SPEF
SHEBOYGAN PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION | Private Gifts For Sheboygan Public Schools

SPEF Awards $1.2 Million in Scholarships

By Jerry Jones
SPEF Board President

The Sheboygan Public Education Foundation (SPEF) awarded over $1.2 Million in scholarships to 64 graduating 2024 seniors at its Scholarship Night at the Stephanie H. Weill Center in downtown Sheboygan on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

The SPEF Board of Directors decided in Fall of 2023 to hold its independent scholarship night for the 58 SPEF administered scholarships instead of presenting at each high school in the school district.

Presenting SPEF scholarships in one night made it easier for donors to present their scholarship on one night instead of multiple nights in the months of April and May. In addition, the school district moved its scholarship nights to April from May, which moved up the deadline to select SPEF scholarships. The earlier deadlines created issues reading, interviewing, and/or selecting SPEF larger applied-for scholarships and coordinating the 58 SPEF administered scholarships.

The SPEF Scholarship Night was a celebration of the hard work the graduating seniors accomplished during their high school years and honors each scholarship donor for their generosity. SPEF is honored to administer those scholarships.

Some of the donors attending the event said: "It was a great place to have the ceremony." "Congrats on event – it was wonderful." "An amazing and inspiring scholarship event, well done! Enjoyed the presentations and hearing the stories and passion of the donors as well as the exciting futures of the students. Our community is so supportive of our future, thanks for including me."

Donors/Speakers were encouraged to present their scholarship while the name of the scholarship was projected on the large on-stage screen in front of their recipient(s) standing on stage. SPEF plans on asking donors if they would like to include a photo in the visual projection for 2025.

In addition, each scholarship recipient and the donor(s)/presenters had their photo taken together backstage by Sheboygan Professional Photographer Steve Irish. Recipients and donors were then sent copies of the photo for their personal record. SPEF thanks Steve for his photography skills and making the night special for all.

The staff and volunteers of the Stephanie H. Weill Center, along with the SPEF Board of Directors, also deserve a special "Thank You" for volunteering that night and making this first-time SPEF event memorable.

If you are interested in setting up a scholarship (one-year or continuous year), please reach out to SPEF and contact our Managing Director Roxanne Pauls. I know the scholarship recipients are always appreciative of any scholarship that assists them with their post-secondary education plans.

Set aside the date Wednesday, May 14, 2025, and join us again for SPEF Scholarship Night 2025 and participate in the celebration!

21 Years of Supporting Public Education

The Sheboygan Public Education Foundation, Incorporated, will raise contributions to enhance our students' educational opportunities by supporting high quality facilities and programs.

The Sheboygan Public Education Foundation (SPEF) continues to make a significant impact on our community by investing in the educational experiences of our students. Over the past 23 years, SPEF has funded scholarships, numerous innovative projects, from STEM programs that inspire future scientists and engineers to art initiatives that foster creativity and self-expression. These funds not only enhance classroom learning but also ensure equitable access to enriching opportunities for all students. By supporting SPEF, you contribute directly to empowering the next generation of thinkers, leaders, and citizens. Together, we are building a stronger foundation for lifelong success and community growth. Thank you for your invaluable support!

—Santino Laster,
President, Board of Education

SPEF
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Year in Review

Thank you for your support!

Fall/Spring SPEF Project Proposals Grants Awarded

2023-2024 School Year

Bean Bag Chairs
Balance Tricycles
Phonics is Fantastic
Hand Drums
Maker Space Paint & Brushes
Learning with Legos Coding, Letters, Phonemes, Short Words
Quick Talker Brix Sets
Legos
Scholastic News Magazine
Custom Wood Burning Kits
Flexing Seats
Musical Instrument Cases
High School Volunteer Days
Student Detailing Work Program
Plant Project
Artist School Mural

Board of Directors

Jerry Jones – President
Kurt Kober – Vice President
Wayne Kolzow* - Treasurer
Tina Brunmeier, Chris Conway, David Freitag, Kris Fritz, Anne Holzem Craig Mazza*, Jennifer Scapellato, Laurie Van Veghel

Advisory/Non-Voting

Heidi Boehmer
School Board Member
Seth Harvatine
Superintendent

Managing Directors

Roxanne Pauls
Terry Shircel*

Advisory Board

Mary Lynn Donohue, Bob Gorges, Rev. Julie Hollister, Abby Kiefer, Carol Kolzow, Maeve Quinn, Paula French, Whitney Viglietti, Jean Waibel, Donna Wendlandt

**Retired September 2024*

▸ **Staff Solicitation –** The staff of the Sheboygan Area School District continues to be generous! Some ***$9,192.00*** was raised in 2023-2024 from generous staff donations, which in turn is given back to the schools in the form of non-technology and technology grants.

▸ **Local Scholarships –** Some 251 SASD graduating seniors applied for 58 of The Sheboygan Public Education administered local scholarships. There were 1,710 SPEF scholarship applications submitted. There were 64 seniors receiving at least one SPEF sponsored scholarship amounting to over ***$1.2 Million***. Congratulations to the scholarship recipients and thank you to the generous donors and all seniors who applied for the scholarships!

▸ **Annual Appeal –** Local businesses and community members are asked to financially support our mission during this December fundraiser. We appreciate their continued support of public education in Sheboygan with a total of ***$12,433.00*** raised.

▸ **Mid-Year School Supplies –** This year, 14 school secretaries, guidance counselors, administrators, and support staff, asked for school supplies for their needy students. Due to the financial support by individuals and businesses within the Sheboygan community, SPEF has been able to purchase supplies for needy students within the district, including pencils, markers, backpacks, scissors, crayons, notebooks, earbuds, headphones. Thank You!

▸ **2023 Friends of Education –** Each year SPEF recognizes a community member/business/organization who has been a "Friend of Education" within our Sheboygan community for promoting and supporting The Sheboygan Public Education's Mission: "To enhance our students' educational opportunities by supporting high quality facilities and programs." Our recipients this year … Brian Versey worked endlessly, unselfishly, and professionally to improve the Sheboygan Area School District through The Sheboygan Public Education Foundation. He served multiple terms on SPEF's Board of Directors and was one of the founding Board Members, volunteered and donated sponsorship with his wife Julie and family at SPEF's Take The Lake/Diploma Dash, "All In" For Education Texas Hold'em, Scholarship Selection Committee, and other SPEF events/programs. Seth Harvatine retired as Superintendent of the Sheboygan Area School District in July, 2024. Seth served the students, staff, and community in the school district in a variety of roles. He assisted the school district in the moving of the SASD Administration Offices to its current location on Stahl Road which opened the Central Building to house the Warriner Middle and High Schools.

SPEF President Jerry Jones congratulates 2023 winner Mike Sopko on his win.

ALL IN FOR EDUCATION
TEXAS HOLD'EM SHEBOYGAN STYLE

Mike Sopko won the 20th annual 2023 "All In For Education" Texas Hold'em in-person fundraiser which was held at Pine Hills Country Club. SPEF raised over $23,000.00! Thank you to our generous sponsors, contributors/donors, dealers, volunteers, and Silent Auction bidders.

If you want to learn more about The Sheboygan Public Education Foundation and participate, volunteer, or donate, please contact us at info@spefwi.org or visit spefwi.org.