



# NORTHAMPTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT NEWS

“

As a teacher and advisor to a variety of clubs, teams and organizations, I am profoundly grateful for the role the NEF Endowment has played in offering my students ways to further improve their education beyond the walls of the classroom.

– Jeromie Whalen, technology teacher,  
Northampton High School

”



*Thank you!*

YOU PUT US  
OVER THE TOP!

*Together*

**WE EXCEEDED OUR GOAL,  
RAISING \$1,064,597 FOR THE THE NEF ENDOWMENT!**

**The world has changed suddenly.**

**NEF remains fully committed to helping our schools going forward**

**- and we are more grateful then ever for such a strong and supportive community.**

The Northampton Education Foundation concluded our Endowment campaign on Dec. 31, 2019, topping our \$1 million goal for a total of **\$1,064,597** gifted and pledged to the NEF Endowment Fund. With the success of this campaign, the NEF Endowment will fund larger, multi-year grants to *all* Northampton schools *forever*, solely from the interest on the Endowment.

This campaign attracted widespread support from local banks, businesses and institutions, as well as many families with children in the schools, alumni and individual community members who join in recognizing the long-term value of a vibrant public education system. Since its inception in 2002, the Endowment has now raised more than \$2 million.

In these extraordinary times of school closings and the shuttering of many community centers and businesses, our daily life has been upended. Despite the ever-changing nature of life right now, the Northampton Education Foundation remains steadfast in its support of the needs of the Northampton Public Schools. Our regular 2020 fundraisers have been canceled or postponed. We remain deeply grateful for the generosity of the community in our past fundraisers; it is that generosity that enables us to meet some of the immediate needs of our learning community today, as well as plan for a time when students and staff can come together again.

# NEF Endowment Grants Awarded to Date

- Bridges: Bridging The Gap Between Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade (\$40,000 over 2 years)
- Celebration of Ancient Greece (\$10,000)
- Northampton Environmental Education Program (NEEP) (\$50,730 over 3 years)
- Green Action In Northampton Schools Program (GAINS) (\$10,000)
- The Creative Classrooms Initiative (\$15,000)
- A High School Advisory Program: Civic Engagement and Tolerance Education (\$27,000 over 2 years)
- FirstRobotics Team (\$3,500)
- The JFK Technology Institute (\$15,775)
- Childs Park: 'Sharing Place:' A Multi-School Tile Installation (\$9,250)
- The Outdoor Garden – A Sense of Place (\$111,000 over 5 years)
- Living History in Northampton, Florence and Leeds (\$40,400 over 3 years)
- Change-Makers (\$14,000)
- Caught Off Guard (\$10,000 over 2 years)
- Energize Northampton (\$15,810)
- Modified NHS Biology Curriculum (\$10,790)
- Integrated Math (\$5,420)
- Expanded Use of Computers for JFK Special Needs Students (\$9,560)
- Bridge Street After School Enrichment (\$10,000)
- All Elementary 3D Printers (\$15,192 over 2 years)
- JFK 6th Grade Social Studies (\$7,205)
- Responsive Classroom (\$6,000)
- Global STEM (\$14,000)
- Safe Passage: “Say Something” (\$4,866)
- Audubon/Arcadia Climate Change (\$10,000 over 3 years)
- Breakfast After the Bell (\$15,600)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at JFK (\$41,780 over 3 years)
- Climbing ROCKS – Reaching Our Children’s Kinetic Sensors (\$9,882)
- Makerspaces (\$9,035)
- Get R.E.A.L. Reading Education and Leadership (\$24,000)
- Northampton Engineer Project (\$12,000)
- Sojourner’s Truth in the 21st Century (\$2,025)
- Grow Food Kids (\$15,000)
- Live Steam (\$32,375 over 3 years)

**Total Endowment grants awarded to date: \$627,195**

We are in the process of awarding the next round of Endowment grants  
- stay tuned!

# Why I Give:

## Dr. Melvin Hershkowitz honors his daughter's memory - and her legacy as an educator - with named fund

**At 97, Melvin Hershkowitz has made educationally focused philanthropy into his own cottage industry. And while it has much to do with the untimely loss of his beloved daughter, Marie, there is much more to the story....**

A spry and sharp-witted resident of Northampton since 2010, Hershkowitz has shared his good fortune generously with institutions like his alma mater Columbia University, Hampshire College, Bridge Street School, and most recently, the NEF Endowment Fund.

Education figured heavily in his New York City upbringing. His father was among the first board certified ENT surgeons in the country in 1921, and so medicine seemed the logical option for Melvin early on. At NYC's Horace Mann Prep School, he excelled at German, finishing his time there with an unbroken string of perfect test scores. He continued his German studies as a pre-med student at Columbia, garnering the Deutsche Verein prize at graduation. So it should surprise no one that as a newly minted M.D. eager to incorporate his language skills in a post-war military deployment, he was immediately dispatched to Japan. There, he recalls, he spent most of his time treating American G.I.'s for STDs.

Back in New York after his stint in the Army, Hershkowitz was at first drawn to a career in pathology, but "after some 20 autopsies, I realized that I would rather work on live patients." Twenty years in a private Manhattan practice followed, along with a marriage to Joanna Lega and three children, including the youngest, Marie. Melvin always managed to keep one foot firmly planted in academia, acting as a teaching fellow at NYU, and eventually moving into a more full-time teaching position at the New Jersey Medical School. Later he taught at George Washington University and then, at the age of 67, he was invited onto the faculty of Brown University's medical school, where he remained until his retirement - "for real this time" - at 81.



Northampton educator Marie Hershkowitz



Marie's father, Dr. Melvin Hershkowitz, with NEF board member Mandy Gerry and his son-in-law Steve Hathaway at the NEF Endowment Celebration on Dec. 3, 2019

"Marie was a brilliant teacher. I am blessed to be able to honor her memory and support something that meant so much to her."

Not long after that, Melvin found his way to Northampton, where his daughter Marie had settled with her husband, Steve. Marie had graduated from Hampshire College and decided to stay in the area, taking on a number of teaching positions before landing at Bridge Street School as an ESP with a keen interest in special education.

She was a beloved teacher who organized early morning study groups and maintained a special library for her SPED students. She twice won awards for her work in this field. Melvin describes her as being incredibly devoted to the children at Bridge Street and having "a universal compassion streak." He remembers her as always having had something positive to share about her students.

Tragically, in 2013 Marie Hershkowitz succumbed to brain cancer and was deeply mourned by all whose lives she had touched. Her father set about honoring her memory, first with a scholarship in her name at Hampshire College, then by contributing to a new playground at Bridge Street, and finally with a named fund in her honor within the NEF Endowment Fund.

"I've had good fortune and it's important to share that," he says. "Marie was a brilliant teacher. Students need to see that you really care about them and that you can guide them when they encounter difficulties. That's what made Marie such a good teacher. It's not just about the transmission of information. I am blessed to be able to honor her memory and support something that meant so much to her."

*Did you know?*

NEF is an **all-volunteer** organization, relying on the time, energy and dedication of our Board and committees.

Thank you!

# NEF Endowment grants at work: Breakfast After the Bell

The NEF Endowment provided seed money in 2019 for a local pilot program of Breakfast After the Bell. This program provides a healthy morning meal to all children regardless of family income, increasing breakfast participation and removing stigma lower-income students often face when they eat breakfast at school.

Benefits include improved academic achievement, improved student health and increased attendance rates.

This highly successful program, which will receive federal funding, will roll out in all Northampton elementary schools in Fall 2020.

This grant reflects the NEF Endowment's goals of promoting innovation, collaboration and sustainability.



## NEF Endowment grants at work: NHS website



NHS technology teacher Jeromie Whalen works with students to redesign the NHS website as part of an NEF Endowment grant.

## NEF Endowment grants at work: Sojourner Truth and Local History



*YOU made it happen!*

# Thank you to all our donors to the NEF Endowment

*- Lifetime Giving for Lifetime Learning -*

## Leading the Way: Named Funds of the NEF Endowment

Florence Bank Fund for Public Education

Northampton Area Pediatrics Fund

Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Fund

bankESB Fund

Eli Daniel Nemetz Todd Memorial Fund

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### Gifts of \$100,000+

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This list includes all known donors to the NEF Endowment from 2002 through March 5, 2020. Donors who contributed to both the founding Endowment campaign and the most recent campaign, which concluded on 12/31/19, are indicated with \*



"Childs Park: 'Sharing Place' - A Multi-School Tile Installation," a NEF Endowment-funded collaboration between Northampton High School, Bridge St. School and Jackson St. School.

## Endowment donor list, continued...

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Students in their "Outdoor Classroom," funded at all four elementary schools for five years by the NEF Endowment

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Students testing water for a Global STEM project, funded by the NEF Endowment

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NEF Endowment grants enrich all Northampton public schools



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 Catherine Wanat and David Reckhow \*  
 WEBS, America's Yarn Store  
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 Joan Welch  
 Diane Welter  
 Renee Wetstein  
 Christina and Matthew White  
 Renna Whittredge  
 Stephen Wichrowski, Jr.  
 Priscilla Williams  
 Judy Wisch  
 Vera and Lawrence Wishnow  
 Judith Wolf and Justin David  
 Jeanette Wolfe  
 Denise Wood  
 Wright Builders, Inc.  
 Michael Young  
 Elizabeth and John Yount  
 Marcia Zalesky Young  
 George Zimmerman



## NEF Endowment Legacy Circle

Thank you for including NEF in your planned giving.

**Wendy Berg**  
**Elizabeth and Peter Bigwood**  
**Marcia Burick and Edward McColgan**  
**Karin George**  
**Monica Green and Richard West**  
**Steve Herrell**  
**Elizabeth Horn and Shawn Shimpach**  
**Marisa Labozzetta and Martin Wohl**

**Dale Melcher and Bill Newman**  
**Ellen and Barry Nigrosh**  
**Christina Petersen and Peter Rayton**  
**Lydia Sarro and Joseph Bartolomeo**  
**Virginia Sullivan**  
**Thomas Wartenberg**  
**Joan Wiener and Stan Schapiro**

Please consider joining these founding members of NEF's Legacy Circle with a planned gift.

For more information please contact Martin Wohl at [mwohl@comcast.net](mailto:mwohl@comcast.net)  
 or Debbie Koske at [dkoske@communityfoundation.org](mailto:dkoske@communityfoundation.org).

# Why I Give:

## Florence Bank and Smith College lead the way in supporting the NEF Endowment and public education

The NEF Endowment is truly a community investment in our future, and we are grateful for the support of so many, including generous pledges and gifts from local businesses and nonprofits. In 2019, the NEF Endowment received pledges of \$50,000 respectively from Florence Bank and Smith College. Both the bank and the college are longtime supporters of the Endowment. With these impactful gifts to this campaign, each institution demonstrates its deep, ongoing commitment to our community.



### Florence Bank: Strengthening Communities

In July 2019, at Florence Bank's headquarters in Florence, John Heaps, Jr., President and CEO, presented a giant display check to Dr. Martin Wohl, Chair of the NEF Endowment Campaign, to recognize the bank's \$50,000 pledge.

Heaps, who will retire on May 1 of this year after 25 years as head of Florence Bank, has made community support a hallmark of his tenure. "One of the best parts of my job is giving back to the community and seeing the impact of that. Helping the NEF Endowment grow was a natural fit for the bank," said Heaps.

This pledge continues Florence Bank's longstanding commitment to NEF, beginning with a \$100,000 pledge in 2004 for the establishment of the Florence Bank Fund for Public Education at the NEF Endowment.

"Florence Bank has been a true partner to the NEF Endowment from the beginning. Their special generosity makes a real difference to our students, teachers, and entire community, and we are incredibly grateful," said Dr. Wohl.

**"Smith College is proud to be a vital part of Northampton and a partner in its success."**

### Smith College:

#### Reaching Out to Schools, Teachers and Children

From its student interns working in our public schools to the courses it offers to NHS students to its in-kind and financial support, Smith College embraces its role as an active community partner.

Smith is a long-term supporter of the NEF Endowment, beginning with its first \$50,000 pledge in 2004. In 2019, Smith presented the NEF Endowment with a \$50,000 gift for this campaign, bringing the College's total investment in the NEF Endowment to \$100,000.

Smith College President Kathleen McCartney announced the donation in October 2019 at Smith's annual Community Breakfast, saying "I know that educators, especially those who work with children and young adults, have big dreams. I'm excited to see Smith College partner with the NEF to help fund those dreams and see them become reality."



Dr. Martin Wohl observed, "Smith College is not only a model for excellence in higher education, but also a great example of an institution that gives back to our community. Their gift says a great deal about Smith's commitment and generosity to Northampton and to supporting public education."

# Why I Give:

## NHS grad Emma Yount creates art that gives back to her alma mater



Northampton High School graduate Emma Yount found a unique way to combine her artistic talents with her desire to give back to Northampton's public schools.

Currently a sophomore at Wheaton College, studying Studio Arts and Business, Emma began her own pet portrait business just over two years ago. She had initially painted a few pet portraits for her NHS track and cross-country teammates, and her reputation quickly grew. When she began college and launched her website (eryportraits.com), she sold 100 portraits by the end of her first semester. In the summer of 2019, Emma donated \$5 from each portrait sold to the NEF Endowment, totaling \$250.

Emma recalled, "I wanted to find a way I could give back to my school though my business. I decided that the Northampton Education Foundation would be a perfect fund. I remember various projects that the NEF made possible for my schools, including the Jackson Street School gardens and the tile mosaic installation project at NHS. I can vividly remember working with my classmates, teachers and the community making this garden. It was one of my favorite memories at Jackson Street. Projects like these made school exciting and memorable. I know by supporting the Northampton Education Fund Endowment campaign programs like these will continue to motivate students and strengthen the school system."

## Many thanks to the following for their in-kind donations to the NEF Endowment campaign:

A2Z Science & Learning Store

Mary Bates

Beth Pellettieri

André Boulay

Click Workspace

Coldwell Banker Upton Massamont Realtors

Rich Cooper

Marisa Labozzetta

Becca Hershkovitz and Katherine McCusker

Claire-anne Williams and the JFK Jazz Band

Beau Flahive and The Northamptones

Paul Kinsman, NHS band teacher

Sharon Saline

Stephanie Shafran

Rachel Simmons

Smith College

rk MILES

Bob Melnik and his NHS students for constructing the campaign thermometer

The printing and mailing  
of this newsletter has  
been underwritten by a  
generous donor

## Special thanks to:

All the community members who have served on the Endowment distribution committee

NHS students who have served on the Endowment distribution committee

The Event Committee for the Dec. 3, 2019 "Be Part of the Change" celebration

All the Northampton public school students and families who contributed to NEF's Nov. 2019 coin drive

Blair Winans and Rhyme Digital

Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts

Greater Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce

Northampton Public School PTOs

Paradise Copies

The wedding celebration of Toni Hochstadt and Michael Doherty

**Thanks to all who support NEF, through our Annual Fund, Adult Spelling Bee,  
SOS Book Fund, Giving Tuesday and more - every gift to NEF makes an impact!**

**And boundless thanks to the teachers of Northampton Public Schools!**



## **What's next for the NEF Endowment: A new cycle of larger, collaborative grants - forever**

With the success of the NEF Endowment campaign, we are excited to launch a new, ongoing, 3-year grant cycle for large-scale, collaborative projects that will impact all Northampton public school students. Thanks to this expanded Endowment, NEF will generate approximately \$100,000 per year for our city's schools. Our city's educators will have more time to dream big and plan accordingly, and to collaborate more effectively among schools.

In response to the pandemic, the NPS district has stepped up to ensure the security of staff pay and benefits, as well as to meet the needs of our more vulnerable community members with daily food distributions. As the school district works to provide resources to families and explore options for distance learning, NEF is proactively reaching out to teachers and administrators to determine how we may support them in this crisis.

With the current uncertainty, we are working out the timeline of the new Endowment grant cycle, and hope to begin grant distribution as soon as the 2022-2023 school year. We are planning the details of the new grant process to include the voices of faculty, staff, students, School Council, PTOs and community members. Final decisions for Endowment grants will be made by the NEF Board with the recommendations of the Endowment distribution committee. The twice-yearly Small Grants to Teachers and the NEF/SOS Book Fund will continue unchanged, and annual Endowment grants will continue as before until the new grant cycle commences,

In an order to be determined, the plan for the new annual grant cycle is:

NEF awards grant to Northampton High School to use over 3 years

NEF awards grant to JFK Middle School to use over 3 years

NEF awards grant to all four elementary schools to use over 3 years

With the success of this Endowment campaign, this cycle will continue in perpetuity. Each school (or school level in the case of the elementary schools) will have a larger amount of grant money with which to plan over the three years. Grants are intended to foster innovative and creative projects, and a percentage of each Endowment grant cycle will be allocated to sustain proven projects.

Money given to the Endowment is not spent, but rather carefully invested through the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. These larger grants are generated from the interest of these investments. Gifts, pledges and bequests from local parents, alumni, community members, and businesses become an educational legacy.

With a strong NEF Endowment, teachers will have the resources to promise a first-class educational experience, regardless of the economic or political climate. Public education in Northampton will thrive, and our students will be prepared for the world ahead.

**Thanks to your support, the NEF Endowment is poised to expand its grantmaking and its commitment to Northampton's public school students and teachers.**

**With the backing of our community, the Endowment will continue to grow.**

**Thank you for your support!**

# Honoring a district leader: Gwen Agna

In June 2020, Gwen Agna will retire as Principal of Jackson Street School after 24 years - and 31 years in the district.

With community support, NEF salutes Gwen's extraordinary legacy by establishing the Principal Gwen Agna Fund for Northampton Public Education.

Donations to this named fund within the NEF Endowment will support grants at all Northampton public schools, and reflect Ms. Agna's championing of strong public schools.



Ms. Agna receives a Massachusetts Senate citation for the establishment of the Principal Gwen Agna Fund for Northampton Public Education on May 31, 2019



The award-winning NHS Robotics team, launched with an NEF Endowment grant

## Many thanks to the NEF Board and Development Committee:

### Board:

Lisa Papademetriou, Co-President  
 Jennifer Sanders James, Co-President  
 Martin Wohl, Vice President, Endowment  
 Mary Curtin, Treasurer  
 Christina Petersen, Secretary  
 Josh Bedell  
 Jason Berg  
 Peter Bigwood  
 André Boulay  
 Danielle Carr Ramdath

Mandy Gerry  
 Mona Kulp  
 Amy Levine  
 Francie Lin  
 Dale Melcher  
 Dorothy Nemetz  
 Emily Quintana  
 Megan Zinn

### Development committee:

Joe Bartolomeo  
 Josh Bedell  
 Peter Bigwood  
 Mandy Gerry  
 Monica Green  
 Marissa Hoechstetter  
 Ellen Nigrosh  
 Martin Wohl, Chair  
 Elizabeth Horn, Campaign Consultant

In memoriam: Gerald Budgar

Ex Officio: John A. Provost, Ed.D., Superintendent



**Celebrating the  
NEF Endowment:  
*Be Part of the Change*  
Dec. 3, 2019**



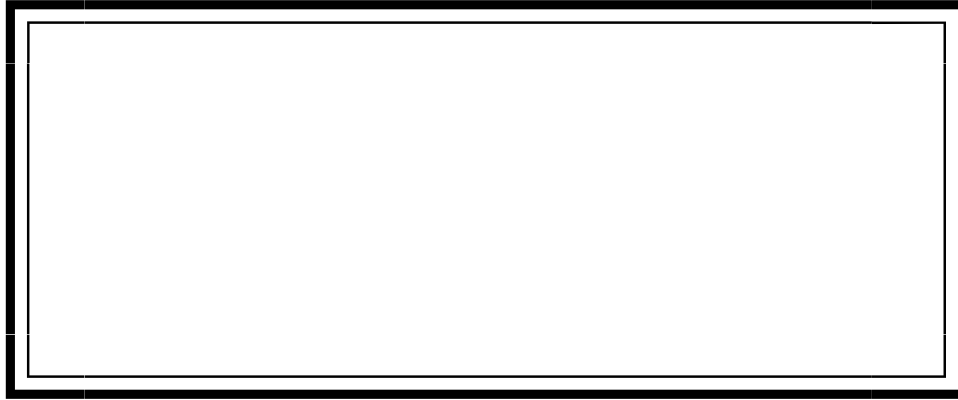
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**THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A "MARK YOUR CALENDAR" BOX....**

**NEF Small Grants deadline: April 16 - POSTPONED UNTIL EARLY FALL**

**NEF Plant Sale: Saturday, May 9 - CANCELED**

**NEF Showcase: Friday, June 12 - POSTPONED**

**NEF Adult Spelling Bee: POSTPONED UNTIL FALL, date TBA**

**Although all events are canceled or postponed for now,  
NEF remains committed to helping our schools, now and always.  
We are communicating with teachers and staff to find ways to best  
support them during this extraordinary time.**

**We cannot wait to gather with our wonderful community in the future.  
Please be healthy, be safe and continue to care for one another....**



**NORTHAMPTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

[northamptoneducation.org](http://northamptoneducation.org)