



SALINA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

community connection

ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

salinaeducationfoundation.com 785-309-4729

Fall 2019

Classroom grants to enhance student learning • Exceptional teachers to staff our classrooms

Nurture a Seedling and Great Things Grow!

The 14th Annual Fall Breakfast honoring SEF’s donors was held at the Salina Country Club on September 10, 2019. The program focused on a single grant, given by an anonymous donor in 2010 that provided a classroom set of 25 guitars for South Middle School. Matt Gerry, the teacher who requested the grant, and 30 of his Advanced Guitar students charmed the crowd with not only performances of three rock songs (the final song, *Fortunate Son* by Creedence Clearwater Revival received a standing ovation), but with a brief history of how a nationally-recognized program was built over the years.

Matt Gerry had expressed his thanks to the anonymous donor by writing an eloquent thank you letter to the SEF, which



Teacher Matt Gerry meets Donor Joe Hodges



in part said, “Maybe someday I will shake your hand without knowing that you’re the one who has changed a multitude of my students’ lives.” That day became a reality when Pam McIntyre, Executive Director, introduced Joe Hodges, the donor who made the South Middle Guitar Program possible.

Superintendent Linn Exline shared her vision for Salina Public Schools. Superintendent Exline told the gathered guests that an essential part of visioning for the future is including the community in setting long-term goals. That discussion

with the community will take place over this school year. Linn praised the SEF for key contributions that impact students and their postsecondary success. She specifically pointed to the early childhood grants, computer coding and robotics grants, literacy initiatives, the South Middle guitar program, and 305 LIVE as strong educational programming. Linn remarked that supporting the vision of a teacher through the Outside-the-Box Grant, the Sudden Opportunity Grant, and the 21st Century Advantage Grant is what education should be about.

2019 Fall Breakfast Donors

- Arrow Printing
- Artful Parties and Events
- The Bank of Tescott
- Clark, Mize, and Linville
- Jones Gillam Renz
- Woods and Durham

The Growth of a Program

2003

- Matt Gerry hired to teach 6th grade general music at South Middle School.
- Started researching classroom guitar programs.
- During the summer took a summer Teaching Guitar Workshop. Wrote SEF grant request for a classroom set of 25 acoustic guitars—granted.

2004

- Started incorporating guitar into 6th grade general music. Kids and parents loved it!

2005-2009

- Never gave up on adding a strictly guitar class to South Middle.
- Continued to teach and add guitar units to curriculum.

See Program, page 2

Letter from the Chair of the Board

I am extremely honored and humbled to be the Salina Education Foundation Board Chairman. I am excited to be a part of an organization that represents a vibrant community that is striving to be progressive in providing engaging educational opportunities for all. I hope to stay true to the history and character that has made the Salina Education Foundation the stable, supportive resource for USD 305.



Kristy Rodriguez

SEF is off to a busy start with the donor appreciation Fall Breakfast that showcases

learning opportunities that have been made possible by donations to the Foundation. We are excited to see the new sensory manipulatives, hands-on gardening, and other new engaging teaching strategies that are being implemented this year because of our three grant programs.

The groundwork has begun for the next 305 LIVE which will take place May 23 at the Salina Central Auditorium. This is an event that allows students to experience songwriting, production, and performing with guidance from Joe's Pet Project, a band of USD 305 alums.

The LIFT program (Loan Initiative for Future Teachers) continues to allow us to "grow our own teachers." SEF named six

new LIFT recipients this past April. The financial support that this forgivable loan provides to these individuals helps our community keep young talented teachers coming back to our district.

I want to thank and commend the Board of Trustees for their service. Being a member of the Board is a voluntary position that approaches the service to our community with passion and a sense of doing what is best for children. I also want to thank all of you who have supported and continue to support the Salina Education Foundation. None of what SEF does would be possible without your support.

Kristy Rodriguez
Chair, Board of Trustees

Program from page 1

2010

- First guitar class at South Middle with 20 students.
- This first class entered and won contest from the rock band Weezer. Received nearly \$2,000 for new equipment and a live Skype session with the band and students.

2011

- Mr. Gerry named USD 305 "Teacher of the Year."
- Awarded SEF Outside-the-Box Grant (Concert Night with Mr. G) to take students to see performances at the Stiefel.

2012

- Students performed in first 305 LIVE and all subsequent 305 LIVE rock concerts.
- Awarded grants for guitar cases so students could take instruments home.

2015

- Guitar class entered and won contest from the rock band Collective Soul. Won an autographed guitar that now

hangs in the guitar classroom.

2017

- Entered the Give a Note Foundation grant contest and was the Midwest regional winner.
- Received \$2,500 grant from the Give a Note Foundation and a matching grant from the Country Music Association. \$5,000 used to purchase new updated guitars.
- South Middle School guitar program featured on the Radio Disney Music Awards. The Disney Channel runs a commercial with South Middle guitar students performing with up and coming country star Tegan Marie.
- CMA Foundation names Mr. Gerry a "Music Teacher of Excellence" at a banquet hosted by Little Big Town in Nashville, TN.

2018

- Invited to play at Kansas Music Educator's Conference.
- High school class added because of high interest (taught by Eddie Creer).

Today

- Mr. Gerry teaches eight sections of guitar to 7th and 8th graders (six level-one classes and two advanced guitar classes). 214 students are currently enrolled in guitar at SMS.
- Original guitars have been replaced. Those guitars are now "take home guitars."

- Students will perform with Joe's Pet Project May 23, our fifth 305 LIVE!

Class of 1999 Scholarship

Salina Central High Class of 1999 celebrated its 20th year reunion this fall. To honor classmates who have passed away, Kristen Stelljes, Class of 1999 graduate, and husband Mike Kayser have contributed the initial amount needed to open an endowed scholarship. Their donation specifically honors Adam Hulstine who envisioned a scholarship that would honor classmates who have died. Regrettably, Adam passed away July 29, 2019. Kristen and Mike are calling on friends and classmates to match their donation. Once the \$10,000 requirement has been achieved, a scholarship will be awarded to a Central High graduating senior.

To contribute to the scholarship, send donations to: Salina Education Foundation Class of 1999, Box 797, Salina KS 67401.

You may also use your credit card: <https://salinaeducationfoundation.com/give-a-gift>

Mark Your Calendars!

2020
Fall Breakfast

September 15

Welcome New Trustees

Tim Blake is a graduate of Salina South High School and owner of Hickory Hut Barbecue. Tim and his wife, Shelly (Laubhan) Blake, only recently moved back to Salina to raise their three boys after living in the Kansas City area for 15 years. Tim comes to the SEF board with extensive experience in money management and financial planning.



Tim Blake

Tom Loudis has lived in Salina for 30 years and is owner of Paragon Business Forms. He and wife Linda raised two

children: T Jay, who graduated from Salina South in 2000 and Jennifer, who graduated from Salina Central in 1996. Tom's volunteer activities include: Board of Directors CAPS, Coronado Council BSA, Salina AM Ambucs, National Ambucs, Inc. Board of Directors 2000 – 2006, and National President Ambucs, Inc. 2004 - 2005.



Tom Loudis

Michelle Peck is the Associate Director of Development for Saint Francis Ministries. Prior to joining Saint Francis Ministries, she was the CEO for Big Brothers Big

Sisters of Salina. Michelle graduated in 2002 from Kansas State University with her Bachelors in Secondary Education Business. Michelle has taught Leadership Salina for the past 10 years. She and her husband Aaron own and operate BEL Tree Farm. Together they have two children, both of whom attend Lakewood Middle School.



Michelle Peck

Quick facts about the Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees consists of not less than ten (10) nor more than fifteen (15) persons from the community and two (2) members of the Board of Education.

- Members serve three-year terms and may serve up to two terms.
- Trustees are assigned to committees, which include the Executive Committee, Finance and Investment Committee, Allocations Committee, LIFT Committee, and Activities and PR Committee.
- The Executive Director and the Superintendent serve ex-officio, without vote.
- The Board of Trustees makes independent decisions, with guidance from USD 305, about all grants and programming.



Trustees Amy Stonebraker, Michelle Peck, Katy Ebert, and Taylor Urban greet guests at the Fall Breakfast.

305 LIVE IS Coming!

Come see what happens when Joe's Pet Project (Nathan Tysen, Ryan McCall, Lance Gilchrist, John Hobson, and Jason Hammond) works with our middle and high school students to write original songs, stage, and perform a rock concert. Follow us on Facebook to learn when ticket sales begin. You will be able to buy advance tickets at all middle and high

schools, the district board office, and Mid-west Music. Tickets will also be available at the door. **Mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, May 23, 2020, Salina Central Auditorium.** Doors open at 6:00 p.m. to view the great donated items, and the concert starts at 7:00 p.m. **The School of Rock is in session!**



Horizon Award

LIFT Recipient Kelsey Plummer has been named the Elementary Horizon Award winner for 2019-2020. The Kansas Horizon Award program, which is sponsored by Kansas State Department of Education, allows all school districts in the state an opportunity to nominate one elementary and one secondary teacher for the award. To be eligible for the award, teachers must have successfully completed their first year of teaching and have performed in such a way as to distinguish themselves as outstanding. Kelsey teaches Kindergarten at Cottonwood Elementary and joins fellow LIFT recipient Jessica Steele, who is the 2018 Horizon Award winner. Congratulations Kelsey!

Our Mission

To promote and support educational excellence by providing resources to enhance opportunities for the students and staff of Salina's public schools.

As part of this mission, the trustees of the Salina Education Foundation:

Manage and grow endowment funds, grants, and gifts for specific schools, programs, and scholarships

Award grants to teachers seeking to enhance instruction

Identify and support, through forgivable loans, outstanding Saline County residents seeking to become teachers in USD 305

Build community awareness and support of the Salina Education Foundation

Our Vision

Uniting the community to support excellent public schools

Board of Trustees, 2019-20

Kristy Rodriguez.....Chair	
Valerie Andrews.....Vice Chair	
Byron Norris.....Secretary	
Bill Sturges.....Treasurer	
Tim Blake	Michelle Peck
Kate Bycroft	Amy Stonebraker
Gary Denning	Taylor Urban
Katy Ebert	Jeanie Warner
Nedra Elbl	Pam McIntyre,
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James Lambert	Linn Exline,
Tom Loudis	Superintendent,
Jeff Norris	Ex-officio

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Help Make A Difference. **JOIN SEF TODAY!**



South Middle Guitarists

YES! I want the BEST for all students in the Salina School District! Gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- \$3000 or more **21st Century Club**
- \$1000-2999 **SEF Benefactor**
- \$500-999 **SEF Patron**
- \$100-499 **SEF Supporter**
- \$10-99 **SEF Friend**
- Please send more information

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

Make checks payable to:

Salina Education Foundation
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Salina, KS 67402-0797