

Once again “Read Aloud Day” was a success! Thanks to Colette Poirier and her volunteers for coordinating the efforts of 100 adult volunteers from the Wilton community and the school system to bring the excitement of reading to our young students. This event is just one of many that The Wilton Education Foundation uses to enrich the school system and our community. Since 1993, the Foundation has raised over \$320,000 from Wilton residents like you. These funds have resulted in grants directed towards science and technology, professional development opportunities for our teachers, enhancements in the arts and focused middle school and high school student programs, like “Career Days” and “Job Shadow Day.”

The goal this year is \$100,000. An ambitious goal when compared to the past. Yet, The Foundation exists to invest in the programs that our operating budget is constantly minimizing. This gap is growing. The balance of satisfying all the constituents of Wilton in the annual budget is an arduous undertaking. Certainly the budget increases of recent years have exceeded inflation. But a closer examination of those budgets shows that the growth in expenditures are accelerating for special education, health benefits, fuel and maintenance and similar operating accounts. Expenditures in professional development, leading edge science and technology and enhancements in the arts programs and facilities have either been budgeted and drastically reduced or eliminated entirely. Are we sacrificing our investment in the future excellence of our schools to support our operating expenditures? When will these tradeoffs result in a consequential impact in our children’s lives and the quality of their education?

The Foundation allows and encourages those residents of Wilton to voluntarily invest in the Wilton educational system and become a “Community Partner in Education”. Their charitable contributions supplement the school budget. They mitigate the burden of those expenditures that would ordinarily become additional budget increases spread across all Wilton taxpayers. The Foundation is presently raising funds through selling tickets to the festive family performance of Charles Dickens’ “*A Christmas Carol*” at the Westport Playhouse at 1pm on December 3rd. For tickets please call 291-7665.

Soon you will be receiving our Annual Appeal letter in the mail. We encourage you to seriously consider this because I hope you share our belief that excellent public schools benefit the entire community and that community involvement through collaborations and private funding improves the quality of public education.

I encourage all of you to visit our website at wiltoneducationfoundation.org to learn more about The Foundation’s work, to purchase tickets to “*A Christmas Carol*” and to make an online donation. On behalf of our Board and the many volunteers of The Wilton Education Foundation, I thank you.

Thomas Mann, Chairman