

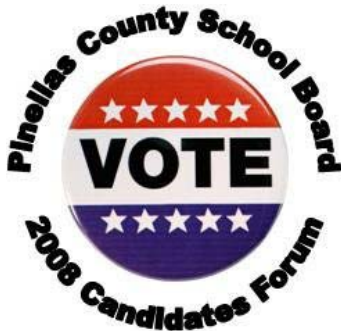


## Foundation Forum

## August 2008

This is a monthly newsletter to keep you updated on projects and initiatives of the Pinellas Education Foundation. Please forward this to anyone you feel would be interested in learning more about the Pinellas Education Foundation.

### Meet the School Board Candidates on August 21 at Osceola High School



Join the Pinellas County Council of PTAs and the Pinellas Education Foundation for the 2008 **Pinellas County School Board Candidates Forum** at Osceola High School on Thursday, August 21, 2008. Doors will open at 6 p.m. with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. The forum will consist of three moderated debates, one for each of the contested seats in the upcoming school board election. Candidates will be asked four questions that have been submitted in advance and allowed equal response time. Each candidate will also be allotted one minute for an introductory statement and one minute for closing. The Forum will be moderated by Al Ruechel from Bay News 9 and Tom Tobin from the St. Petersburg Times. Forum sponsors are BrightHouse Networks, the Pinellas County Council of PTAs, the Pinellas Education Foundation, the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, the St. Petersburg Times, and WorkNet Pinellas. For those unable to attend,

the Candidates Forum will be broadcast live on PDS-TV. The candidate forum will be rebroadcast Friday, Aug. 22, 9 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 23, 8 a.m., 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.; Sunday, Aug. 24, 8 a.m., 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.; Monday, Aug. 25, 8 a.m., 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.; and Tuesday, Aug. 26, 8 a.m., 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

### Letter to the Editor - *Setting the Record Straight*

Dear Foundation Forum:

On June 21, a story appeared on the front-page of the St. Petersburg Times entitled *Business Leaders Push New Model for Pinellas Schools*. The article set off a firestorm of emotion and controversy that threatens to obscure the challenge facing this school district and our community. Let me state the problem very simply. **Far too many of our children are dropping out of school and those who do graduate are often not prepared. The economic and social impact to our school system and Pinellas County is staggering.** As parents, educators and taxpayers we cannot allow this to continue.

As a past chairman of the Pinellas Education Foundation and a founding member of the Students First Alliance, let me set the record straight by saying that we are proud of our teachers and fully recognize how difficult it is to educate our children while your hands are tied behind your backs. We've heard you loud and clear when you've told us that there are too many rules and not enough resources to allow our dedicated classroom teachers to do their jobs. We've listened as you've agonized that you can't put your great ideas into practice because they're not part of the standard curriculum. We've watched as good teachers leave our schools because they can no longer stomach failure but aren't given the tools to succeed.

We must stop the game of "shoot the messenger" that has played out in the media. The Students First Alliance, led by the Pinellas Education Foundation, was formed to raise awareness and suggest solutions to the high drop-out rate, our schools' poor record of increasing student achievement, and to find solutions to the budget deficit facing our school district. The Pinellas Education Foundation was created by a group of community leaders and from the Foundation has come Enterprise Village, Finance Park, the Doorways Scholarship Program, Teach for Excellence Classroom Grants, Scholarships for Graduating Seniors, countless career education programs, Centers of Excellence, and the list goes on...to the tune of \$90 million since 1986. And don't forget the hundreds of businesses, large and small, that partner with individual public schools. All proof positive that when the community becomes involved, our teachers, our schools and our children benefit.

Far too much time and energy have been wasted arguing about the dimension of our public school failure. Our efforts would be better spent working together to come up with a plan to address this critical problem. Our community should be grateful to the Pinellas Education Foundation, the members of the Students First Alliance, and our interim superintendent, Dr. Julie Janssen, for placing students first and taking the lead in this effort. I'd like to call upon everyone reading this letter to join our team and become part of the solution.

Gerry Hogan  
Past Chairman  
Pinellas Education Foundation

## Young Caregivers Silent Struggle

A 2005 study found as many as 1.4 million children in the U.S. ages 8 through 18 provide care for a chronically ill or disabled family member. The ranks of young caregivers are large and expected to grow, given advances in medicine and technology. People with conditions such as Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis, lupus, cancer and heart disease are living longer. With portable machines that help them breathe, swallow, and communicate, paralyzed parents can remain at home longer.

The study, funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging and conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving and the United Hospital Fund Foundation, found nearly 60% of child caregivers helped with a task such as bathing, dressing or feeding. A fourth of the children had no one helping them with the tasks, and about half said the caregiving took a significant amount of their time. Boys were almost as likely to provide care as girls. More than 400,000 were under 12. About 60% of the children came from households earning less than \$50,000.

The Caregivers Support Network has developed the program, Caregiving Youth Project of Pinellas, to identify and support youth who have care-giving responsibilities for a family member, help them succeed in school and allow them to be students with less worry. The program started at Largo Middle School and this year will extend to Largo High School. Additionally, the Caregivers Support Network offers the Richard Besser Memorial Caregiving Youth Scholarship through the Pinellas Education Foundation to a student who has balanced the dual role of student and caregiver. For more information on this scholarship or to submit an application, visit the Pinellas Education Foundation web site at [www.PinellasEducation.org](http://www.PinellasEducation.org) after October 1, 2008 to apply.

## Industry Leaders Come Together for Students First Virtual Mentor Breakfast

Fifty Corporate Ambassadors and Industry Leaders convened for a networking breakfast hosted by the Pinellas Education Foundation on August 13. Sponsored by Chick Fil-A of Seminole and Planet Smoothie, guests heard from Gerry Hogan, Chairman and CEO of Canna Capital and Foundation board member, on the "Students First" advocacy campaign to improve the graduation rates and educational achievements of students in Pinellas County Schools. Read more information online at [www.studentsfirstpinellas.org](http://www.studentsfirstpinellas.org). Interim Superintendent Dr. Julie Janssen shared information from her plan to create positive change in our schools, discussing some of the topics and findings from the "WOW" conference held for principals and administrators in late July.

Jim Scott, Administrator of "The Virtual Mentor" concluded the program with a presentation of this website which connects students and educators to business and industry by offering online mentoring opportunities. Read more online at [www.virtual-mentor.net/](http://www.virtual-mentor.net/). Virtual Mentor is currently seeking additional volunteers to serve as "virtual" mentors for middle and high school students. Sign up online today!

Special thanks to Gary and Sandra Malanowski, Chick Fil-A Seminole, and Rochelle Avery of Planet Smoothie for their generous support of this event.

## Register Now for Busch Gardens Teacher Open House

Attention teachers! You and a guest are invited to **Busch Gardens Teacher Open House**. Come and experience how Busch Gardens can be a resource in your classroom. Learn about our field trips, sleepovers, special teacher programs and even have your own adventure in the park.



- K-5th grade teachers:  
Saturday, September 6  
Check in between 9 and 11 a.m.

- 6-12th grade teachers:  
Saturday, September 13  
Check in between 9 and 11 a.m.

Please RSVP by calling 1-877-248-2267. Reservations are required one week prior to the event.

## Visit Us and Learn How You Can Change a Life

The Pinellas Education Foundation changes lives through learning by supporting the following programs:

- Enterprise Village & Finance Park promoting free enterprise and financial education for 5th and 8th graders
- Doorways scholarships & mentoring opportunities for financially deserving students
- Frances Stavros Career Education Fund opportunities & the Jacobson Culinary Arts Academy
- College-bound scholarships for graduating high school seniors
- Pinellas County Outstanding Educator of the Year honoring the profession of teaching
- Teacher classroom grants that inspire innovative projects
- Walker's Rising Stars competition featuring talented high school students in the Arts
- Seniors & Scholars breakfast series and events benefiting our 55+ population

We offer one-hour informational sessions to help educate members of the community about the Pinellas Education Foundation and how our programs impact the teachers and students in Pinellas County public schools. These one hour educational sessions include a tour of our world-renowned program Enterprise Village. Won't you join us?

For information on session dates and times, or to schedule a session, contact Marilyn Browne at 727-522-4816 ext. 2112 or [brownem@pinellaseducation.org](mailto:brownem@pinellaseducation.org).

**The Pinellas Education Foundation is a member of the [Consortium of Florida Education Foundations](#) and the [National School Foundation Association](#).**

**The Pinellas Education Foundation would like to acknowledge the donors listed below for their pledges and contributions during the months of July 2008. If you would like to contribute to the work of the Pinellas Education Foundation, [please click here.](#)**

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## **Pinellas Education Foundation**

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