



SANTA BARBARA
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

Education Matters

FALL 2023

TURNING WORDS INTO WISDOM



Students take center stage at the Love of Literacy Luncheon.

LOVE OF LITERACY
TEACHER & STUDENT GRANTS
BRIGHT TORCHES

SBEF RAISES OVER \$49,000 TO GIVE BOOKS TO LOCAL STUDENTS

On Thursday, September 28, the Santa Barbara Education Foundation hosted the annual Love of Literacy Luncheon at the Santa Barbara Woman's Club. The event, attended by over 200 generous supporters, raised an impressive \$49,000 for the Open Books Project. This initiative aims to provide 2,500 students in the Santa Barbara Unified School District, from Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 3rd grade, with books they can take home to read with their families.



Superintendent Dr. Hilda Maldonado shares the stage with McKinley student Julieta Torres-Oseguera.

The event was hosted by Santa Barbara Poet Laureate, **Melinda Palacio**, and featured a captivating keynote speech by renowned novelist **Thomas Sanchez**.

Sanchez who has had an impressive writing career and whose novels have garnered international recognition shared his own literacy journey. He reminisced about how his mother had worked multiple jobs to help provide books in their home. "I sat on my

mother's lap while she read those books, and I turned the pages with great excitement." Sanchez described the writing process for his forthcoming novel for young adults "Oceano Horse From The Sea," he stated, "Her steady voice continued to guide me into a glorious world of imagination."

Dr. Hilda Maldonado, Superintendent of Santa Barbara Unified, provided an update on the most recent efforts in staff development with the rollout of the newly adopted Wit & Wisdom and CKLA Caminos reading curricula. She also highlighted significant gains in reading, remarking that scores for reading last year for Latino students, who make up 72% of the district's student body, jumped from 27% to 56% for students who are meeting and exceeding standards.

However, it was the students who were the stars of the event. Dr. Maldonado invited **Julieta Torres-Oseguera**, a 2nd grade student from McKinley Elementary School's Dual Language Immersion up to the stage to share her reading journey.

Julieta shared her heartwarming reading journey, saying, "Reading in English and Spanish allows me to read with my family. I'm excited for my upcoming trip to Mexico, where I get to read my new books with my grandpa." And then to demonstrate her reading skills to the room full of adults she read her statement again, this time in Spanish for all to hear.

Adams Elementary School teacher **Anne Darga** introduced 4th grade student **Evan Reed**, who struggled with reading during the challenging learning conditions due to the pandemic. Evan explained, "It was also hard to do my schoolwork because most of the activities had instructions that were written. I could read

some of them, but when there were hard words, I would stop and do something else.”

Through dedicated support from Darga and other teachers at Adams, Evan not only caught up to his peers in reading but developed a deep love for learning and reading. “The best part about being a reader is that you can read challenging books that are interesting. Percy Jackson is my favorite, and I read all five books last summer!”

With the Open Books Project, the Santa Barbara Education Foundation aspires to create a culture of reading that extends beyond the classroom, nurturing a lifelong love for books and learning. SBEF plans to send 2,500 new books home to every TK-3rd grade student and their family by the end of 2023.

SBEF extends its gratitude to the Love of Literacy Luncheon sponsors, including Pillar Sponsor: Sage Publishing; Ambassador

Sponsors: Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo, First 5 Santa Barbara County, Tisha Ford, Jersey Mike’s, and John Ogilvie; Champion Sponsors: Arroyo Seco Construction, Cottage Health, KBZ Architects, Lazy Acres, Montecito Journal, Santa Barbara City College Foundation, and UCLA Health, with additional support provided by Chaucer’s Books and Scott and Sons Electric.



Keynote Speaker Thomas Sanchez

TEACHER GRANTS OUTCOMES

Every year, SBEF funds grants to support the purchase of project-based supplies and tools and to encourage innovative teaching in Santa Barbara Unified. **This year, thanks to our generous donors we are awarding a record \$200,000 in Teacher Grants.**

Last school year, SBEF awarded 71 grants to SB Unified teachers totaling \$100,000 to help meet the needs of their students. **Here's what a few teachers told us about their grants:**

Roosevelt Elementary Printmaking

“As a teacher, it is such a joy to introduce a new experience to students who have not encountered it before and to see such a high level of engagement. One student in particular I have seen him only partially engage in every art assignment all year, and many times he does not engage at all despite being given lots of choice within the assignment. He could not wait to carve a block!



He was so excited by the whole process! Just like students engage in reading, writing, and math in different ways and have different learning styles, different students will be engaged by different art mediums.”

Heather Walker

La Colina Junior High School Garden Sunshades

“This year 30 out of 41 teachers have brought their students into the garden for a total of over 400 visits! As a result, every student at La Colina has made multiple trips to the garden with their teachers and has been able to learn in a shaded, comfortable corner of the garden. “

Maureen Granger



Dressing for Success at Adelante Charter School

“This money helped me buy traditional white Mexican tops and blue and red folklórico skirts that will be used every year in our dance shows at our Day of the Dead event, Winter show, and Family Day presentation. Students shined and looked professional and uniform in all three events and it made the presentations so beautiful. I was able to buy tutus, grass skirts, and dance skirts that will benefit the students for years to come!”

Lauren Macoice-Grant



Libros en español for Santa Barbara High School

“Students in the Intro to Translation and Interpretation class have been voraciously reading in Spanish this semester. One morning a small group of them came in and found out we had gotten a shipment of nearly a hundred new libros en español, and as they looked at the cart, there were audible gasps and squeals. They were so excited to see all the new popular fiction and graphic novels we had gotten, and they couldn’t wait to read them!”



Sherri Bryan

INTRODUCING STUDENT GRANTS!

Last year, SBEF was excited to launch a new grant program designed specifically for SB Unified high school students. Grants totaling \$5,000 were awarded for student-managed projects enriching the academic, artistic, and personal development of



their fellow students. The goal of Students Grants is to empower high school students to identify needs on their school campuses and create solutions to solve them while introducing youth to the grant writing process and working with nonprofits. We can’t wait to see what the next generation of Santa Barbara leaders will do!

IGNITING A LOVE OF SHAKESPEARE

Bright Torches, a dynamic team of theater and education practitioners from the UK, specializes in working with youth around the globe. In October, they offered local students an array of captivating experiences, including storytelling performances, workshops, and puppetry, aimed at instilling a love for the works of Shakespeare, all while fostering imagination and promoting critical thinking.

The Bright Torches team engaged with over 1,800 students during their week-long residency in Santa Barbara. They showed all that Shakespeare is for everyone, with strategies and activities that cater to all learners, including emergent multi-lingual students and students with learning exceptionalities.

Their impact extends beyond this trip, as they plan to return to Santa Barbara in April 2024 to conduct follow-up workshops for students and provide professional development opportunities for Santa Barbara Unified teachers. The residency is part of a broader initiative funded by Sara Miller McCune through the

Léni Fund, a program of the Santa Barbara Education Foundation supporting and encouraging student participation and exposure to performing arts programs in Santa Barbara.



Tom Davey, the founder of Bright Torches teaches Shakespeare with puppets at Franklin Elementary.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR ON THE RIGHT NOTE!



As the new school year begins, so does our tradition of supporting Santa Barbara Unified School District music teachers through our Keep the Beat program. We distributed donated instruments and \$17,500 to our music educators to use for classroom needs for this school year. Donations to Keep the Beat are accepted all year round. Visit our website for ways to give.



ACTS OF KINDNESS

Speaking of instrument donations, our friends at **Deckers Brands** collected instruments for Keep the Beat as part of their week of Acts of Kindness. Thank you Deckers Brands for reaching out on our behalf!

LITERACY KICK-OFF AT LA LIEFF

In August, we gathered local literacy supporters to share our plans to support students with literacy initiatives in the community at the Love of Literacy Luncheon kick-off event. Thank you to La Lief Wines for hosting!



OUR PROGRAM DIRECTORS LUNCHEON

Before the busyness of the school year takes hold, we gathered for a luncheon with our amazing program directors to discuss the upcoming year of providing these essential programs to our SB Unified students!



PIANOS ON STATE

Fall is the season we've all been waiting for! Schools are back in session, everything is pumpkin-flavored, and playable public art takes to the streets during Pianos on State! Pianos are out from October 3 to 23!



ON BOARD WITH SBEF

Get to know SBEF's newest interns!



CAROLINE PORCHE

Caroline Porche studies Sociology with a minor in Professional Writing at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She's dedicated to education, having read with students in the Santa Barbara Unified School District, and worked as a Para I Educator at

Peabody Charter School aids students with mild to moderate disabilities. Her involvement reflects her commitment to quality education for all. Her role with the Santa Barbara Education Foundation seamlessly aligns with her passion for education and enhancing opportunities for young learners in Santa Barbara.



MERCER JANSSEN

As a committed student pursuing a double major in Political Science and Economics, along with a minor in Spanish at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Mercer brings a strong academic background. Her experience with SBEF has given her insights into

non-profit operations and the intricacies of grant writing. Mercer firmly holds the belief that the journey to higher education starts in elementary schools, and she champions public schools as the key to fostering greater equity in the path to university education.



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