

2024-25



# ANNUAL REPORT

*Bridging Students and Donors to Enrich Learning and Impact Lives*



Dear Friends of the Foundation,

This past year has been an exciting one for the Foundation as we celebrated our 40th anniversary, launched a new mission statement and cornerstones, and implemented a new database. We also expanded classroom grants and field trip funding — all thanks to the incredible support of our community and alumni.

In May, thanks to our generous donors, we proudly awarded a record \$617,250 in scholarships to 141 South St. Paul graduates. These scholarships continue to impact students' futures long after high school. In addition, we provided \$81,163 in classroom enrichment funding, supporting initiatives from academic programs and experiential learning to band instruments, coding, and more — all of which you'll find highlighted in this report.

Our annual events were also memorable, with the Walkathon's first year at Kaposia Education Center and a wonderful Gala honoring Jean LeVander King and the Foundations 40 years of service to South St. Paul students.

With your continued support, every student in our district benefits from the Foundation's work. We are honored to serve as a bridge between your generosity and our students' success. Thank you for being part of the Foundation family!

*With gratitude,  
Beth*

**Mission:**

***Bridging students and donors to enrich learning and impact lives.***

**What we do:**

The South Saint Paul Educational Foundation was established in 1984 to support South Saint Paul Public Schools. We do this through:

- Program funds awarded to provide exceptional educational opportunities for all students in South St. Paul Public Schools.
- Scholarship assistance to graduating seniors to support the pursuit of their career goals.
- Alumni and community support to help build a stronger Foundation.

**Cornerstones:**

**Visibility** - We are intentionally and purposefully connected.

**Innovation** - We find a way to make things possible.

**Stewardship** - We are stewards of donor generosity.

**Passion** - We are change makers.



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# 2024 ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER

On November 13, 2024, the South St. Paul Educational Foundation hosted its Annual Friends of the Foundation celebration and fundraiser at the Mendakota Country Club. This year's event was extra special as we marked our **40th Anniversary!**

The evening's honoree was **Jean LeVander King**, who was recognized for her and her family's dedication to the Foundation and our students. From generous scholarships to serving on our board, to the first scholarship of Fannie Mae, their contributions have truly shaped the educational landscape in South St. Paul.

The night was filled with **laughter, great food, raffles, and lively bidding during our live and silent auctions.** This year's event successfully raised funds to support the ongoing operations of the Foundation, allowing us to continue offering impactful programs and scholarships.

Thank you to all who joined us and helped make our 40th anniversary celebration a night to remember!



# WALKATHON 2024: STEPPING UP FOR STUDENTS!

On **September 25, 2024**, the South St. Paul Educational Foundation hosted its **37th Annual Walkathon**—a tradition that brings the community and schools together to support South St. Paul students.

Thanks to the incredible generosity and enthusiasm of our **donors, sponsors, participants, and volunteers**, we raised nearly **\$25,000!** Half of the funds raised go **directly back into classrooms**, supporting special projects, educational activities, and essential supplies that enrich the student experience.

The Walkathon is more than just a fundraiser—it's a celebration of school spirit, community pride, and the shared goal of enhancing education. Special thanks to Illtetschko's for the hot dogs, the Duffy Group for grilling, and the cross-country team for volunteering!



# 2025 SOUTH ST. PAUL SILVER APPLE AWARD WINNERS

*Don Bliss, class of 1950, established the Silver Apple Award in honor of his wife, Roxanne Waldhauser Bliss, class of 1951. Students are invited to nominate a South St. Paul Schools staff member as someone who has made a positive impact on their life. This year three SSPPS staff members were honored.*

*Congratulations to this year's South St. Paul Educational Foundation Silver Apple Award winners!*



## ***Kris Weinfurtner***

Kris Weinfurtner, math teacher at the high school, was nominated by Tomas Ochocki. He wrote that he nominated her because, “she is always pushing me to do my best. In her classes she explains algebra and geometry in ways I understand. Now, I feel good about math and get good grades.” This award is especially fitting this year as Mrs. Weinfurtner prepares to retire in June.



## ***Kayle Hedberg***

Kayle Hedberg, 4th grade teacher at Kaposia was nominated by two former students. The students nominated Ms. Hedberg because she “is so, so nice and gives us lots of chances. She helps kids with work and she loves all the kids the same!”



## ***Erika Nordstrom***

Erika Nordstrom was nominated by her entire 4th grade class at Lincoln Center. The students wrote that “Mrs. Nordstrom makes learning fun, goes to lunch with them, tells us that everyone is smart, dresses up funny sometimes and makes us brownies!”

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS 2025

## Nancy Whiteside Program Fund

This fund supported 1st grade field trips to the Minnesota Zoo and Lincoln Center, and 2nd grade trips from Kaposia Education Center and Lincoln to the Minnesota History Museum to explore the Westward Expansion.

## Larry Gru Memorial Fund

The Larry Gru Memorial Fund provided a variety of learning experiences for students, including:

- **CLC Community Learning Day** at Lincoln Center and a snow cone fundraiser for Neighbors, Inc.
- **Science Museum field trip** for English Language Learners to study Minnesota history.
- **Youth Frontiers Kindness Retreat** for 5th graders at Kaposia and Lincoln.
- **Youth Frontiers Courage Retreat** for 7th and 8th graders.
- **Inver Hills/DCTC field trip** for 8th graders to explore college and career pathways.



## Lu Interactive Playground

Kaposia Education Center has a new **Lu Interactive Playground** — an innovative system that blends physical education with classroom learning in math, reading, science, and social studies. This project is funded through Kaposia student and staff fundraising, the Technology Department, and the Foundation's General Endowed Program Fund.

## Dodge Nature Center Field Trips

Thanks to the SSP Garden Club, all Kindergarten students visited Dodge Nature Center this year. An anonymous donor expanded this opportunity to include all 1st and 2nd grade students as well.



## Deb Clark Theater Program Fund

Provided new **One Act Play scripts** to enhance the high school theater program.



# PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS 2025

## RJ Happe Fund

Covered **Speech and Debate** activity fees, ensuring all interested students could participate.

## General Endowed Fund

Supported several impactful initiatives:

- Individual **dry-erase boards** to increase engagement and discussion in high school classrooms.
- **French and Spanish immersion weekends** at Concordia Language Villages for 7th and 8th grade students.

## Vern Finander Program Fund

Provided middle school students with the chance to learn hands-on **coding and robotics** using Ozobots during Connections classes.

## John and Bunny Todd Endowed Music Fund

Funded 5th grade students at Kaposia and Lincoln with **clarinets, flutes, trombones, and trumpets**. This fund honors Bunny Todd's lifelong love of music and continues to enrich SSP students' lives.

## Dylan Engen Memorial Fund

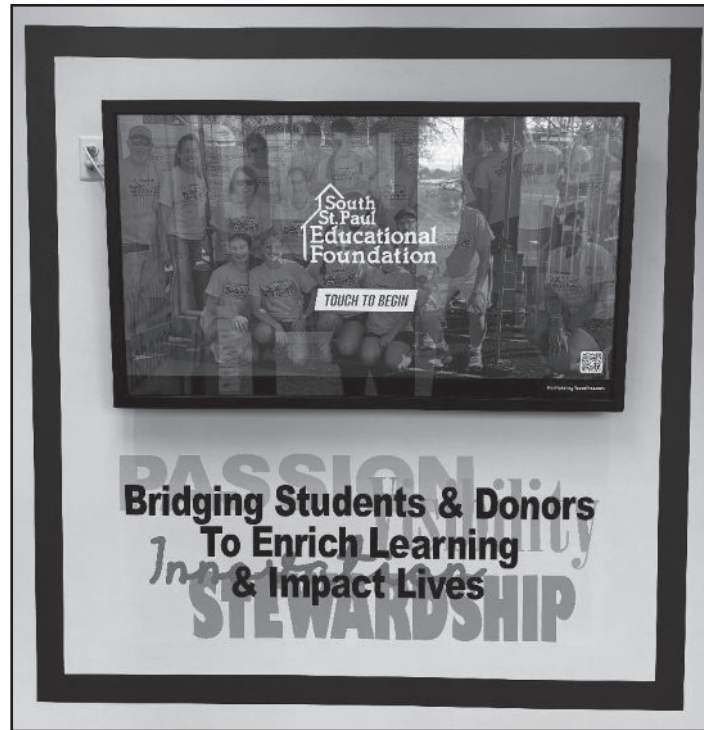
Supported the **School of Fish** outing, where students learned about fish habitats, knot tying, and fishing techniques — and each received their own rods, reels, and tackle.

## Ken and Mary Schultz Family Fund

Established in 2008 by the Schultz family to honor Ken and Mary's community legacy, this fund allows more than 70 students each year to participate in school activities and athletics. The family continues to support the program through the annual **Stride for Packer Pride 5K** in May.

**The Mr. Otto's Way** fund purchased new outdoor winter apparel for 72 elementary students. The fund was established in 2018 and has ensured that hundreds of students having snowpants, boots and coats for the winter over the years!





## TOUCHWALL 2024

### A NEW WAY TO CELEBRATE OUR LEGACY: DIGITAL DISPLAY UNVEILED!

If you've ever visited the South St. Paul Educational Foundation, you've likely noticed the walls filled with photos of scholarship recipients and plaques honoring our generous donors. Over the years, we simply ran out of space.

We now have a much-needed upgrade—and with the **generous support from Program Funds provided by Sandie (Jim) Metzen, Karen (Tom) Metzen, and Dave and Leslie Metzen**—we are thrilled to introduce a brand-new digital display that brings our rich history to life!

Scan the QR code below and explore scholarship recipients, programs and our valued donors and sponsors. And soon... the South St. Paul Hall of Fame and yearbooks!



# 2025 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



On May 14, we celebrated 141 incredible students who were awarded a record-breaking \$617,250 in scholarships to support their post-secondary journeys. The event was filled with student stories, proud families, generous donors, and the dedicated teachers who helped guide these students along the way. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made these scholarships possible—your support is helping turn dreams into reality!

For a full list of scholarship winners, please see our website at [www.sspcf.com/scholarships/](http://www.sspcf.com/scholarships/)



*"I would like to thank you for the SSP Police Department Packer Alumni Scholarship, and I can't wait to put it towards school to become a police officer. I am so excited to start by career, and getting this scholarship makes it more attainable."* **Gage Andrews**

*"I am so grateful to receive the Debbie Kern Memorial Scholarship. My mom has told me many stories about her as she was her coach, teacher, and role model. I am honored to receive a scholarship in her memory."* **Stella LaBore**



*"Thank you for the Sheila Devine Memorial Scholarship. I am very grateful for this scholarship because it helps lift a burden of the cost of school. It also helps me further my dream of getting a degree in Business Administration."* **Alejandro Ortiz Flores**

# NEW SCHOLARSHIPS ESTABLISHED 2024-25

Each year new scholarship opportunities for South St. Paul High School seniors are provided through the generous donations of families, individuals, and organizations. On behalf of the recipients, we extend our appreciation to those who established the following scholarships in 2024-25.

## **PHYLLIS AND ALLAN HONER ENDOWED MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship is in memory of Phyllis, who graduated in 1952 and her brother Allan who graduated in 1950. They have fond memories of the school and wish to further the educational goals of future students seeking careers in either medicine or education.

## **DON JOHNSON, DDS HEALTHCARE SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship is for a graduate who plans to continue their education at an accredited junior college, college or university to major in a healthcare field.

## **FRAN DELIA SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship is given in memory of Fran Delia by her nephews Rich and Jim Bernier. Fran was a beloved school nurse and eventual Director of Health and Nursing Services for the SSP School District. She also was a past board member of the SSP Educational Foundation. Fran always had an infectious smile along with a positive effect on everyone, including students, teachers, her staff and members of the community.

## **FRAN DELIA NURSING SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship is given in memory of Fran Delia by her niece Lori Howe. This scholarship will go to a student interested in nursing.

## **KELLER-BIEBEL FAMILY**

At the end of World War II, the Keller and Biebel families were refugees who emigrated from Europe to the United States and family made a new start in South St. Paul. Their children, Karl Keller and Margaret Biebel, despite the difficulties of learning a new language, graduated from SSP High School in 1954. They married and lived and worked in South St. Paul for over 50 years. Their four sons all attended SSP high school and were the first generation to graduate from college and had careers in computer science and engineering. This scholarship was established to assist a promising student to achieve his/her goal of a college degree in science, math or engineering.

## **ROLLIN B. GLEWWE FAMILY**

The Rollin B. Glewwe Family Scholarship was created by the family of Rollin and Joan Glewwe to honor their enduring legacy. High school sweethearts who first met in junior high, Rollin and Joan graduated from South St. Paul High School in 1951. Their love story spanned more than 70 years, during which they raised five children who, along with numerous grandchildren and now even great-grandchildren, are proud South St. Paul graduates. Rollin was a man who embodied deep love for both his family and his community. He attended the University of Minnesota and served with distinction in the Minnesota Senate from 1967 to 1973. Rollin was a dedicated advocate for service and a passionate champion of making a positive difference.

## **TOM RICKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP -**

Tom Ricker grew up in South Saint Paul and attended South St. Paul Schools. He was class president his senior year and graduated in 1962. Tom went on to study education at the University of Minnesota. Upon graduation, he began his career in education and worked as a teacher and coach in South St. Paul for 13 years. Later, Tom moved on to a successful career in finance but was proudest of his years as an educator and coach. Tom continued to give his support to South St. Paul community and was a board member for the SSP Educational Foundation. He cherished the community, and his many life-long friends.

## **EMPOWERHER CHELSEY SMITH**

The EmpowerHer Chelsey Smith Scholarship supports first-generation college students pursuing degrees in technology or design. Established by a SSP Alum, this scholarship honors the transformative power of financial support and mentorship in achieving educational and career success. It is awarded to a female student who is not only breaking new ground as the first in their family to attend college, but who has demonstrated strong academic performance and aspires to lead and innovate in fields like computer science, UX/UI design, or engineering. EmpowerHer aims to uplift the next generation of pioneering women in tech and design, providing support and mentorship to help realize their goals.

## **WILLIAM C. JOHNSON MEMORIAL**

This scholarship was established by Bill's family and friends in his memory. Bill was an exceptional athlete who excelled in football, basketball and track. The community of South St. Paul was very important to Bill, and he was an avid outdoorsman and Gopher basketball fan.



# JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

## FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTORS

*We apologize for any possible inaccuracies in this listing of our contributors for this fiscal year. Please advise the Foundation of any corrections.*

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# SOUTH ST. PAUL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended June 30, 2025 and 2024

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Contributions	\$ 632,356	\$ 593,836
Interest/Investment Income	762,188	511,392
Special Events (net of expenses)	50,925	32,310
Other	0	55,000
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>1,445,469</b>	<b>1,192,538</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program Services	757,729	693,387
Management and General	162,304	151,451
Fundraising	69,608	66,802
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>989,641</b>	<b>911,640</b>
Change in Net Assets before unrealized gain (loss)	455,828	280,898
Unrealized Gain on Sale of Investments	218,381	1,039,486
Change in Net Assets	674,209	1,320,384
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	12,177,741	10,857,357
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 12,851,950	\$ 12,177,741
Less: Donor Restricted Funds	(9,494,845)	(8,941,625)
Less: Board Restricted Funds	(2,749,024)	(2,708,108)
<b>Net Unrestricted Funds - End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 608,081</b>	<b>\$ 528,008</b>



521 Marie Avenue  
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