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Ed Foundation Preps for First Annual Pier Party to Raise \$4 Million for Santa Monica-Malibu Schools

By Jason Islas
Lookout reporter

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article said that the Pier Part is on Saturday. It is actually on Sunday, April 27. The article has been updated.

April 23, 2014 -- Faced with raising \$4 million for the district-wide fundraising initiative for the second year in a row, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation is wasting no time.

While the fund-raising arm of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) has been hard at work raising money since February 1, the Ed Foundation is getting ready for its Pier Party fundraiser.

The first annual Pier Party, which is this Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., will be the most visible event put on by the Ed Foundation to raise money for õpremiumõ programs at schools throughout the District.

For \$25 to \$175, ticket holders will have their run of the Santa Monica Aquarium and the Pier, where there will be music, games and food. VIP ticket holders are also invited to a continental breakfast with Superintendent Sandra Lyon with brunch and cocktail tasting later.

õThis raises money and it builds community spirit,õ said Rachel Faulkner, program director with the Ed Foundation. õThe point is to gather our community together and have a fun, family day thatõs accessible to any family who wants to come.õ

Faulkner said that, over time, the Pier Party could become the Foundationõs signature event for the annual \$4 million fundraising drive.

õWeõve increased our staff size,õ she said. And we õcreated a really good fundraising plan to adhere to.õ

The School Board passed the controversial district-wide fundraising policy in December 2011 which prohibited parents from making direct donations to their childrenõs schools to pay for extracurricular programs, teachersõ aides and other personnel. (õSanta Monica - Malibu School Board Approves Controversial Gift Policy,õ December 1, 2011)

Instead, their donations are now pooled and distributed throughout the District to assure that students attending schools in richer parts of the District -- like Malibu -- did not receive an advantage because their parents made more money than others.

But in order to prevent a cut in services District-wide, officials determined the Ed Foundation -- the organization in charge of raising the money -- would



Harding, Larmore Kutcher & Kozal, LLP



When one lives in a city as breathtakingly beautiful and unique as Santa Monica, inevitably that city will be shared with visitors.

have to raise \$4 million a year.

“It’s a big undertaking every year,” Faulkner said. Last year, the Foundation raised \$3.2 million and the School Board voted to make up the extra \$800,000.

Part of the problem, Ed Foundation officials said, was that Malibu -- the part of the District that had most vigorously resisted District-wide fundraising -- had given disproportionately little last year. ([“Fundraisers Scramble After Malibu Schools Fail to Contribute,”](#) January 28, 2014)

Still, last year’s drive was a victory, officials said, because until then, the Foundation had, on average raised about \$500,000 a year in its 32 year history. Now, the Foundation had raised nearly \$4 million in the same period of time.

Saturday’s Pier Party, which Foundation officials estimate will generate about \$50,000 for the effort, is as much about bringing the community together as it is raising money, Faulkner said.

“People who care a lot about our schools are going to be there,” she said.

For more information about the Education Foundation visit smmef.org. To find out more about the Pier Party, go to PierParty.org.



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