

State College Area School District Education FOUNDATION



CELEBRATING GENEROUS ALUMNI

**NEW ROUND OF
GRANT AWARDS**
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**HONORING
MARGARET BLIZARD**
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**2020-21 HONOR ROLL:
THANK YOU DONORS**
PAGE 11

SAVE THE DATE
MAROON & GRAY
SOCIETY BANQUET

TO BENEFIT THE MARDI
LOWRY MCDONOUGH '87
STUDENT OPPORTUNITY
FUND & GRANT PROGRAM

● FROM THE FOUNDATION BOARD

SAVE THE DATE

MAROON & GRAY SOCIETY BANQUET

Saturday, May 21, 2022
Mountain View Country Club

Join us for a truly special event to finally officially induct our 2020 honorees and celebrate the life of Mardi Lowry McDonough '87, namesake of the Student Opportunity Fund & Grant Program

2020 Honorees

Joyce Lee, Retired Educator

Thomas Gentzel '69, Executive Director & CEO,
National School Board Association

The Late Ron Pavlechko, Educator & Coach

Mark Roland '91, U.S. Army Special Forces

Dr. Jane Snowden '77, Associate Chief Health Officer, Center for Artificial
Intelligence, Research & Evaluation, IBM Watson Health

1976 State Champion Boys Soccer Team



Mardi Lowry McDonough '87

More information will follow on ticketing and sponsorship opportunities

OUR MISSION

THE STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT EDUCATION FOUNDATION IS COMMITTED TO ENHANCING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

OUR VISION

AN ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT CHALLENGES AND INSPIRES EVERY STUDENT TO REACH HIS OR HER FULL POTENTIAL.

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The official registration and financial information of State College Area School District Education Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS MORE THAN \$21,000 IN FALL GRANT ROUND

HOW THE MARDI LOWRY MCDONOUGH '87 STUDENT OPPORTUNITY FUND & GRANT PROGRAM WILL IMPACT STUDENTS IN 2021-22 AND BEYOND

As part of its mission to enhance the experiences of students with innovative learning opportunities, the Education Foundation awards grants to educators and coaches through the newly named Mardi Lowry McDonough '87 Student Opportunity Fund & Grant Program, honoring the memory of a long-time district educator. This fall, grants were awarded totaling \$21,896.97 for projects across the district in various disciplines and areas of interest.

LION LEADERS @ MOUNT NITTANY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mt. Nittany Middle School's PBIS student leadership team is called Lion Leaders. Their mission is to promote:

Responsibility, Organization, Attitude, and Respect among the MNMS student body. The Lion Leaders do not have a budget, except for making a small amount of money through ROAR wear sales. Their past work has been funded personally by the advisors or with PTSO mini-grants. The lack of funds had made it difficult



Continued on Page 4

Lion Leaders show appreciation for bus drivers

HERE'S THE FULL LIST OF GRANT RECIPIENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF A FEW PROJECTS:

DISTRICT-WIDE

\$2,400 Playground equipment and supplies
\$4,000 Bike racks

EASTERLY PARKWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

\$966 iPads for EOE 3rd grade teachers
\$1,500 Wobble Chairs for K-5

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY

\$1,251 Flexible seating for 4th graders
\$500 Mindfulness Room Resources

GRAYS WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

\$1,245 2 MakerSpace carts and STEM projects materials
\$925 Sensory room materials

MOUNT NITTANY MIDDLE SCHOOL

\$500 Lion Leaders (PBIS Student Leadership Team)

PARK FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL

\$600 ES/AU classroom equipment (standing desk, rocking chair, balance ball chair)
\$300 Extra cooking and sewing supplies
\$2,500 3D PotterBot Micro 10 ceramic printer

STATE HIGH

\$1,640 Artificial lighting study
\$500 EmpowHER
\$1,300 Virtual Reality stand-alone headset

DELTA PROGRAM

\$1,000 Musical instruments for performing arts groups and classroom

VIRTUAL ACADEMY K-5

\$420 Virtual field trip to Discovery Space

GIFTED SUPPORT

\$350 KEVA Planks

EDUCATION FOUNDATION...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

for the group to expand its work. Grant funds will help the group to purchase supplies for new projects.



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR DELTA PROGRAM CLASSROOM

The Music and Performing Arts room at Delta Middle School is in need of instruments and equipment to meet the desires of the student population. Grant funds will help to outfit the music room with close to full sets of ukuleles, tubano drums, and steel drums, all of which are used in multiple types of music classes at Delta. The instruments will be used for: Ukulele Ensemble, World Drumming Ensemble, Songwriting, Rock Band, and General Music. Funds will have a lasting impact on the program and be used for many years to come.

MINDFULNESS ROOM @ FERGUSON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY

A safe supportive learning environment is necessary for students to grow and learn. While there have been obstacles to creating this environment in the past, such as adverse childhood experiences, the pandemic creates an added challenge. Teachers and students now more than ever need a warm, welcoming, safe, and tranquil space to unwind and just be. Through Mindful Schools training and CUI Trauma 101 training, teachers learned several ways to create such a safe space and discovered useful tools to teach children to identify,

process and regulate overwhelming emotions. Funds will help to create a calm safe space in our school for students, faculty and staff to pause, reflect and regroup. Open to individuals, small intervention groups and whole classes, the cozy mindful space will be filled with resources for teachers and students. Ideally, it will provide comfortable functional seating and be esthetically pleasing to provide a feeling in which one would relax immediately upon entering the room. In this supportive quiet Mindfulness Room, students will be taught to tune in to their emotions, and practice self-care, self-compassion and positive self-talk.

THE MAGIC OF OPEN-ENDED CHALLENGES WITH KEVA PLANKS FOR GIFTED SUPPORT

KEVA provides enriching and innovative engineering and open-ended challenges for kids and adults of all ages. KEVA provides resources that can be used across the grade levels and across the disciplines in K-5 Gifted Support. (teacher) had the opportunity to attend the Whole Teacher Eclecticon Conference and saw the creator/founder of KEVA, Dr. Ken Scheel's session entitled The Magic of Open-Ended Challenges with KEVA Planks. He demonstrated how to collaboratively build a story, flora and fauna, worlds, ball runs, towers, etc. All lessons are built with the following steps: challenge, build, observe, analyze, synthesize, reflect, and clean-up. KEVA open-



Selfportrait bulletin board at Easterly Parkway

ended challenges provide opportunities for students to take their thinking to the next level while having agency over their learning.

K-5 VIRTUAL ACADEMY FIELD TRIP

Students in K-5 Virtual Academy are currently not included in any extracurricular or co-curricular programs within the district. Funds will help all students have the opportunity to participate in at least one virtual field trip within the 2021/22 school year to Discovery Space Center in State College.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING STUDY FOR AQUAPONICS AND SUSTAINABILITY COURSE

As part of the Aquaponic and Sustainability course at the high school, students will study the difference in various types of ar-



tificial versus natural lighting sources. This grant will allow for the purchase of a high-tech agricultural LED light to compare to the other lighting sources in the greenhouse.

Using this LED light gives students access to the most current technology in an experimental study. Aquaponics and Sustainability is a hands-on STEM learning course that has students engaged in real world problem solving. The entire research project will be designed, implemented, carried out by students with the guidance of the teacher. This type of study happens at all levels of sustainable indoor agriculture. The goal is to maximize crop production for consumer consumption. The class sells produce to the staff and it is shared with the Culinary teacher/students to use in menu planning.

EXTRA COOKING & SEWING LESSONS FOR REMEDIATION/ENRICHMENT

Remediation/Enrichment class meets three days a week during ninth period at Park Forest Middle School. The Family and Consumer Sciences teacher would like to offer students enrichment in these topics, especially cooking food and sewing projects. Students favor the cooking portion of class and have little time to explore everything they'd like. Extra time cooking lessons would give more students the opportunity to learn these important life skills. Funds will be used to purchase ingredients for cooking and materials for sewing. ●



● SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT



Larry Beans '62 and family



Class of '62 Concession

Celebrating Generosity at Memorial Field

Before the Little Lions took the field on October 15, a group of alumni and community members came together to celebrate the generous support that helped to fund renovations and improvements to iconic Memorial Field.

The Education Foundation board, along with Superintendent Bob O'Donnell, Head Football Coach Matt Lintal and Athletic Director Chris Weakland, honored donors to the Memorial Field project and showed off new signage commemorating their gifts.

A \$1 million commitment from Larry Beans '62 named the press box; he also named the concession stands for his graduating class, many of whom attended the reception to celebrate with him. Larry's family also attended.

Dreibelbis Plaza at Memorial Field is named for a \$500,000 gift from Galen Dreibelbis '52. His family joined him at the event.

The Hawbaker Family locker room is named in recognition of the family's \$200,000 gift. Dan Hawbaker '57 attended with his family.

Many home team lockers are named for individual alumni and families for their gifts to the project. Lockers are still available for naming through the Legacy Locker program.

All donors to the Memorial Field project were invited to attend a reception and tour, which was followed by a reception for all alumni and friends who braved a little rain and enjoyed refreshments and snacks on Dreibelbis Plaza.

The Education Foundation board is grateful to all donors to the project and to the school district for its efforts in helping to recognize contributors. To learn more about the Legacy Locker program or other opportunities to contribute to the Campaign for Memorial Field, contact Executive Director Paul Olivett at (814) 883-8067. ●

A PROACTIVE APPROACH:

SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH DURING A CRITICAL TIME

Children and teen mental health disorders are surging across the country as the pandemic continues to impact school, activities and daily life. A proactive approach to student mental health helped the district to lay the groundwork for making an impact now when demand is high.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to impact students through quarantines and event cancellations, not to mention overall anxiety and stress, top pediatricians say the current state of children and teens' mental health is a national emergency, with a surge in suicide attempts and mental health disorders. Increased demand for services indicates that this trend is present in our local district, according to administrators and the student services team.

"Students spent nearly two years outside of the typical school experience and continue to face stress from situations like maintaining their academics or missing extracurricular opportunities due to quarantine or cancellations," said Jeanne Knouse, director of student services. In addition, students may feel pressures at home if families are still facing financial uncertainty or parents and guardians are managing higher workloads through staffing shortages in many industries.

“IF STUDENTS’ BASIC NEEDS AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AREN’T MET, THEY CAN’T LEARN. WITH THIS SUPPORT, WE REMOVE THOSE BARRIERS TO LEARNING.”

Fortunately, SCASD has been proactive about addressing student mental health and began addressing it well before the pandemic. Together with donors and the SCASD student services team, the Education Foundation pioneered the Mental Health Matters Fund in 2019. This thriving fund has continued to evolve and fuel an important and innovative support system for students and families by funding mental health and well-being initiatives and basic needs support.

Thanks to generous contributions from the school community, the Mental Health Matters Fund has helped the district to make significant strides.



HERE'S A LOOK AT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

- The addition of 11 interns to the Herr Clinic/SCASD partnership who are qualified to work clinically with students
- Direct care for students who cannot access mental health professionals through their health insurance
- Professional development for faculty and staff focused on trauma-informed care and building classroom community
- Critical financial support for utility payments, rent, food and personal care items to around 100 families throughout the 2020 school year

Ms. Knouse says the impact of these accomplishments is simple, yet profound: "If students' basic needs and mental health needs aren't met, they can't learn. With this support, we remove those barriers to learning."

These initiatives have continued in the 2021-22 school year, and recent efforts helped to support 425 families during this holiday season thanks to a partnership with the State College Food Bank.

Students and families who have been directly touched by your generosity have expressed tremendous gratitude to student services staff for this valuable resource, illustrating that the Mental Health Matters Fund is truly neighbor helping neighbor.

The Education Foundation is grateful that you are part of a strong community of supporters helping students thrive in school by making sure resources are available for their mental health and well-being. ●

HONORING MARGARET BLIZARD: “WE’RE ALL BETTER BECAUSE WE KNEW HER”

Margaret Blizard, a retired educator in the State College Area School District, passed away in late April, 2021 at the age of 77. Her life was filled with stories — she was born in post-war Wales and moved to the United States so her husband, David could pursue a postdoc in Bar Harbor, Maine. Soon afterwards, the couple moved to New York City where Mar-



garet promptly knocked on the door of the Children’s Television Workshop (Sesame Street) and landed a job organizing their nationwide Model Viewing Centers, supporting early childhood education. Upon completing her master’s degree in Special Education, Margaret began a lifelong interest in autism. Fast-forward a few more years and she qualified in school psychology at Wake Forest Academy, using her well-developed sense of self to project confidence, professionalism and above all, a sense of caring and child-advocacy in often fraught parent-teacher conferences. This would become a hallmark of her life.

Toward the end of the ’80s, life brought the Blizards and their two sons to State College, and to her job in the Special Education department in the State College Area School District, starting a rewarding 20-year career in that organization. She founded a class for students with autism and worked as a school psychologist, mainly in kindergarten and elementary grades, for the rest of her career. It was a setting where she flourished and touched individuals in life-changing ways.

But don’t just take our word for it. Here are seven tributes from those who worked with her, loved her, and say that “we are all better for knowing her.” Godspeed, Margaret. Thank you for sharing your life with us.

One of Margaret’s delights was to play the Queen of England in elementary school study units on the British Isles.

KAY MCKNIGHT: “SHE INTRODUCED US TO THE JOY OF KRISPY KREMES”

Picture it: the second long day at NASP (The National Association of School Psychologists) Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. We are on our way back to our hotel, having attended different sessions then meeting for dinner.

Margaret, our driver, shrieks, “KRISPY KREMES,” makes a hard left, crosses six lanes of traffic, parks and marches herself into the Krispy Kreme store. KK had not made it into the northern states yet and Margaret tried to explain the joy of these donuts as the rest of us were still recovering from the hard left approach.

With every hair in place and not a wrinkle in sight, Margaret steps to the counter and orders two dozen for her boys who will be so excited that she brought them Krispy Kremes.

— Kay McKnight, School Psychologist



From left to right: Theresa Cummins, Nancy Kelly, Margaret Blizard, Lynn Fritz, Linda Duffy, Monkia Modest, Anne Bruce. Photo taken by Cindy Vella.

NATASHA VOGT: “SHE HAD A BEAUTIFUL WAY OF FOCUSING ON THE STRENGTHS IN STUDENTS”

Margaret was a knowledgeable and respected resource when I taught students with autism. She had a beautiful way of focusing on the strengths in students’ with ASD and

empowering teachers to help the individuals we worked with.
— *Natasha Vogt, Behavior Specialist, SCASD*

CINDY VELLA: “WE ARE ALL BETTER BECAUSE WE KNEW HER”

I first met Margaret at Gray’s Woods Elementary. I had returned to full time teaching at the age of 49 in a fourth grade classroom. It could definitely have been overwhelming, however, Margaret had this amazing ability to “keep me on my toes” and at the same time, allow me to feel confident and enjoy my time with my students.

I looked forward to her observations and more importantly to having her evaluate a child. I knew that each and every child would feel like I did around her — confident in what I was doing, valued, and respected. When it came time to meet with parents, I observed Margaret doing the exact same thing. Her empathy for others was always present.

It was through the Gray’s Woods connection that my friendship with Margaret became an important part of my life. Our trips to Ocean Grove with our friends’ group are such wonderful memories of really getting to know her! I loved to hear her stories about her life. Hearing her sense of humor and laughter was such a joy!

The three traits that have left a lasting impression on my life

are Margaret’s empathy, generosity, and humility. The love, courage, and bravery that Margaret and David displayed throughout her illness will stay with me for the rest of my life. We are all better because we knew her, but the world will never be the same without her.

— *Cindy Vella, Retired Fourth Grade Teacher*

LYNN FRITZ: “SHE WAS THE PERFECT STAND-IN FOR THE QUEEN DURING OUR BRITISH ISLES STUDY”

Margaret taught our faculty many ways to help children who struggled to learn. Her calm, intelligent guidance was extremely valuable to students, parents, teachers and administrators. She went beyond her role as a School Psychologist and joined in school activities. Her regal bearing and lovely accent made her a perfect stand-in for the Queen during the British Isles unit of learning. She dressed in clothes similar to those worn by Queen Elizabeth and had tea with students learning about British culture.

I was lucky enough to become Margaret’s friend as well as her co-worker. We traveled, enjoyed concerts, movies, opera, birthday celebrations and dinners together. I remember her as such a highly intelligent, curious, talented, fun loving, adventurous woman who loved people. I will miss her forever.

— *Lynn Fritz, Retired Kindergarten Teacher*

LINDA DUFFY AND BO BLIZARD: “MARGARET PROVIDED A MODEL TO GUIDE OUR OWN LIVES”

Margaret led her life with grace, dignity, courage and strength, and provided a model that so many of us have wanted to guide our own lives. There were many aspects of her that left a lasting impact on others.

She was **joyful**. Her light was something that brought joy to everyone she met and she had a way of making people feel special. One of our book club members described Margaret as a wise teacher, compassionate listener, joyful companion, and inspirational mirror of what a life well-lived should be.

She was **intelligent**. In team meetings, people became mesmerized by her beautiful English accent and soon were very



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MARGARET BLIZARD...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

aware that she knew what she was talking about. Her calm, positive problem solving strategies were always welcomed.

She was the **wife** who loved her husband so much that she left Wales to begin a new life in the US. That life gave her 55 years of many adventures across the US and the world. She cherished her remarkable sons and the little men that followed them. Margaret embraced travel, new adventures and family life with gusto.

She was an **artist** who created beauty through her loom; was brought to tears by the ballet or opera and shared her talent with others frequently. When she wasn't weaving, she was listening to opera, Welsh choirs, or to the ballads of the Everly brothers and the Beatles. Yes, Margaret was one of those screaming Beatles fans live in concert in Cardiff, Wales in 1963.

She was **confident**, walking into the new offices of Sesame Street and the Children's Television Workshop in 1970 and leaving, having created the position of Education Director of Training. Later she became the Director of Developmental Viewing Centers.

She was a **brave fighter**. Even with a diagnosis of an incurable disease, she fought with more strength than I knew was humanly possible. Margaret was a force.

I truly believe that the people she taught, the friends she impacted and the family she guided will go on to create positive changes and that positive energy will spread indefinitely and infinitely.

— *Compiled by Linda Duff, Retired Instructional Support Teacher, and Stephen (Bo) Blizard, Margaret's son.*



She was a welcome and valued addition to our school district, with a keen interest in the identification of, and programming for students on the autism spectrum. Families sought her expertise and in some instances even moved their families to State College to take advantage of her knowledge and guidance. Without question, Margaret was a guiding force in making the school district a leader in providing quality support and services for students with autism and their families. Perhaps Margaret's strongest asset was her interpersonal skills. This was evident with every category of exceptionality as Margaret would always make herself available to those in need, be they children, teachers/paraprofessionals, administrators or parents.

Margaret was a dynamic school psychologist and treasured colleague and friend. She was truly a gentle soul, who was loyal and generous beyond measure. We who knew Margaret will treasure all of the funny asides, chuckles, and surprising flashes of Welsh wit and wisdom she shared over the years. Her giving nature touched all who knew and loved her. We are all the better for having shared time with Margaret. Wherever she may be, I am certain it is now a kinder, gentler, brighter and loving place.

— Sharon Salter, retired Director and Assistant Director of Special Education and Pat Moore, retired Director of Special Education

These submissions have been edited for space, but there is so much more to be said about Margaret Blizard's legacy and impact. You can read the full, unabridged tributes at scasdfoundation.org. ●

SHARON SALTER AND PAT MOORE: "SHE MADE A DIFFERENCE"

How does one encompass the impact of a very special woman, colleague, and friend? Margaret was an amazing woman. She was generous and giving of herself, her knowledge, and her caring for others.

SCASD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

DONOR LISTING EXCERPT

SEE THE FULL REPORT ONLINE AT [SCASDFOUNDATION.ORG](https://scasdfoundation.org)



Creating Opportunities

FOR EVERY STUDENT

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR SCASD STUDENTS

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES WHO MADE GIFTS TO THE ANNUAL FUND & MARDI LOWRY MCDONOUGH '87 FUND IN 2020-2021.

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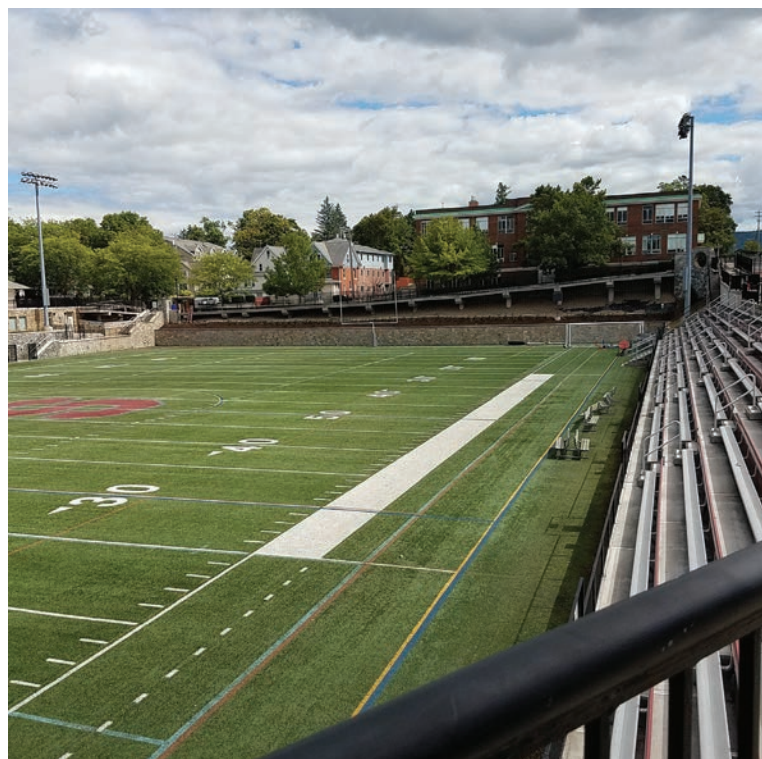
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