

Moraga Education Foundation Surpasses Fundraising Goal

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo Andrea A. Firth

Following a year marked by significant cuts to the State funding of public schools, parents of students who attend Moraga public schools have a little something to smile about, albeit if only briefly. The Moraga Education Foundation (MEF)—a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that raises funds to fill State-created budget gaps—surpassed its 2007-2008 goal to raise a total of \$1,245,000. MEF’s fundraising success was in part due to a May letter campaign that raised \$119,000 in just 31 days.

“The Moraga parent community has consistently stepped up to the plate to support their children’s education,” stated Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer, however even he was surprised by the magnitude of the support garnered so quickly through the May campaign.

More than 14% of contributors to the May campaign were giving for the second time and 18% of contributors were first time MEF donors. “We have had an unprecedented year,” stated MEF President Shari Simon. “To preserve the type

and range of programs that we have had in our schools, we had to raise more. The number of new donors was very exciting,” she added.

According to Schafer, MEF’s contributions will enable Moraga School District to reinstate programs that were to be eliminated due to the State funding cuts. Libraries across the District will be restored to full-time function, added classes at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School will keep the average class size from encroaching on 30 students per class, and popular grade-level enrichment programs will not be forgone. In addition, MEF will give a total of \$420,000 to Campolindo High School, which will help fund counseling programs, class size reduction, library services, and classroom technology—programs that would have been cut secondary to the State budget crunch.

“Unfortunately we are going into a bleak period and State funding may get even worse,” noted Simon. Superintendent Schafer concurred. “We are very concerned about the next three budget years... The State has shifted providing adequate school funding to the individual communities. Our community has been able to meet the challenge, but I question how long they will be able to continue,” stated Schafer.

Although the money raised by MEF does not begin to approximate the State funding shortfall for the District, Simon remained hopeful. “I’m very optimistic about the commitment of our parents and the greater community. Education is valued and a priority here. I believe that the community will rise to the challenge.”