

NHS to Improve Communications with LCD Marquee

The Norwalk High School Marquee Committee raised \$67,600 for a marquee. Through a combination of donations and a \$20,000 State of CT grant, Norwalk High School will use the message board to help improve communication between students, parents, alumni and the community. The sign will be used to promote, among other things, emergency information and lot's of school spirit, after school activities, sporting events, fundraisers, plays, vacation days, delayed openings, early dismissals and school closings.

A Norwalk High School parent, Rose Emro, felt that communications needed improvement between NHS and the rest of the community at large, fans and parents. She had seen other high schools have state-of-the-art LED signs for their high schools and thought NHS could benefit from this type of communications system. She got immediate support from Parents of Norwalk High School and a committee was formed in the fall of 2007 to raise funds for the project. The original goal was to ask corporations, local business and community members to donate \$500 each to the project

over a six-12 month period, finalize a design and hire a company to create and install it as the building renovations are complete. The estimated original cost of the sign was \$24,000.

"I saw the need for Norwalk High School to have a state-of-the-art communications system like other high schools, so, I researched this further and learned how LED digital marquee's helped schools raise awareness, create more school spirit and communicate effectively and successfully etc.," said Emro. "I also learned that students are able to program and manage the digital content on the signs."

Emro embarked on a mailing campaign, made presentations and enlisted help from Parents of Norwalk High School, Norwalk High School Principal Lenny Mecca and secondary education director Tony Daddona, who all supported Emro's original idea. In addition, Emro enlisted the support of Norwalk Education Foundation. The project quickly grew to include Norwalk Public Schools administration including Salvatore Corda, chief operating officer Stuart Opdahl and purchasing manager, George Giannatti.

"Emro is to be applauded for all of her hard work in bringing this project to fruition," noted Mecca.

The family who saw Emro's marquee presentation donated the bulk of the project, starting with the original outside marquee request, which then they made a second donation after the outside marquee was funded. This second donation is funding 15 wireless laptop computers for the school library and two additional internal LED display boards: one for the career center and the other for the main lobby. This project just kept growing allowing both the additional LED screens to be run by the students through the technology class.

State representatives Larry Cafero (R-Norwalk) and Toni Boucher (R-Norwalk) were also enthusiastic about this project from the onset so they supported it by submitting a grant request for this to the state. A grant of \$20,000 was approved, bringing the total amount raised to \$67,600 by Christmas.

The funds will allow Norwalk High School to purchase the marquee original outside sign, which will be designed and presented by the students of NHS. The base will

be a stone-like material that resembles granite to match the existing Testa Field Posts and blend nicely with Norwalk High School's building. Students will be responsible for a designing of the actual base; they will draw the bear mascot and have it etched into the base along with the school crest along with the donor recognition. They will even have help from a local contractor who offered his services. Then, they will present their design upon the completion (to be announced). The sign itself will be a 7'x10' amber LED display to be programmed and operated by the students through their "newly formed technology class."

According to committee member Jill Griffin, "The students at the high school continue to be the inspiration for projects such as this. As parents we want the best for our children. We want to always do what we can to upgrade, enhance and improve the quality of learning. Communication is key and whenever there is a chance to improve it, we, the Marquee Committee will be there."

Cafero commented, "We all worked very hard to make this extremely worthwhile project hap-

pen. It was a team effort. The entire Norwalk High School community, Toni Boucher and Rose Emro have proven themselves once again, to be terrific advocates and I was happy that they brought this issue to the forefront."

Boucher continued, "I would like to thank Rose Emro for bringing this important Norwalk High School project to my attention. Rose's commitment and enthusiasm in helping Norwalk High School has been infectious. In addition, I would especially like to recognize the important role that Minority Leader Larry Cafero played in securing the necessary funds to move this project forward. His support was crucial in achieving this successful conclusion. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with him in providing our high school with the means to communicate more effectively with its students, parents, faculty and the community at large. I look forward to seeing the new Marquee project add to the quality of life of this great Norwalk institution. In today's often complicated and challenging times, the new Norwalk High School marquee and computer link-up could potentially become a life saver."