

New calendar supports student programs

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The cover contains a photograph of a painting of the Judge Aram Tellalian Building by Trumbull resident Sabine Bonnard.

The calendar includes descriptions of the many academic programs Trumbull's Academic Challenge for Excellence (ACE) Foundation supports.

Trumbull along with school districts throughout Connecticut grapple with funding programs and services through their education budgets while receiving limited assistance from the state.

Created in 2003 to offer financial support to academic teams at the high school, ACE attempts to ameliorate the situation. The foundation recently published the second edition of the Trumbull Town Calendar, its major fund-raising project.

The calendar costs \$10 and is sold at more than 20 local retail stores. It also can be purchased online using PayPal at www.trumbullace.org or picked up at the Trumbull Public Library for \$10. It can be mailed anywhere in the United States for an additional \$5.

All proceeds allow ACE to continue to subsidize student activities that go beyond classroom work, said Dan Neumann, chairman of this year's Town Calendar Committee and ACE's secretary and treasurer.

Though initially intended to support high school programs, ACE's charter now includes assisting academic teams and special programs at the town's middle and elementary schools.

This year's calendar includes a reference section containing contact information for Trumbull's school and town officials, along with its state and federal legislators.

More than 110 local sponsors from the business community, civic organizations and individual patrons helped with this year's publication.

A variety of photographers participated in this year's edition, and Neumann would like to see even more next year.

Co-founder Gary Cialfi, director of curriculum, instruction and assessments for Trumbull Public Schools, described last year's support for the calendar "overwhelming."

He, along with ACE board members Kate Donahue, Nancy Gardiner, Vicki Tesoro and Marilyn Lord, joined Neumann in putting together the calendar. Teresa Neville was its layout and design editor.

"The impetus for initiating the foundation was to enable Trumbull High School students and teachers to 'soar with the eagles' and to go 'above and beyond' in their pursuit of academic excellence," Cialfi said in an e-mail message. "Often this pursuit requires funding that must be subsidized by supplementary resources in order to participate and excel in academic competitions with school districts throughout the country."

Donahue said foundation members initially asked her to help create the first calendar in March, 2004.

"I worked mostly on the calendar content with Nancy and Marilyn...we did all of the PageMaker ourselves, which took most of May and June of 2004," she said.

The group also had help from Trumbull High School's yearbook faculty advisor Sue Berescik and student staff members.

"From there, I was pretty much committed," Donahue said. "We managed the production process, sold calendars, dispensed funds, and created an annual celebration dinner to acknowledge the achievements of the academic teams."

From the start, Donahue said she liked the idea of having a "booster club" for the district's academic teams, similar to those for sports teams and the marching band.

She said it "made sense because the Board of Education budget did not cover all of the costs many of these teams incurred."

She described the production of this year's calendar as "a very time intensive endeavor.

"This is an amazing group of people and I am honored to work with them," she said. "Their dedication to this project is without peer. Our challenge going forward will be to attract more parent volunteers since Nancy and Marilyn's daughters are seniors and will graduate from Trumbull High School in the spring."

The foundation has recently sponsored 13 activities at the high school, one at each of the town's middle schools and one at an elementary school.

Neumann anticipates the addition of two more academic teams this year.

Among the many programs that receive support from ACE are "We the People," "Federal Challenge," math teams, and two student-generated publications, "The Eagle's Eye" and "Trillium," the high school's award-winning yearbook.

The foundation recently funded a workshop called "Simply Speaking, Selling Yourself and Your Ideas."

Lenny Laskowski, president of LJL Seminars of Stratford and author of "10 Days to More Confident Public Speaking" conducted the seminar.

More than 50 students, including members of the school's Debate Club, learned about communicating effectively. They also received lunch and resource materials.

According to Kathy Rubano, social studies teacher and advisor to the Debate Club, the ACE foundation has been instrumental in providing much needed financial support.

"They are a great resource for our students," Rubano said.

The foundation also recently paid the transportation for members of the Debate Club to attend a competition sponsored by the Connecticut Consortium for the Law and Education in Hartford.

Tax-deductible contributions may be made to the Trumbull ACE foundation, c/o Trumbull High School, 72 Strobel Road, Trumbull CT 06611.