

A Gift of Hope for the Gregory School

A local couple wanted to gift seed money to an educational program. A Trenton school had a dynamic technology teacher who was reaching into her own pocket to buy materials for her class.

The Princeton Area Community Foundation was the connection between the two. After the staff of the Community Foundation told the donors about the Gregory School's emerging robotics program, the couple made a \$5,000 gift to purchase equipment for students in grades K-5.

"We're very happy that we're able to support the development of technology skills at this young age," said one of the donors.

For 25 years, the Princeton Area Community Foundation has served as a vital link between philanthropists and nonprofits in the region. In this case, the Community Foundation staff visited Gregory School earlier this year to learn more about its programs, after learning about those new initiatives from Beth Walsh, Gregory School supporter and Senior Vice-President at PNC Wealth Management. Staffers also knew the donors had an interest in science and education. So when the donors, who wish to remain anonymous, reached out to the Community Foundation for advice about their giving, the staff knew they had the perfect match for the couple's philanthropic goals.

"I'm very grateful that the Princeton Area Community Foundation reached out to this family to enrich our students and faculty to develop our Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative," said Principal Michael Rosenberg. "Robotics and technology instruction is essential for a world-class education."

The \$5,000 gift, made to a nonprofit that provides programming in the school, will provide the foundation for the initiative. Children can begin learning sequencing skills in kindergarten, and by the time they reach middle school, they will have a strong foundation in technology and robotics, said teacher Kimberly Jacquay.

"Our students are super-excited," said Jacquay, who plans to invite the donors back to see students' progress throughout the year. "I'm excited. ...It's very nice to have someone come in and say, "we'll support you in a new endeavor.""

Elizabeth DeJesus, the district's assistant superintendent of special services, said the Trenton Board of Education was grateful for the donation.

"I know this is going to be a long lasting partnership and we're going to see our children excel in robotics," she said.

PTO President Robert Garner and Patricia Planter, the parent liaison at the school, said they were also thankful for the assistance.

"The donation? I'm speechless," said Planter. "It's a wonderful opportunity for our children to be in the loop. Five thousand dollars is a lot of money. It goes a long way with us and we're receiving that token of love."

Rosenberg had similar sentiments.

"What a lot of folks need is hope," he told the couple. "And you're providing it."