

LET'S TALK EDUCATION

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Photo by Jeff Murdock

These Hope Elementary violinists and other budding musicians will be helped by the financial support of the Carlsbad Educational Foundation, which is presenting Celebrate Carlsbad Day and the Kids Are Worth A Million telethon May 2 at Legoland California as a fundraiser.

Reinvigorated Carlsbad foundation provides educational enrichment

Great ideas and organizations often grow from humble seeds.

In the mid-1980s, Carlsbad High PTA member Bob Beard helped create the Carlsbad Educational Foundation, or CEF, garnering support from community leaders to raise money to upgrade the school library. That successful effort evolved into CEF's Kids Are Worth A Million campaign to keep schools technologically up to par.

Today, that seed has grown into a flourishing nonprofit that has contributed more than \$4 million over the years to our schools, primarily in the areas of science, technology, arts and reading.

Recently, CEF re-energized its focus by conducting a six-month strategic planning process to identify high impact areas for financial support. The process was spearheaded by CEF CEO Valin Brown and included the involvement of Carlsbad business executives, myself and the district's principals, teachers and PTA members.

As a result, the foundation is embarking on a grant-making effort to accelerate development of hands-on science programs, launch a music program at all elementary schools and increase investment in innovative educational programs that drive student achievement.

"The foundation is thrilled to help the district fund and design new programs that strive to elevate student achieve-

ment and enrichment," Brown said.

He will be working closely with district staff to develop a timeline, budget and list of programs to be launched in the fall. As in the past, the foundation and district, albeit a powerful partnership, cannot do it alone.

CEF is reaching out to chamber members and to the entire community as stakeholders in the future of our children's education.

"We have embarked on an ambitious fundraising program that includes a direct mail campaign to encourage businesses and individuals to get involved at an appropriate level of support," Brown said. "We are looking into new business ventures to augment the funding generated by our licensed Kids' Care childcare business at elementary schools. And we have blocked out a day of fun with the May 2 Celebrate Carlsbad Day and telethon at Legoland. A portion of each discounted admission on that day will go directly to the CEF and thus, to the schools."

On behalf of the entire district, and as a parent of a Carlsbad High student who reaps the benefits of the foundation's efforts, I feel fortunate to live in a community that values education and walks the walk to make sure that kids truly are worth a million. See you at Legoland May 2.

For more information about CEF, visit www.carlsbaded.org.