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NEF 2004 in Review

The Newburyport Education Foundation launched 2004 with several new board members to expand total board size to 24 members.

In April, a number of board members led by Major Gifts chairperson Cindy Johnson secured \$125k in three-year pledges from the Newburyport Bank, The Institution for Savings and the Provident Bank.

The largest project in the Campaign 2004-2006, the renovation of the middle school science facilities, was formally started in May 2004. A financial requirement plan will be presented in February 2005.

June was a profitable month for NEF. Over \$20,000 was raised in the First Annual Ed Gala. The NEF created the *Ed Award for Excellence in Education* in honor of Edward G. Molin, founding president of the organization and tireless benefactor to Newburyport Public Schools. The *Ed Award for Excellence in Education* will be given annually to an individual or group who provides exemplary service to Newburyport schools. It will be known as the "*Ed Award*": Ed for Education. Ed for Edward Molin. The inaugural *Ed Award* went to its eponym, Edward G. Molin at ceremony at Newburyport City Hall in a moving ceremony held in City Hall with the Gala following across the street at Steeple Hall.

Banknorth, as a new member of the banking community in Newburyport, gave NEF a \$5,000 grant in honor of the Ed Gala. Several individuals also made substantial donations at this time as well as purchasing tables at the Gala to invite teachers throughout the school system to attend.

The first Teacher Tribute program was also launched in June of 2004. Through this program, parents who wish to thank teachers are able to make a donation to NEF in honor of teachers. \$1,100 was raised in the end-of-the-school year campaign.

Another NEF honoree this summer was long-time teacher and NHS parent, Roger Gagnon. Mr. Gagnon is the most recent honoree of the NEF *Make Your Mark* program. His family purchased the naming rights to an office to commemorate his retirement after 35 years at NHS. Mr. Gagnon's wife, Mary Lou, noted that she and her children (all Newburyport alumni) knew he enjoyed his years at NHS and this gift was so appropriate.

The *Make Your Mark* campaign is an effort by NEF to raise money through the granting of naming rights of classrooms, offices and other areas of the high school. Opportunities range in price from \$1000 to \$100,000 and are noted by a handsome plaque prominently displayed outside the room. The NEF would like to again thank the NHS Class of 1938 who launched this program through their generous donation of \$10,000 for the naming rights to the reception area in the high school. Look up for their plaque next time you visit!

The NEF was an active participant in many Yankee Homecoming festivities this year including Old Fashion Sunday, Family Day and of course, the parade! We also participated in all the schools' open houses this Fall and sold our new stadium blankets in a fundraising project with a new, local, philanthropic company called TZ Tees.

The Swedish Distance Learning Exchange program at NHS has been taking shape over the last few months and in the next weeks, the formal classroom projects will begin. The program is conducted via live video conferencing in the Distance Learning Lab with a high school in Gavle, Sweden. Several Swedish teachers have been to Newburyport and an NHS teacher recently returned from a work study at the Swedish school. In addition, numerous meetings have been held via video for many other faculty from both schools. This project has been funded by the NEF and is one example of our target areas to enhance education opportunities for our students.

In December, the NEF launched the Holiday Teacher Tribute program and raised nearly \$4k in donations in honor of teachers.

Also in December, new board member and popular middle school math teacher, Nancy Duclos, dressed up in an old school marm costume and wandered the streets of Newburyport during Invitation Night to raise awareness for our February 10, 2005 Spelling Bee. Nancy was quite the spectacle and made the front page for her efforts!

Additional funds came in December via a grant from NAID (\$5k), the Burke Foundation (\$5k), and the newly established Small Family Foundation (\$10k). With these new monies raised and the success of major gifts and events, the NEF board decided to give \$45k worth of grants for 2004. Grants were divided into three parts: \$25k for a new computer lab for the high school, \$10k to lease a mini-bus to use for local field trips and \$10k to get started on formal plans for the middle school science facilities.

Finally in December, the mayor of Newburyport and City

Council voted to create a fund for voluntarily donations to the school system's operating budget to be include in residents' excise taxes. Despite initial confusion within the board and within the community, most issues have been laid to rest and the fund will solicit in parallel to the NEF.