

COMMUNITY PULLS TOGETHER - CREATES A RECORD FUNDRAISING YEAR FOR PALO ALTO'S PARTNERS IN EDUCATION (PiE)

Palo Alto Schools Benefit during a Difficult Year.

Palo Alto's Partners in Education will donate a record \$2.57 million to the Palo Alto Unified School District to pay for school aides and specialists, enrichment programs and college counselors for the 2009-10 school year.

Lois Garland, president of PiE, a non-profit, private educational foundation committed to raising funds for local schools, announced the gift at the district's school board meeting Tuesday night. Despite the troubled economic environment, Garland said the annual campaign received a flood of donations during the final weeks of the campaign, which contributed significantly to the overall success of the fundraising drive.

School leaders said the gift carries extra significance during the current economic downturn.

"Once again Partners in Education, working with school leaders and all Palo Alto Unified School District parents and community members, has raised the funds necessary to maintain crucial components of our educational mission," said Superintendent of Schools Kevin Skelly. "We are enormously grateful for the confidence and support during these tough economic times and promise to be faithful stewards of the community's support."

In elementary schools, the PiE gift will pay for classroom aides and specialists, arts instruction and science enrichment. Middle schools will spend the money primarily on electives and enrichment programs and student support, and high schools will use its PiE dollars to fund college and career counselors, among other educational needs.

More than 3,000 families contributed to the district-wide campaign, which ended on Feb. 12. Support came from throughout the community in donations large and small.

"We could not have done it without the help of so many parents, school principals, teachers, businesses and local citizens who rallied for the cause of education in our community," said Garland. "It is a testament to how much we all value our schools."

Many donors took advantage of a matching challenge grant that ran in the final weeks of the campaign. During that time, a group of generous families pledged to match any donation given to PiE up to a total of \$55,000. This year PiE also saw a significant increase in the number of corporate matching gifts from employees. To date, approximately \$170,000 has been donated through the corporate matching gift program.

Palo Alto Partners in Education is a nonprofit 501(c)3 foundation that enhances educational excellence for every student in the Palo Alto public schools.. It is the only foundation dedicated exclusively to raising funds for all PAUSD schools. Since PiE's inception in 2005, it has donated over \$9 million for Palo Alto schools. For more information about PiE, please visit www.papie.org <<http://www.papie.org>> . For more information, contact: Muneerah Merchant (650) 575-7589 or Diana Walsh (650)224-1180.