NJ DOE Awards Morris School District Unprecedented $2.9 Million Grant to Expand Preschool Education

The number of students receiving a free preschool education in the Morris School District will increase to 225 for academic year 2019-2020, thanks to a sizeable Preschool Education Expansion Aid grant from the State of NJ totaling $2.9 million—the largest awarded in Morris County. Over the next several years, the grant is expected to allow as many as 500 children a year to attend preschool free of charge. Those seats will be filled by three- and four-year-olds at the Lafayette Learning Center (LLC) and its partner preschools in Morristown, which have developed a close collaboration. This working “consortium” of local preschools includes the Head Start Community Program of Morris County, with classrooms at their Morristown Center as well as at the District’s own Alfred Vail School; the Cornerstone: Neighborhood House; and several YMCA-affiliated programs like the Blake Center. Children on the Green, and the Children’s Corner. more on page 2>

MEF Named New Jersey’s Outstanding Large Education Foundation

On March 29, 2019, the Morris Education Foundation (MEF) was named New Jersey’s 2019 Outstanding Large Education Foundation by the New Jersey Education Foundation Partnership (NJEP) at their annual awards luncheon. The MEF received the award due to its continued exceptional financial support for the Morris School District since it was founded in 1992. During that time, the MEF has given back $3.5 million to the schools through grants that impact the diverse constituencies, district-wide initiatives, college scholarships and more.

This honor caps off a series of accolades for the foundation. In 2018, the MEF was named the #1 Education Foundation in the country in their category and 36th in the nation overall by the Caruthers Institute’s annual study of education foundations. more on page 7>

MHS Humanities and STEM Academy Students Hone Their Creative Problem-Solving at Princeton University

A few minutes shy of 1:30 PM on a Tuesday in April, students in Professor Steinhauer’s Creativity, Innovation, and Design class made their way through the labyrinthian hallways of Princeton’s School of Engineering and Applied Science. There they met a group of students from the Humanities and STEM Academies of Morristown High School as part of a series of collaborations between the two institutions. For the next three hours, the undergrads and the Academy students teamed up to address a real-world challenge: how can we manage attention in the face of competing obligations and constant distractions? Through exercises in ideation, such as brainstorming and brainwriting, the teams came up with bold, creative, and feasible solutions to the challenge that could later be prototyped. more on page 3>

MEF Awards 25th Anniversary Gratitude Grants to Each School

As a way to say thank you to our ten excellent schools, the MEF celebrated twenty-five years of serving the Morris School District with the 25th Anniversary Gratitude Grants for our Schools. The $5,000 grants, given to each school, were used to fund an initiative, program, or project to enrich education and strengthen our school communities. Here are the projects selected by each school. Alexander Hamilton • Entry Hallway Mural

This legacy project has transformed the entrance of Alexander Hamilton and will be enjoyed by the community for many years to come. All stakeholders in the school community—students, teachers, and families—worked together to design and paint the custom piece with the help of muralist and art educator Caren Frost Olmsted. more on page 2>
Gratitude Grants

Alfred Vall - Shades of Learning
Alfred Vall School has an outdoor learning environment, a field for students to learn and practice. Teachers use the facility to enhance the outdoor learning space will add more value student education. Weekly readings, yoga and mindfulness, language arts.

Nightingale Middle School - Musical Instrument Scholarships
Nightingale Middle School’s growing band and orchestra programs have received a significant financial boost from the Alfred Vail School. More than half of the students in the school’s instrumental music programs have received scholarships, which are used to purchase musical instruments.

Morristown High School: Problem-Solving in the Classroom

The Real Equation for Success: Morristown High School Math Team Earns Top Spots in State Math Competitions

The Morris School District is a district known for its strong focus on music education. The district offers a wide range of music programs to students at all levels, from elementary school through high school. The district’s music programs are designed to provide students with opportunities to develop their musical abilities, express themselves, and connect with their peers and the larger community through music. The district’s approach to music education is based on the belief that music is an important part of a well-rounded education and that it has the power to inspire and engage students, helping them to develop a love of music that lasts a lifetime.

The Morris School District’s music education programs include:

- Elementary School Music Programs: The district offers music education to all students in grades K-5 through a comprehensive curriculum that includes music theory, performance, and appreciation. Students have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, participate in a choir, or engage in other music-related activities.
- Middle School Music Programs: The district offers music education to all students in grades 6-8 through a variety of programs, including band, orchestra, choir, and guitar. Students have the opportunity to perform in concerts and competitions, and they are encouraged to explore different musical genres and styles.
- High School Music Programs: The district offers music education to all students in grades 9-12 through a range of options, including band, orchestra, choir, and electives. Students have the opportunity to participate in the district’s music festival, which features a variety of performances, and they are encouraged to pursue music-related careers.

The Morris School District’s music education programs are designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in music-related fields, as well as to support their overall academic and personal growth. The district’s commitment to music education is reflected in the success of its students, who have won numerous awards and distinctions, including national recognitions. The district’s music education programs are supported by a dedicated team of music educators, who work collaboratively to ensure that all students have access to high-quality music education.

The Morris School District is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students, and its music education programs are an integral part of its efforts to support student success. The district’s approach to music education is grounded in the belief that music is a powerful tool for personal and social development, and that it has the potential to inspire and engage students of all ages. The district’s music education programs are designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in music-related fields, as well as to support their overall academic and personal growth. The district’s commitment to music education is reflected in the success of its students, who have won numerous awards and distinctions, including national recognitions. The district’s music education programs are supported by a dedicated team of music educators, who work collaboratively to ensure that all students have access to high-quality music education.
Nearly 100 students performed in the spring musical Annie. The FMS theatre program follows a “no-cut” policy so that all interested students can share the magic of the stage.

Close to 700 students are enrolled in band, orchestra, or chorus. This thriving music program offers valuable performance experience in multiple contexts. In April, the Falcon Big Band earned several awards at the NJAJE Middle School Jazz Festival.

FMS won the General Knowledge Bowl of Newark Academy again this year. Our teams stood firm against area public and private schools as they worked together to answer questions about art, geography, literature, math, history, and other disciplines.

Two students qualified for the state You Be the Chemist Challenge, part of a program that celebrates and encourages interest in STEM. Gavin Varneckas placed first in all of NJ and will head to the national competition in D.C.

Students are encouraged to traverse new pathways through exposure to a range of electives, such as computer science, engineering design, and art. Several middle schools received awards at the 2019 Morris County Teen Arts Festival.
MEF: Tell us a little about your journey since high school.

RG: My wife, Lynne Goryeb Porfido '84, and I graduated Montclair High School in 1978. In those days, Montclair was a great place to grow up. We both had great experiences there. Lynne was in the homecoming court and participated in many activities, and I was a member of the wrestling team. After high school, I attended Montclair State College for two years before transferring to New York University. I graduated with a degree in accounting in 1981.

LGP: We also graduated from Montclair High School. My husband and I moved to Long Island when we were 16 and 17, respectively. We started a small business of flipping houses. We are just finishing up our first project, which we are excited about.

MEF: Tell us about Champion Mortgage.

RG: Champion Mortgage was started in 1981 by my father, Joe Goryeb '75, and my brother, Mike Goryeb '75. We started with a small office in Morristown, New Jersey. Our first loan office was at the Armory on Maple Avenue. Over the years, Champion Mortgage has grown to be one of the largest home equity lenders in the country.

LGP: At Champion Mortgage, we had to work hard to make a living. We were living in Long Island. I was 16, Rick was 17. We were working 12-hour days, 6 days a week.

RG: We were able to get our first home mortgage at Champion Mortgage, and we were able to buy our first house in Morristown.

LGP: We split responsibilities within the organization in order to make a living. We were really making a difference. Ultimately, we were able to have our own personal growth and control, but we had to work hard to make it happen.

MEF: Tell us more about how the business has grown.

RG: It was the best move that could have ever happened. We were able to provide for our families. We were able to live a comfortable life.

LGP: My brother and I were able to provide for our families. We were able to live a comfortable life. We were able to provide for our children.

MEF: Tell us about your leadership and philanthropic roles.

RG: As the business grew, my brother and I became involved in leadership roles. We were able to give back to the community. We were able to help others.

LGP: We have been closely involved with Morristown Medical Center, so when we sold the business we approached the Board of Trustees of the Mayo Performing Arts Center with a proposal. The Mayo Performing Arts Center was interested in partnering with us. As a result, we were able to purchase the Mayo Performing Arts Center and become one of the largest home equity lenders in the country.

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A joint publication from The Morris School District and The Morris Educational Foundation

Morristown High School’s 2019 production of The Addams Family, directed by Katie Adams with musical direction by David Gallagher, was an artistic tour de force. MEF scholarship winners and their families joined together with scholarship donors to celebrate. This year the MEF awarded $154,000 in scholarships to twelve Morristown High School students.

The FMS Select Choir took first place at the 2019 Morris County Teen Arts Festival and earned the first choice recommendation for the State Teen Arts Festival.

Archaeopteryx, by MHS senior Megan Sodano, won the Morris County Teen Arts Festival Gold Award and will be entered in the State competition. Another of Megan’s paintings was featured in the Morris Museum’s Fresh Perspectives Exhibition this spring.

3-for-3! Anna Rivetti, Braeden Siverson and Rachel Van Sciver have accomplished an FMS first: each won a county championship (soccer, basketball, lacrosse) in all 3 seasons.

MEF Trustee Ann Rhines accepted the Outstanding Volunteer award at the New Jersey Education Foundation Partnership (NJEPF) annual luncheon.

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