

Frances Rivetti

Freelance Writing and Public Relations 707 477 8397 francesrivetti@comcast.net

Press Release

Petaluma Educational Foundation Announces Newly Redesigned Classroom Grant Funding Model in Time for Non-Profit's Premier Annual Fundraising BASH

For immediate release: August 7, 2009

Petaluma, CA: Following months of strategic planning in the midst of unprecedented, state-wide educational cuts, non-profit Petaluma Educational Foundation has announced an entirely redesigned funding model for the future provision of its benchmark 27-year-old Grant Program enabling teachers and school communities throughout the Petaluma area to bring innovative educational ideas to fruition.

Over 1,359 "Invest in Education" PEF grants totaling more than \$1,465,274 have been awarded to teachers throughout Petaluma's 33 schools since 1992. Entirely funded by individual donations to its annual "Invest in Education" campaign, this unique program remains supportive of each school or district's overall goals, while weighing in the best interests of all students affected by individual grants.

Announcement of a restructured program funding process in which PEF will offer two distinct types of grants with different levels of funding comes within weeks of the non-profits' premier annual fundraising event, The 2009 gala dinner/auction BASH.

Taking place on September 12th at RNM Properties' generously donated South McDowell Landing, a large, professional suite overlooking the city's Wetlands at Shollenberger Park, the foundation's popular BASH is anticipated to raise over \$250,000 in keeping with last year's fundraising figures.

Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, the foundation will offer PEF Enrichment Grants of up to \$2,000 for curriculum projects that supplement, support, and enrich the student experience, awarded in January 2010 for the 2010-2011 school year and completed by May of 2011.

A second tier of grants will be offered as PEF Major Impact Grants of up to \$15,000, with significant emphasis on innovative programs of extraordinary scope, reach or longevity, awarded by 2010 and completed by May of 2011.

Teachers, groups of teachers, classified personnel and principals in K-12 public, charter and not for profit private schools in the Petaluma area are eligible for the PEF Major Impact Grant Program. In addition, community groups with an established presence within the schools, students and parents may apply with teacher sponsorship and site principal approval.

Inaugural PEF Major Impact Grant recipient was Petaluma Wetlands Alliance for its innovative, wide-reaching Science Program. All 50 third grade classrooms in Petaluma have participated in a custom-designed program at Shollenberger Park, bringing children closer to nature by docent-guiding them through discovery of local wetland plant and animal life.

Popular with students and teachers alike, the Petaluma Wetlands Alliance \$15,000 Major Impact Grant program for science is currently subject to a second year review for re-approval.

Sonoma County-based commerce and industry have joined forces to position this year's September 12th PEF blockbuster BASH as one of Southern Sonoma County's most high-profile, non-profit sector fundraising events.

“Corporate sponsorship is off the charts this year,” says PEF Executive Director, Janet Ramatici. “We are extremely honored to receive the generous sponsorship commitment of top level donors Exchange Bank, Clover Stornetta Farms, Andrea and John Barella, Basin Street Properties, Guido Enterprises, Hennessy Funds, Lace House Linen and the Petaluma Market, plus invaluable support of RNM Properties and high flying, veteran rock and roll band, Moonalice.”

Director of Marketing for Clover Stornetta Farms, Joanie Benedetti says: *“Clover is excited to once again be a part of furthering education in Petaluma through PEF and our sponsorship of the BASH. It is important to ensure that Petaluma’s children will continue to be challenged academically, enabling them to be contributors to our society in the future. It is because of PEF, and the programs and scholarships it creates that allows for such a diverse learning environment. As a business in Petaluma, we believe in our community and hope that we can continue to draw from our community to help make our business better.”*

Exchange Bank has a legacy of supporting the young men and women of Sonoma County. According to the bank’s VP/Business Development Officer, Ron Malnati: *“Investment in education for our future leaders is why we at Exchange Bank support the Petaluma Educational Foundation. Investments that will be returned a thousand-fold as these young adults embrace the opportunities and the challenges that the future holds.”*

Paul Elmore, President of this year’s BASH venue host donor RNM Properties adds: *“California’s budget crisis is impacting our schools and limiting the scope of programs that most of us benefitted from when we were kids. Partnering with the Petaluma Educational Foundation to host the BASH at RNM South McDowell Landing is an excellent opportunity to support the children in our communities. Quality education makes our community a stronger, better place to work and live.”*

Sponsor band, Moonalice consists of seven accomplished troubadours of international renown, named after a Native American Tribe. Managed by Petaluman, Steve Parish,

legendary band members include: G.E. Smith (lead guitarist of Hall and Oates, Bob Dylan Touring Band and former Music Director of Saturday Night Live); John Molo (Bruce Hornsby, John Fogerty and Keller Williams); Barry Sless (Founding member of David Nelson Band); Pete Sears (Rod Stewart, Jefferson Starship); Ann McNamee (singer/songwriter); Roger McNamee (venture capitol entrepreneur and musician); and Jack Casady (legendary bassist for Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna).

Tickets for this year's BASH are priced at \$150 per person, inclusive of cocktails, live and silent auctions, a sit-down, three-course dinner with drinks and dancing to the Moonalice brand of Americana rock and blues. This semi-formal, social extravaganza culminates with late-night deejay entertainment in an exclusive Chocolate Dance Lounge! Tickets for the 500 person event can be purchased from PEF at 707 778 4632 or online at www.pefinfo.com.

In addition to its Grant Program, Petaluma Educational Foundation funds over 200 graduating high school student scholarships each Spring, plus cultural enrichment events in art and music. PEF also manages over \$3, 500, 000 in endowment and component funds established through gifts, planned giving and corporate commitments to benefit Petaluma schools.

-ends-

Petaluma Educational Foundation, 200 Douglas Street, Petaluma, Ca 94952

PEF Director, Janet Ramatici 707 778 4632 janet@pefinfo.com

Media Contact, Frances Rivetti 707 477 8397 francesrivetti@comcast.net