race for the Top

Norwalk Public Schools will receive a portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding: \$1.2 million in Title I and \$2.3 million in IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). This funding must be used to supplement, and not to supplant or replace budget items that had traditionally been part of the education budget. The goal of the funding is to promote new ideas and sustainable reform.

States that accept funding from ARRA must commit to making four reforms.

1. Adopt internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that better prepare students for college and a career.
2. Build high-quality data systems that track a student's academic career, making it possible to tell which teachers, programs and schools are effective.
3. Recruit more high-quality educators to underperforming schools as well as to subjects like math and science.
4. Support effective strategies to turn around underperforming schools.

States with the most comprehensive and cutting-edge reform plans can also win a share of a \$5 billion 'Race to the Top' fund - a portion of which will go directly to districts and non-profits that are achieving results.

To quote Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, "If all we do is perpetuate the status quo, we will miss this historic opportunity."

According to the U.S. Department of Education web site, success will depend on the **quality of leadership, judgment, coordination, and communication** of all involved. It represents a historic opportunity to restore America's global leadership in education.

Now is the time for the Norwalk Board of Education and our school leaders to show the leadership needed to build on existing infrastructure in Norwalk schools for many of these goals like student data tracking and analysis, college and workforce readiness, early childhood, extended learning, and improved teacher quality.

THANK YOU for your support.

Sincerely,

The Norwalk Education Foundation (NEF)