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## Education foundation to receive largest donation in its history

The coffers of the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation will soon be filled with an estate gift of \$4.8 million to establish an arts endowment, among other things.

The largess was announced by Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation Executive Director Linda Greenberg Gross at the Santa Monica -Malibu Unified School District Board of Education Sept. 20 meeting.

It is the largest donation in the organization's 30-year history.

"This is a truly transformative gift for the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation and our efforts to support every student at every school in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District," said Greenberg Gross. "This gift will help us continue the great work that is already happening in our schools, and it will ensure that programs throughout our district can continue in these difficult economic times."

The donation come from the estate of the late Peggy Bergmann and will be divided into two parts:

Two point four million dollars has been designated to establish an arts endowment for the purpose of providing semi-private music instruction, as well as the purchase and maintenance of musical instruments, for economically disadvantaged students throughout the district. The endowment will be known as the Peggy Bergmann Arts Endowment Fund, in memory of Lenore Bergmann and John Elmer Bergmann.

The other \$2.4 million has been designated as current-use dollars to address education foundation's critical needs within the school district. During the coming months, superintendent Sandra Lyon will be working with the newly-formed Superintendent's Advisory Council, made up of district, foundation, and community leaders, to assess the district's most critical needs in determining the best and most impactful use of these dollars.

Bergmann passed away on Dec. 10, 2011. According to Bruce and Sonya Sultan, attorneys for the estate of Peggy Bergmann and longtime supporters of the school district and of the education foundation, Ms. Bergmann had learned of the district's efforts to provide equity to all students through a centralized fundraising model, and she wanted to jump start that effort with this bequest.

"It was Ms. Bergmann's hope that this gift would encourage others to give large and small gifts to the education foundation to make program equity a reality for all children in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District," said Sonya Sultan.

"We are so pleased to join with the foundation to announce this magnificent gift that will have an enormous effect on our schools today and in perpetuity," added Lyon. "As state funding for public education continues to decline, it's never been more important that we seek support from our communities to ensure continued excellence in our schools. This is a tremendous step in that direction."

The Bergmann bequest arrives at a time when the school district is moving toward a centralized fundraising model in which the education foundation broadens its focus from events and annual appeals to major and planned gifts that will create sustainability for important programs at schools throughout the district.

Cultivation of long-term relationships, such as the one that resulted in this gift, is now a core focus of the foundation's centralized fundraising efforts, said a foundation spokeswoman.

"Gifts like this one - those that impact students and schools district-wide - have to be our focus if we are to achieve equity in our district and give all students opportunities to succeed," Greenberg Gross said.