

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Power of 100 Campaign Aims High to Raise \$25,000 for Hopewell Valley Schools

PENNINGTON, N.J. – (June 20, 2017) – The Hopewell Valley Education Foundation (HVEF) has launched its “Power of 100” annual fundraising campaign to support school initiatives and priorities throughout the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD). The campaign, now in its sixth year, aims to raise \$25,000 to advance “Inquiry-Based Teaching,” which has rapidly become a central feature in the Hopewell schools to help instructors teach and students learn in a more effective, stimulating and rewarding manner. The campaign will help fund a new three-year initiative of teacher training to maximize the effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Teaching.

HVRSD leaders have adopted Inquiry-Based Learning as a way of fostering success through more dynamic classroom learning and student engagement. Through this approach, the typical role of the typical teacher is evolving from the lecturer at the front of the room into a skilled guide who encourages students to be more active participants in and drivers of classroom discussions. Students enjoy far more opportunity to use their own critical and creative thinking skills and hone their presentation and team-building abilities.

“This year, our ‘Power of 100’ annual fund gifts will directly support our school district’s initiative to increase the quality of student-centered instruction,” said Kevin Kuchinski, HVEF president. “The Hopewell Valley Education Foundation is proud to advance the District’s innovative efforts to provide an exceptional education that helps every student to flourish,” Kuchinski said.

Kuchinski emphasized that teacher training in the Inquiry-Based Teaching method is critical to creating an environment of active learning, cooperation, and problem-solving that equips students to face the demands of a quickly changing world.

Recent funding from HVEF enabled Hopewell Valley Central High School to purchase a Harkness table – a large, oval-shaped table designed to foster idea-sharing and engaged discussion – and train teachers in the methods that drive student-led, inquiry-based exploration.

HVRSD advanced-placement history teacher Jeff Parkinson is excited about the benefits he has seen in classes. “The tables have created an environment where students know their opinions are valued, their input welcome,” Parkinson said. “By sitting at the tables with the students, they know I am their advocate, and at least intellectually, their equal. Students also intrinsically understand as soon as they walk into the room the importance of discussion in the learning process,” Parkinson added. “This has created a culture unique to my single Harkness class, which I find myself craving for my other classes. I have found that although some elements of the Harkness method can translate to any classroom setting, the tables are far more significant than I ever imagined.”

District Superintendent Thomas Smith, Ed.D. regards the adoption of new learning models as essential in positioning HVRSD students for success. “The support of the Hopewell Valley Education Foundation in our move toward Inquiry-Based Learning, specifically the Harkness method on the secondary level, enables us to provide a challenging, yet supportive, learning environment for our students,” Dr. Smith commented. “HVEF’s support allows us to challenge ourselves as a district as we work to provide the best education possible for our students.”

The original “Power of 100” fundraising campaign challenged 100 residents to support the district’s excellent public schools with a minimum pledge of \$100. Now, as the campaign has grown, many more have joined the Power of 100 each year, often contributing more than the base level.

Over the past 19 years, HVEF has awarded more than \$500,000 for the school district’s programs, activities, and teacher grants aimed at enriching the educational experience of Hopewell Valley students. Foundation funding has supported: the iPad pilot project in all six Hopewell Valley schools; development of the new Project-Lead-the-Way pre-engineering curriculum at Timberlane Middle School; successful authors-in-residence programs; the introduction of 3-D printers to school media centers; four college scholarships given annually to Hopewell Valley Central High School seniors; and numerous other initiatives.

The 2016-17 “Power of 100” campaign kicked off at a recent meeting of HVEF’s Board of Directors. Each of the 16 members of the volunteer board has contributed kickoff pledges to the campaign, giving it an enthusiastic and strong start.

“Our Board is 100 percent behind this year’s campaign. The board members know the significance of their gifts and the impact they’ll have on faculty and students,” said Paul Bell, chair of this year’s “Power of 100” campaign. “We are asking Hopewell Valley residents to build on that momentum and lend their support to the campaign to enable our schools to provide the very best to all students throughout the district.”