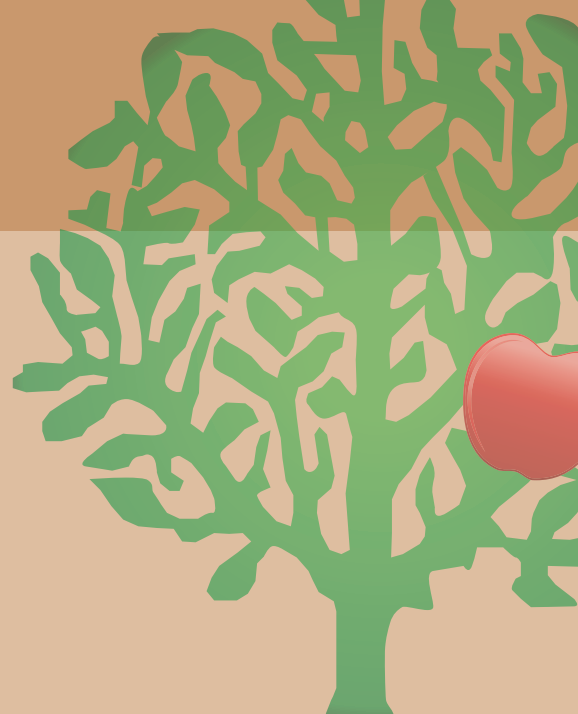




FUNDING THE FUTURE



WHY DO WE NEED THE HooverCSF?

Welcome to the first edition of Funding the Future, a biannual newsletter that will keep you informed about the latest happenings of the Hoover City Schools Foundation. People often ask why a school system like Hoover City Schools needs a Foundation. Yes, our schools are funded with Federal, state and local tax dollars, but our needs far exceed what we receive. It's important to remember that when you donate to the Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, you are making a difference in our students' lives. You are literally changing the future!

Even with limited resources, our schools do an incredible job educating our students. The Foundation helps our teachers do more. When you have teachers who have big ideas, you want to be able to provide them with additional funds to bring that learning

Our schools are funded with Federal, state and local tax dollars, but our needs far exceed what we receive.

to life in new and exciting ways. The Foundation's grants provide teachers with innovative resources to help teach the curriculum in more meaningful ways.

Since 1992, the Foundation has helped bridge this gap between public school funding and the growing needs of our students and teachers. We look to support those teachers who are constantly looking outside the box to bring a fresh spin on learning.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT THE FOUNDATION PROVIDES FUNDS FOR:

- Grants designed to help prepare students for college and careers, even at the elementary school level.
- Grants in the area of Fine Arts and Special Needs, including a grant for the teachers at Berry Middle School so their students could have adapted equipment to meet their individualized learning needs.
- Intervention programs, including drug awareness, education, prevention, student resource officers, bullying education and school and bus safety.
- Grants for our teachers to attend professional development seminars or conferences.
- Grants for STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
- SeedLAB, a program for teams of educators who want to pilot innovative ideas in the classroom. These teams are provided with the time, resources and funds to work toward solving problems they face in the classroom.

The Foundation received a record number of grant applications this year, and we were able to fund a record amount of these grants thanks to increased community support. Even with our increased fundraising efforts, we were still only able to fund 31 of our 89 requests. The only way we can fund all of our teachers' great ideas is through your support. If each parent could give just \$36 a year, only \$1 per school week, to support his/her student, we would

have \$500,000 available to award as grant money to our schools. Imagine what those dollars could do! Public education not only affects our children—it affects our future, our economy, our crime rate and our jobs. Read on to find out how the Foundation is truly changing lives each day.

Won't you join us? Be part of the solution! Visit our website at www.CommitTo36.com to donate today.

USING GRANTS TO CREATIVELY ENGINEER SOLUTIONS

For more than 10 years, Engineering Academy Teacher Scottie Wilson at Spain Park High School has been assisted by grants given from the Hoover City Schools Foundation. Her passion for engineering is shared with her students by helping them creatively tackle complex issues and engineer a solution.

When you give to the Hoover City Schools Foundation, you are literally helping chart the path of someone's life.

For this school year, Scottie received two grants. The first, Solder Me Awake, awarded \$1,075 for soldering materials so students can gain a better understanding of computer and electrical engineering, including DC circuits, printed circuit boards, electrical components and schematic drawings. The second awarded Scottie \$975 for Sensing Our World, a project where students gain hands-on engineering and computer science experience, creating programs to take measurements and data, using sensors and signal conditioning. "Kids

are afraid to take chances and to get the wrong answer," Scottie says.

"Engineering gives them the freedom to see their ideas come to life. There might be a wrong answer, but it leads to the right answer."

Engineering is about hands-on

math and science, so the funds that are provided to Scottie's programs are invaluable to her students. "Before we got grants from the foundation, we didn't have any hands-on items to work with," she explains. "The grant money allows us to purchase items we couldn't afford with classroom money."

The money the Engineering Academy has received from Foundation grants has allowed Scottie to purchase materials that students will eventually use in college. Recent graduate Emily Broome partnered with the health sciences department to see if she could help solve a problem they were having. Emily used a 3-D printer bought with grant money to engineer health simulation tools at a fraction of the cost. She made a complete set of false teeth that students can use to practice oral care or orthodontics to a vein finder for potential nursing students. Now an engineering major at Auburn University, Emily is taking the knowledge she received at Spain Park and continuing to learn more about her future career.

The Foundation gave 2019 graduates Lauryn Kortman and Anastasia Zellner the tools they needed in order to reach out to young elementary girls to foster the love of engineering. From LED light sabers to magnetic slime, these future leaders let girls know that they too can build things and go into careers that have been primarily dominated by men. "It's nice we had this experience in high school to know that I love engineering and want it to be my future career," Lauryn says. "It has given me an exposure to all elements of the field."

When you give to the Hoover City Schools Foundation, you are literally helping chart the path of someone's life. "We are so grateful to all our donors," Scottie says. "We are so thankful for all the resources provided to the Engineering Academy. They make the Hoover City Schools great—the best in the nation."



Scottie Wilson
Teacher
Spain Park High School

STUDENTS WORK TO CHANGE VIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA

An innovation design-thinking lab for teachers, SeedLAB was started three years ago by the Foundation to allow teachers the time and resources to tackle challenges in their schools and classrooms. For the first time, four students have been tasked with answering an interesting challenge for a SeedLAB project. Their project centers around the following question: How might we educate students on the proper use of social media?

Since the first of August, high schoolers Brantley Lawrence, Indyah Ferrouillet, Skylar Billings and Amaan Haque have been working on this challenge. “We have seen many examples of how someone presents themselves on social media today can affect them in the future,” Brantley says. “Too often teens post things without ever considering the consequences of their actions.”

Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, the SeedLAB team will be meeting several times a month in order to research and collect data from students, parents and teachers. “The first thing we will do is compile a survey to get people’s opinions on social media—do they like it, dislike it, could it be useful in the school system,” Brantley explains. “From there we will work on a policy that could be implemented for the future as well as plans for education, such as a social media awareness week where we would bring in speakers and talk about the proper use of social media.”

Bryan Phillips, Chief Technology Officer at Hoover City Schools, serves as group mentor. According to the students, one of the biggest problems they see among their peers is knowing when to unplug. “Many teens don’t know when to take a break from social media or when not to post something,” Brantley explains. “Whether it’s a celebration or a joke, sometimes what we post can hurt someone and we aren’t weighing the pros and cons before we do it. Our natural response is to just post.”

Brantley and her teammates hope that their work on this problem can create a healthier use for social media. “Social media is a great tool to keep up with people I’ve met across the country, but it can be used negatively,” she says. “There is great potential, but people need to understand that social media doesn’t accurately represent someone’s life.”



Bryan Phillips, Skylar Billings,
Indyah Ferrouillet and Brantley Lawrence

With new policies in place this year at Hoover High, the rules have drastically changed. Students are only allowed to use their phones in the hallways in between classes and they are no longer allowed to use their ear buds, headphones or Apple watches at school unless instructed otherwise by a teacher. “One thing we have talked about is since these privileges have been taken away, what will students do once they get to college and have free rein to their technology?” Brantley says. “Will they be sufficiently prepared to handle that freedom?”

As a member of the Student Board for the Hoover City Schools Foundation, Brantley is grateful for the opportunity to help suggest changes to school policies. “I am really excited to be part of this collaborative effort,” Brantley says. “The school board is often asked to make decisions without the voice of the students and this is something that affects us more than anyone else.”

Now in her fourth year on the Student Board, Brantley appreciates the ability to have met students from Spain Park and the chance to volunteer in the community at Foundation events such as Denim and Dining. “The Foundation’s Student Board has been great and has given us opportunities to achieve great things,” she says. “I’ve gotten experience in interviewing younger students and volunteering at Taste of Hoover.”

As she winds down her senior year and looks toward college, Brantley hopes her team’s SeedLAB project will have some positive outcomes. “I hope we can change the view of social media as something that is negative to something that can be used for good,” she says. “I want us all to stop viewing it as the problem and see how it can be the solution.”

SIGNATURE HOMES GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

For the past four years, Signature Homes has been a major donor to the Hoover City Schools Foundation. For co-founder Jonathan Belcher, it was more than a business decision—it was personal.

“I grew up in Hoover and attended Green Valley Elementary, Simmons Middle and Berry High School,” Jonathan says. “Hoover has always been a special place for me, our business is headquartered in Hoover at Ross Bridge and the city has played a major role in the growth of our company.”

Along with his partner Dwight Sandlin, Jonathan and Signature Homes have developed many popular neighborhoods throughout Hoover over the last 20 years. From Ross Bridge on the west side of town to Kirkman Preserve near Spain Park High School, to their newest communities in Lake Wilborn and Blackridge off Stadium Trace Parkway near Hoover High, Signature Homes has worked hard to create communities from scratch that offer amenities that bring people together. “Our business model is to purchase the land, develop it and design the entire community, not just the homes there,” Jonathan explains. “We want to help foster that neighborhood feel where you can walk to a restaurant for dinner or sit on your front porch and talk to your neighbors.”

When it comes to buying a new home, families are usually drawn to a community with a highly rated school system. “Our business really depends on strong schools,” Jonathan says. “We saw what the Foundation was able to provide above and beyond for the children of our schools and knew we wanted to be involved on a larger level.”

That involvement includes an annual \$10,000 contribution, in addition to participating in different fundraising events during the year, such as Denim and Dining. “Our children are the future and we have a serious adult responsibility to reinvest in them,” Jonathan says. “Some children wouldn’t have these opportunities outside of their regular curriculum if we didn’t invest in our schools like we do.”

Interim Foundation Director Shelley Shaw is grateful to Signature Homes for their support and partnership to improve education in Hoover. “As our community’s largest homebuilder and a major employer in the city, Signature clearly understands the importance of an excellent school system,” she says. “Signature’s generous support of the Foundation helps to fund numerous grants in Hoover schools, leading to innovative teaching approaches and more engaged classrooms.”



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