



ABILENE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

2017-2018
Annual Report

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MISSION

THE ABILENE EDUCATION
FOUNDATION IS A NON-PROFIT
501(C)3 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
CREATED TO PROMOTE AND
ENHANCE EXCELLENCE IN
EDUCATION FOR THE STUDENTS
OF THE ABILENE INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT THROUGH THE
ENRICHMENT OF ITS PROGRAMS.

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ABILENE 
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

THE POWER OF EDUCATION

A message from the AEF President & Executive Director

What does it mean to “Be the One?” In Abilene ISD over 16,000 children, perhaps some of them your own children and grandchildren, walk the halls of our schools every day, eager to learn, create, and discover their own special talents. One idea coupled with one mentor, one teacher, one project, and one class can help spark the imagination of a child leading him or her to great new discoveries. At the Abilene Education Foundation, we are truly honored to partner with Abilene ISD to help support the extraordinary efforts of our teachers, while fostering the abilities of our students. Whether through much-needed classroom supplies, or scholarships for students who desire to pursue education after high school, your partnership with us has made a positive difference for our students and their futures. Year after year, at AEF we get to witness the work of our teachers, who possess not only a true passion, but also a simple devotion to provide the best possible educational opportunities for all the children in our community. And thanks to your support, we get to see our students not just succeed, but reach their full potential. Without your investment, none of this would be possible. YOU ARE THE ONE, making a difference in the lives of our children.

The 2017-18 school year was one of inspiration for AEF as we continued to grow our programs, including our STAR Teacher Grants, Judy Dudley Memorial GIFT Grants, Young Masters Juried Art Exhibition, and the COOL College Advising program, Teacher in the Limelight Celebration, Scholarships, and more. We also had another successful Cajun Festival, and encourage you to save the date (April 13th) for next year’s event. We hope you will enjoy reading our report, including the inspirational pictures and quotes from AISD teachers making a difference each and every day, and that you will continue to feel proud of the careful way your contributions have been invested in the lives of our students over the last year. Your participation with us has provided for sustainable growth and allowed our programs to have an even greater impact.

We are both proud products of public education, and at AEF we are proud to be part of the Abilene ISD success story. We have enclosed some AISD points of pride we hope you will read. Our community is truly fortunate to live in an area with such an excellent public school system, and we are thankful for you and your dedication to improving the lives of our children.



Mike Breckenridge
President



Christine Curtis-Carr
Executive Director



STAR GRANTS

Supporting Teachers with Academic Resources

Hoots and hollers, a whole lot of laughter and cheers, along with a handful of happy tears are just some of the things you may witness as you enter a winning classroom on Prize Parade Day! STAR (Supporting Teachers with Academic Resources) Grants are awarded each September for classroom projects that support curriculum and enrichment activities. Members of the AEF board and AISD administration surprise both teachers and students by entering the classroom with noisemakers, balloons, an oversized check and, of course, real monies to fund an array of innovative classroom projects, including classroom libraries, campus gardens, field trips, technology, and so much more.

“As a first-grade teacher, I get a tremendous amount of joy from reading out loud to my students. Last year, I noticed many of my students’ reading levels started to improve when I had them follow along in a book as I read it aloud. I looked into purchasing a listening center for my classroom, where students could listen to audio books while reading along with a hard copy. I was shocked to learn it would cost almost \$700! I heard about the Abilene Education Foundation’s teacher grant application and decided to apply over the summer for the Learning Listening Center, which comes with headphones, a mobile storage cart, and 30 audio books with hard copies. I was thrilled when the AEF Prize Parade came into my room and surprised me with the money to purchase the listening stations. I am excited to report that many of my students are already improving and some are even comprehending new words for the first time!”

- Jessica Liddell, AISD elementary teacher

STAR Teacher Grants are funded primarily through the AISD Payroll Deduction Donation Campaign, individual donors, and matching funds from Kaye Price-Hawkins and the Greathouse Foundation. In September of 2017, additional classroom grants were funded by the 21st Century Learning Mary Ann Polnick Memorial Funds. Mary Ann was a 35-year educator who spent 31 of those years within AISD. Additional support for the 2017 STAR Teacher grants was also provided by Nationwide Products/Jason and Leila Darby.

AWARD: \$60,000



THE JUDY DUDLEY MEMORIAL GIFT GRANT

Giving Incentives to First-Time Teachers

“Nervous,” “excited,” and “extremely grateful” are just some of the words AISD’s new-to-the-profession teachers used to describe their emotions as Vice President Mike Dudley awarded GIFT grants to 74 new-to-the-profession teachers at New Teacher Orientation in August of 2017. The Judy Dudley Memorial GIFT Grants are awarded to AISD employees who are teaching for the first time and are intended to assist with additional classroom materials to enhance those provided by the school district.

“There are few words that adequately describe my thankfulness for the kindness and generosity you have shown with the new teacher gift. Thank you for being aware of what goes into making a new classroom and thank you for understanding. I will remember this incredibly kind gift and hope to one day pay it forward.”

- Rebekah Porter, new to the profession teacher in AISD.

Judy Dudley was a teacher at Fannin Elementary and understood the importance of creating an inviting classroom for children to learn and grow. GIFT Grants are funded by Mike Dudley and The Martha Scott Carlson Endowment Fund held at Community Foundation of Abilene. Martha Scott Carlson, a retired teacher, provided the first donation to begin the GIFT Grant Program. With your help, AEF would like to ensure this program is sustained from year-to-year, and your donation would go directly into the hands of new-to-the-profession teachers.

Award: \$11,100



AEF SCHOLARSHIPS

“Thank you for choosing me to be the recipient of the 2018 AHS Alumni scholarship. It is truly an honor to be chosen over an abundant number of applicants. I have been blessed to attend a school with such high tradition and supportive alumni. I will represent AHS with the best of my abilities and never forget where I came from.”

- Robert Martinez

“I wanted to thank you for selecting me for the Cougar Nation scholarship. This will help me further my education and accomplish my goals along the way. Thank you for being a supporter of my educational journey.”

- Hannah McGuire

AEF Scholarships are designed to reward deserving students of AISD, like Robert and Hannah, with financial assistance, in an effort to make the transition from high school to college as seamless as possible, while minimizing post-graduation debt. The AEF Scholarship program has seen an increase in the quality and quantity of applications in recent years (over 100 last year) due to the partnership with AEF’s COOL program and the rising costs of funding a college education. The COOL College Advisors encourage students to apply for as many scholarships as possible to avoid huge post-graduation debt. AEF Scholarships are funded through the annual Cajun Festival fundraiser, endowment earnings, class alumni reunions, memorials and honorariums, individual donors, and AISD payroll deduction. AEF scholarships are matched (with certain guidelines) by local colleges, including Abilene Christian University, Cisco College, Hardin-Simmons University, and McMurry University.

AEF scholarships awarded in 2017-2018 include: AEF Scholarships, Royce Curtis Excellence in Education, AHS Alumni, Michele Scott Memorial, Jerry Taylor Memorial, Coach John McCabe Memorial, Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation, Cougar Nation, CHS Alumni, TSTC Scholarship (WCE), Citizens Bank of Abilene, Johnny Ortega, Jr. Memorial, and Young Masters Juried Art Exhibition.

Award (not including Young Masters): \$35,650



YOUNG MASTERS JURIED ART EXHIBITION

Eleventh Year Celebration!

“I am truly grateful for the opportunity the AEF has given me and other young artists in Abilene ISD. It was such an honor to have my piece chosen and displayed at the Grace. Young Masters has inspired me to never stop creating, and to push myself to do better, and for that I am very grateful.”

- Kenzie Fortson, 2018 Young Masters participant and scholarship winner

Abilene Education Foundation (AEF), in collaboration with the Grace Museum and AISD, presented its 11th annual show for the Young Masters Juried Art Exhibition. Every Advanced Placement Studio Art student in AISD had the opportunity to submit one work of art per class to be considered for the exhibition. The Selection Committee (composed of three local artists: Mike Jones, Linda Stricklin, and Patty Rae Wellborn) received 88 submissions and selected 43 pieces for the show. All 2D pieces selected for the show were professionally framed. Abilene native, La Gina Fairbetter, a professional artist and professor at Texas Tech University, judged the show to award Best in Show, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Places, Merit, and Honorable Mention winners. For the second year in a row, a Martha Kiel Scholarship was also awarded, in honor of this beloved art teacher who has made a long-standing impact on arts education in Abilene. Additionally, two students received special awards to attend a free master class with Patty Rae Wellborn and Linda Stricklin. A printed catalogue and flash drive was produced for each student, providing permanent documentation for their portfolios. The awards ceremony had approximately 230 in attendance and included a mayoral proclamation. An extension of AEF's supporting role with AISD, this project will impact the future of all art students - especially those selected for the show - by instilling confidence and inspiring them to pursue their passion as they strive to achieve their highest potential. Additionally, it provides students acclamation that may further enhance their opportunities for acceptance into premier higher-education art programs. Young Masters is an ideal collaboration among a large school district, education and private foundations, the Abilene community, a cultural institution, and a host of dedicated volunteers. AEF also partners with the Abilene Teachers Federal Credit Union as a site host where, upon the close of the 2018 Grace Museum Exhibition, all Young Masters 2-D art was transferred for public display at the Antilley Rd. branch through May.

AWARD: \$8,500

EXPENSES (does not include in-kind): \$8,400



TLC

Teachers in the Limelight Celebration

“Thank you so much for the wonderful honor of being named the TLC Elementary Teacher of the Year! I greatly enjoyed being part of the teaching community in Abilene, where I get to do what I love every day. This is a once in a lifetime experience that left me utterly speechless. Thank you again for this recognition. Abilene is so blessed by AEF and so many wonderful community donors.”

- Rachel Carlisle, Abilene ISD teacher

TLC (Teacher in the Limelight Celebration) honors the dedicated work of teachers in AISD with campus recognition, a formal dinner, and a monetary award. A TLC teacher possesses integrity and a love for teaching that spills into the classroom. The dinner is underwritten by the Abilene Teachers Federal Credit Union, with additional in-kind support from AISD. Monetary awards are funded by an endowment established by Mr. Edwin Jennings, Jr., in honor of his parents Edwin and Agnes Jennings, Sr. Mr. Jennings’ desire for this event is to recognize, honor, and award monetary gifts to outstanding teachers in Abilene Independent School District.

2018 Winners from left to right:

Larry Haney, Carol Footer, Rachel Carlisle, Steve Shinkle



ABILENE TEACHERS
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

AWARD: \$16,100

EXPENSES (does not include in-kind): \$10,275



COOL

College Offers Opportunities for Life

“Words cannot fully express how thankful I am to have you in my life. I appreciate all your encouraging words, the fact that you have stayed in touch with me, and also that you continued to help me with my college stuff over the past five years -well after you were obligated. I want to be just like you one day. Thank you for believing in me, and for even remembering me on my graduation day from college. You really are the best.”

- Tamika Braye, COOL participant and recent college grad from ACU

The COOL (College Offers Opportunities for Life) program places four full-time college advisors in Abilene ISD high schools to assist students - especially those who are first in their families to attend college - with applying for financial aid, completing college applications, accessing scholarships, and touring college campuses, among a myriad of other services. COOL also provides college educational outreach to elementary and middle school students and even tracks high school graduates through college graduation. To learn more about COOL and read student testimonials, read the COOL Annual Report at www.aaeff.org. The COOL program is primarily funded by the Shelton Family Foundation and the Dian Graves Owen Foundation and is unique to the Abilene area, helping to close the post-secondary gap for high school graduates.

EXPENSES: \$278,900



AEF supports many other programs within AISD including Pass for Success (\$3,000), Art Outreach (partnership with the Grace Museum - \$2,500), Million Word Reader (\$500) and so much more! Learn more at www.aaeff.org.

“With a wonderful staff and great partners from the community we are able to give 100% to our programs, like the Art Outreach program which benefits students in AISD. We are always looking for a way to make Abilene just a little bit better for the people that live here, and are so thankful for partners like AEF.”

- Kathryn Mitchell, Educator Director at the Grace Museum

WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

Endowment Updates

AEF endowments help fund college educations, classroom supplies for new-to-the-profession teachers, and monetary awards, making a difference in the lives of teachers and students in Abilene ISD for generations to come. A permanent record of donors and gifts is maintained by AEF. The Community Foundation of Abilene manages investments of the donations and contributions to these endowments. The principal gift remains and the income continues to generate funds for teachers and students in perpetuity.

Martha Kiel Scholarship Endowment

The Martha Kiel Scholarship Fund honors long-time beloved art teacher Martha Kiel's legacy by providing a scholarship to a high school student participating in the annual Young Masters Juried Art Exhibition at the Grace Museum. A truly remarkable woman, Martha Kiel has been described as a "master teacher... who touches children's souls." Kiel earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls in 1953 and achieved an elementary education teaching certificate from Hardin-Simmons University and a Master of Education degree from Abilene Christian University. Instructing approximately 17,000 students in her 34-year AISD teaching career, Kiel taught at Jefferson Junior High and Cooper High School, while serving as an adjunct professor at McMurry University. At Hardin-Simmons University she served as an adjunct professor from 1974-2013 and was head of the art department from 2000-2006 prior to retirement. While at Cooper she began the Advanced Placement classes for the visual arts and started the Visual Arts Scholastic Event for Region 14. Kiel demonstrated her passion to promote art programs for all students by connecting, mentoring, and inspiring all students regardless of their background.

The Martha Scott Carlson Endowment for AEF GIFT Grants

Martha was a sweet gracious lady who continuously carried a joy for friends and family and a love for education. She was regarded as a wonderful friend, cherishing and helping those around her wherever she lived. While in Abilene, she donated funds to AEF to begin the GIFT (Giving to First-Time Teachers) Grant Program. She provided donations through AEF to have a security officer present at the AISD School Board meetings and funded needs in the deaf education classroom at Ward Elementary. In her memory, her family established an endowment held at Community Foundation of Abilene, to continue to support the GIFT Grant Program each year with funds to help first-year, new-to-the-profession teachers outfit their classrooms. What an amazing tribute and honor given in memory of this former teacher and truly generous individual!

Edwin and Agnes Jennings Teaching Excellence Award Endowment

With the donation of 3,000 shares of Exxon Mobile stock from Mr. Edwin Jennings, Jr. a permanent endowment held at Community Foundation of Abilene has been established to honor teachers making a difference in the lives of students in Abilene ISD with an "Edwin and Agnes Jennings Teaching Excellence Award" in memory of his parents. This endowment will allow AEF to continue these awards yearly for generations to come, as part of TLC (Teachers in the Limelight Celebration). Due to his passion for teaching math and science, Mr. Jennings, Jr. also honors a secondary math and secondary science teacher with an "Edwin and Agnes Jennings Teaching Excellence Award." Nominations for these awards are made by students, parents, colleagues, and community members, as well as school administrators. Mr. Jennings, Jr.'s parents, Edwin and Agnes Jennings, were active and well-regarded members of the Abilene community. For more information on TLC please read page 8.

WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

Endowment Updates

AHS & CHS Alumni Endowment Funds

In 2009, former Abilene High School and Cooper High School alumni helped establish the groundwork for two additional endowments to provide scholarships for AHS and CHS graduates. Additional funds for the endowments were raised by our first annual Cajun Festival fundraiser. Abilene Education Foundation is working with donors and class reunions to increase these endowments so that scholarships can be awarded every year to Cooper and Abilene High graduates.

AHS: Due to generous contributions from the classes of 1940, '42, '43, '48, '53, '55, '56, '57, '58, '59, '60, '63, '64, '65, '79, '93, '95, '96 and 2002 and funds raised by the Abilene Education Foundation Cajun Festival event, the AHS Endowment currently provides an AHS graduating senior with an annual scholarship.

CHS: Due to generous contributions from classes of 1964, '65, '67, '69, '76, '78, '79, '88 and '96 and funds raised by the Abilene Education Foundation Cajun Festival event, the CHS Endowment currently provides a CHS graduating senior with an annual scholarship.

The Royce Curtis Excellence in Education Endowed Scholarship Fund

During their 20th class reunion, the Class of 1993 announced, to a very surprised Royce Curtis, the scholarship fund which will help future Eagles reach their goals of a college education. Royce served as the AISD associate superintendent of personnel for seven years, before retiring in 2010. Many students from the Class of 1993 had Mr. Curtis as a principal beginning in the sixth grade at Franklin Middle School and graduated under his administration from Abilene High School, where he served as principal from 1989 until 2003. Mr. Curtis personified the Eagle spirit and had a passion for seeing his students succeed. This fund, which was established by Dr. Bracken Kolle, and continues to grow with additional donations from AHS alumni and parents, honors Mr. Curtis's legacy at Abilene High by awarding a deserving college-bound senior with a scholarship.

Julia Jones Matthews Endowment

In 2005, Julia Jones Matthews established an endowment benefitting Abilene Education Foundation. The corpus of that endowment is owned and managed by Community Foundation of Abilene. Mrs. Matthews forever changed the landscape of Abilene. Over a lifetime of "anonymous" philanthropy, she quietly, exquisitely, and selflessly rendered a tour de force for her hometown. Her gracious spirit and her generous heart worked powerful and positive changes among legions throughout this community and beyond. She was the quintessence of the scriptural verse "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Interest earned helps with AEF's operational expenses.

Abilene Education Foundation Endowment

The Abilene Education Foundation has established a second endowment fund. This endowment, initially established with generous contributions from Lee and Ruth Caldwell, continues to grow and support AEF programs. The Board of Directors for AEF continues to focus on growth of the organization's endowment through its annual fund and corporate drive efforts.

Legacy Donors

Legacy Donors choose to include AEF in their estate planning, leaving a legacy of education for future AISD students. AEF legacy donors include Mike Dudley, Mindy Morris, Dr. Bracken Kolle, Anonymous (COOL Program), and Anonymous (AEF).

ABILENE GOES CAJUN

A fun-filled day full of music highlighting the many talented performing groups of AISD, last year's annual AEF Cajun Festival fundraiser was a roaring success. Thank you again to everyone who helped sponsor this event, especially our presenting sponsors, STAR DODGE and H-E-B. Our private sponsor appreciation party on Friday night was a blast - thanks to RLV and Reed Beverages for their support. We had a live band and showed a video highlighting the work of AEF over the past year. We are proud to receive such an outpouring of support from corporate sponsors, AISD staff and educators, individual citizens, retired teachers, and more at our annual fundraising event. Last year we raised \$48,000 in net funds! It is because of YOU that AEF is able to give these funds back to support our schools, our children, and our teachers.

We hope you will join us again next year on **April 13th at the Taylor County Fairgrounds**. We will kick off the day with our annual Crawfish Crawl - 5K run or walk, followed by a day of eating shrimp and crawdads, along with live music featuring the performing arts groups of Abilene ISD from elementary to high school.



“Our team was excited to participate in the 2018 Crawfish Crawl because we believe in AEF’s mission of supporting programs for teachers and students in AISD. We chose the 5K because it was an event in which we could all participate, whether we walked or ran. It was fun way for us to come together and raise awareness for Abilene schools.”

- Lucille Fullen, Instructional Technology Department

ABILENE GOES CAJUN



POINTS OF PRIDE

Abilene ISD

The Abilene Education Foundation is proud to support the students and teachers of Abilene ISD. Learn more about all of the innovative educational opportunities for students in Abilene ISD at www.abileneisd.org.

- Twenty-one Abilene ISD campuses received the state's highest academic ranking in 2018. In addition, campuses earned 34 Distinction designations for Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps, and Post-Secondary Readiness.
- Two AISD students in 2018 were named National Merit Scholarship awardees.
- Abilene ISD offers 51 pre-advanced placement or advanced placement courses. A 2013 study (controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic/school-level variables) found that students who took at least one AP Exam (regardless of their scores) were more likely to graduate from college in four years than non-AP students.
- 36 high school musicians were named 2018 Texas Music Scholars by the Texas Music Educator Association.
- 82% of K-12 students are enrolled in at least one Fine Arts class.
- More than 60% of students participate in at least one athletic program, and 42 varsity teams compete throughout the state in 13 sports.
- In partnership with local colleges, three magnet schools are housed on the campuses of Hardin-Simmons University (Holland Medical High School), McMurry University (5th-Grade Magnet), and Texas State Technical College (ATEMS High School).
- Over 300 students are enrolled in dual-credit courses offered by six colleges. In addition to allowing students to earn college credit, dual-credit courses offer students the benefit of first-hand exposure to college-level work while still in high school.
- AISD partners with over 400 local businesses and organizations.
- AISD is one of 15 school districts in Texas to boast of its own planetarium.
- AISD students have attended and excelled at all major Texas universities, as well as Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, Penn, Yale, Johns Hopkins, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, among many other top national universities.



ANNUAL DONORS

Donation levels are from August 1, 2017 until July 31, 2018

UNIVERSE STAR

\$10,000 & Up

Abilene ISD
Abilene Teachers
Federal Credit
Union
Community Foundation
of Abilene
Dian Graves Owen
Foundation
Dodge Jones
Foundation
Edwin and Alice
Jennings Endowment
and Mr. Jennings,
Jr.
First Financial Capital
Corporation
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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Hunt Direct Marketing,
Inc.
Anonymous
Nationwide Products,
LLC

NOVA STAR

\$1,000-\$4,999

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Abilene Cultural Affairs
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Tittle Luther
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Watson
World's Okayest
Mom
Mike and Jeannie
Young

SHOOTING STAR

\$500-\$999

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Abilene ISD Fine Arts
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Abilene Runner's Club/
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Royce and Kathy
Curtis
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and Brandon Carr
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Eagle
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Future Fund c/o
CFA
Ryan and Libby
Gibson
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Corporation
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PLATINUM STAR

\$300-\$499

Abilene's Kona Ice,
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Bike Town*
Jeff Brokovich
Chick-fit-A North
Chipotle Mexican
Grill
Crysta Cook

Linda Davis-Cargile
Billy and Tina
Enriquez
Larry and Mary Gill
Gail Gregg
Kay and Travis
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Barry and Linda
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GOLD STAR

\$150-\$299

20th Century Study
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