

Rincon Valley Union School District
Board of Trustees General Meeting
June 8, 2021

Hello everyone! My name is Megan Fonseca and I'm the Executive Director of the Rincon Valley Education Foundation. RVEF is in its 18th year of existence and works alongside the superintendent and school board to support the mission of educational excellence for all students.

One year ago, I was speaking to you and ended my speech with the words that RVEF was facing adversity in a time of uncertainty. The Covid-19 Pandemic had hit us hard and while we were unsure as to what the new fiscal year would bring, we were not giving up. The very next day brought continued collaboration with RVUSD administration, recruitment of new board members, and brainstorming on how to convert an in-person after school enrichment program into an equally robust online platform based experience.

The start of the school year hit and the new normal of full time distance learning was far from ideal as personal, workplace, and family dynamics shifted tremendously. And while we all were struggling to do the best that we could, I couldn't help but see how district staff worked tirelessly for their students. Their dedication, patience, and ability to spread warmth and care to our families encouraged me to do the same.

RVEF was not in our students' learning space every day, but we were ready to help provide our youth with thoughtful and engaging resources during this time. The board of directors understood that communicating virtually would not stop a child's need to create and think critically. So we began our "An Opportunity to INvest" campaign and asked our community to join us in awakening a sense of wonder and encouraging the spirit of exploration. Monies raised would support the development of engaging programs.

We brought on Cathy Hatcher-England as the new Enrichment Coordinator, and her passion for learning and desire to share that love with others revamped the RVEF Enrichment Program to fit within Covid's constraints. Under her guidance, classes were now offered online via Zoom with sessions having at least 15 courses to choose from and recorded previews available to view on our YouTube channel.

The board and I dedicated our time to fundraising, building relationships with local businesses, and sharing RVEF's latest news with the community through our monthly newsletter and newly updated website. With the Enrichment program off to a promising start, donations rolling in, and a better system of communication set in place I was sure that the foundation's financial situation would recover quickly because we were adapting. I never expected our resiliency to be tested again so soon.

The Glass Fire hit on September 27, and in its aftermath, I repeatedly heard the phrases, "We're hanging in there and we're trying not to give up." RVEF shared in our community's

thoughts and feelings but strove to support our district's staff and students. We asked for help and provided a variety of ways to invest, because giving comes in many forms. And you, our community answered. Your businesses became our sponsors. You shared our Facebook posts and forwarded our newsletters and flyers. You ate takeout from our Dine & Donates. And you enrolled your children in our Enrichment Program. You lent a helping hand when one was asked for and needed.

And while our community rallied behind us, the shift took its toll. The "An Opportunity to Invest" campaign raised close to \$2500, but that was far from the \$32,000 goal we had set. Also, the change from in-person to online classes brought several challenges. Our impact declined as families chose to limit the amount of screen time their child was exposed to. But while attendance was low, the families served were satisfied and grateful. With the funds already raised, RVEF's Board prioritized maintaining Enrichment and restructured the program's operations and cost to be able to continue it through the end of the school year.

It was then time to refocus our fundraising efforts. The 30 year old Art Docent Program was at risk of being cut for the 2021-22 school year. There was no way RVEF nor its supporters could let go of an institution that helped to create over 20,000 individual art pieces per year.

At the start of the holiday season, RVEF found an Anonymous Benefactor who promised to match up to \$10,000 in donations made by the end of the year. And because our community believed that ART was vital to providing a well-rounded education, a major IMPACT was made during this "Season of Giving" campaign. The Art Docent Program was 57% funded by January 1st. We were on a roll and with the announcement that we only needed \$15,000 more, another wave of donations and sponsorships rolled in.

By mid February our goal thermometer had risen another 14% and we were now only \$10,000 shy! RVEF then received a grant in the amount of \$1250 from Walmart that was dedicated to support a district wide Fine Arts Day. Even though all sites were currently in distance learning, there was no reason not to have one as the Art Docent program's online art lessons showed that students were still creating. The foundation worked with administration, school staff, dedicated parents, and Art Docent Program Coordinator Jeannie Behr to put on a district wide virtual event that every RVUSD student could access via the Wednesday Enrichment webpage. Funds were used to buy materials for the students and pay stipends to artists who created and recorded a lesson for this special event.

The Art Docent Program received another round of recognition when Jeannie was honored as RVUSD's Classified Employee for the month of March. RVEF highlighted her achievement by communicating the success she had brought to the program in both

years past and present. Since the start of the 2020-21 school year, Jeannie developed and recorded a new drawing lesson weekly for each elementary school grade level. By the end of the school year, she created approximately 250 lessons. That's 35 lessons each for grades Kindergarten through 6th.

At the beginning of May, RVEF was \$5,000 from its goal. We had found another anonymous benefactor who would match donations up to \$2500. Our supporters took action and on the evening of Friday, May 28 RVEF reached its goal of raising \$35,000.

And so, on behalf of the Rincon Valley Education Foundation's Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to announce that a check written in the amount of \$35,000.00 will be issued to the Rincon Valley Union School District on July 1, therefore fully funding the Art Docent Program for the 2021-22 school year.

In conclusion, I want to give thanks to you, RVEF's Board of Directors and sponsors, and the rest of our community for your continued support and investment in the futures of our youth because no one cares more about our children than we do.