



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Education Foundation announces record fundraising results

More than \$3.2 million raised to support first year of Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's new Vision for Student Success

SANTA MONICA, CA, February 3, 2014 – Spurred by an unprecedented number of gifts from District families as well as several extraordinary major gift commitments, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation today announced that it has raised \$3,203,730 toward its inaugural \$4 million goal to fund the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's Vision for Student Success.

Last year the District adopted the Vision for Student Success, a six-part initiative focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for every student in the District.

"The Vision for Student Success is designed to provide opportunities for all students at every school in our District to reach their full potential," said Sandra Lyon, Superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. "This plan enriches student experiences through the arts, smaller class sizes, personalized instruction, ongoing professional development, and more. We are so thrilled to be working in partnership with parents, local corporations, and other donors as we seek to enrich the learning experience for every student in our District."

That vision was the result of more than a year of community conversations and input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and elected officials.

"The community is coming together to support programs and services for all students in our District," Lyon said. "It's exciting to see the great strides our Education Foundation has made this past year and the support that our communities are putting behind the Vision for Student Success. I'm confident that going forward this community support will continue to grow."

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To fully fund the Vision for Student Success, the District must rely upon \$4 million annually in private funds raised by the Education Foundation. Due to the District's timetable for decision-making on 2014-15 staffing expenditures, January 31, 2014 was established as the deadline for contributions to qualify toward the 2014-15 budget. Funds raised to date total just over \$3.2 million, with the possibility of additional funds from outstanding proposals and gifts postmarked on or before January 31 that have yet to arrive at the Foundation office.

"To reach this level of support in our first year of the centralized fundraising model is a great success for everyone. We knew from the outset that this first year would be tremendously challenging, as our PTAs were raising money to cover current-year commitments that will fall under the Vision for Student Success in future years, while at the same time, we were launching our efforts to raise funds for next year," said Linda Greenberg Gross, Executive Director of the Education Foundation.

"To reach over \$3.2 million in contributions to the Education Foundation while also seeing continued support of school PTAs is a victory for our schools and most importantly for our students and teachers," Greenberg Gross continued. "It's also a testament to the commitment families and community members have to our public schools."

The Education Foundation broadened its focus this year from events and annual appeals to the cultivation of major and planned gifts designed to provide sustainability for important programs at schools throughout the District. The Foundation secured multi-year pledges and matching gifts, doubled its Superintendent's Circle membership, created a corporate partners program and worked with the District to formalize an operating agreement and a facility naming and signage policy. Additional fundraising staff was hired as the Foundation worked to increase its capacity to attract philanthropic support.

"Historically the Education Foundation's annual goal was \$500,000. Rising to the challenge of funding the Vision for Student Success required transforming the organization to raise significantly more funds to ensure these great programs for all students each and every year," Greenberg Gross stated. "The Education Foundation is now well-positioned to build upon the successes of this year and continue our momentum into the future."

Indicators of that success include the largest individual gift, which was made by a former District family (the \$500,000 Scott Family Charitable Fund gift announced last fall), the largest corporate gift secured (the \$150,000 Dun & Bradstreet Credibility Corporation gift announced in December), and a significant growth in the number of donors (from 1,444 donors last year to 2,962 donors this year).

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In 2013 the Education Foundation announced a transformative \$4.8 million gift from the Peggy Bergmann Estate, a portion of which also supports the Vision for Student Success both this year and next.

“The Bergmann gift served as a springboard to where we are today,” said Greenberg Gross. “Donors like Peggy Bergmann, the Scott Family, Dun & Bradstreet Credibility Corporation, and many others have shown that we have leaders in our communities who will step up and make significant investments in the future of our public schools. Our efforts are just getting started, and we’re very excited about what’s in store.”

The Foundation’s fundraising efforts start anew this week, as work begins on the \$4 million goal for the 2015-16 school year.

About the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation

The Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation’s mission is to engage the community to invest in a vibrant educational experience for all students in the Santa Monica and Malibu public schools.

The Foundation works hand-in-hand with the District to ensure that allocated funds have the greatest impact.

To learn more about the Education Foundation and SMMUSD’s Vision for Student Success, visit www.smmef.org.

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