

Just A Thought ...

Those two fatal words,
Mine and Thine.

■ Miguel de Cervantes
(Don Quixote)

Norwalk

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The Hour

\$10K grant to fund teacher education

By ANNA GUSTAFSON
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NORWALK — The Norwalk Education Foundation will be able to fund 15 technology workshops and a 10-week course with a new \$10,000 grant from J.P. Morgan Chase.

The grant will provide funding for NEF's Teacher Technology Training Institute, which provides free technology courses for Norwalk teachers. The \$10,000 will provide course materials and pay for teachers' salaries for the 16 courses.

"TTTI helps the teachers keep up with the kids; students today are so technologically savvy," said Lauren Rosato, NEF executive director. "There are classes on everything from PowerPoint presentations to MySpace and Internet safety."

More than 50 percent of Norwalk's teachers, 729, have attended TTTI courses and many of them have taken more than one course, said Paula Palermo, technology program manager for NEF.

"The classes give the teachers a comfort level they didn't have before," Palermo said. "We make (the classes) classroom appropriate; they can use the tools

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NEF grant to help teach teachers

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they learn to help them deliver lessons."

NEF works with the Norwalk Public Schools to offer the approximately 50 TTTI courses annually, and lessons learned through the technology institute "help the schools quite a bit," said Ralph Valenzisi, the school district's director of technology.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for the teachers," Valenzisi said. "I use them quite a bit to offer any technology professional development we need in the school system."

Through the various courses, which run for as long as 10 weeks or as short as two hours, teachers learn how to both use

technology and implement it within their classrooms.

"Kids are very technologically savvy, but they don't always know the most effective way of learning technology," Valenzisi said. "A student may know a little bit about Excel but a teacher can help them learn how to use data analysis with Excel."

While TTTI courses are not mandatory for Norwalk teachers, they provide valuable information for all levels of learners, Rosato said. There are introductory courses on using a mouse to setting up e-mail accounts, and there are the more challenging courses on creating a Web page and navigating programs such as PowerPoint and Excel.

Course material also informs teachers about the Internet world their students are more apt to experience — such as the MySpace or YouTube Web sites.

"We try to bring to (teachers') attention some of the technologies that the students know a lot more about than they do," Palermo said.

Through such courses as "Internet Smarts," teachers learn how to explain to students "what's ethical, legal, what's right and wrong to do on the Internet. It deals with cyberbullying, giving out personal information."

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From the community

Technology grant



Contributed photo

The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation recently awarded a \$10,000 grant to support Norwalk Education Foundation's Teacher Technology Training Institute, where Norwalk teachers are shown how to use computer technology to enhance learning in the classroom.

Pictured, from left: Lauren Rosato, NEF executive director; Karen Mercer of the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation; and Paula Palermo, technology program manager for NEF.