



Mark Calderone & Theon Scott listen as they read on new MP3 audio book players purchased via an RTHS Education Foundation grant.

**RTHS Ed Foundation grants purchase**

## **MP3 audio book players, sewing machines & projectors**

ROCHELLE - The RTHS Education Foundation issued \$9,650 in grants to four high school projects last month. Proceeds from Fundraisers like the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 30 Men Who Cook Sept. 20 enable this not-for-profit organization to underwrite the cost of programs to enhance learning at the high school. Government teacher Tracy Lloyd wrote a grant requesting 2 multimedia projectors, mounting kits for all six projectors, and installation costs. "The Foundation was generous enough to grant us the money. This summer all 6 social studies classrooms will have ceiling-mounted projectors connected to our computers. That's a plus because it alleviates the extension cords and wires that can be hard to move around," she said.

she said. “The incorporation of modern technology in the classroom will help to make history more current. The MMP can take the old and give it a modern spin by making history come alive with technology. The use of computer generated technology will prepare the students academically for future high school and college projects and presentations by moving beyond the traditional poster.”

Curriculum director Dr. Elizabeth Freeman said this brings the whole social studies department, “up to speed technically. The teachers do a lot with ‘History Alive’ and incorporate authentic documents and materials through multimedia presentations.”



**Ed Foundation grants enabled the Vocal Jazz Department to purchase additional cordless microphones for recording and performances.**

Another grant recipient was the Pins N Needles Club. Beth Mock requested new sewing machines. “Pins & Needles club addresses a need for students who are often not engaged in other high school activities,” Mock said. “We create several projects throughout the year, donating several to charity or using them as fundraisers. Our club has increased in membership so much since we started 2005 that we have students waiting in line to use our machines. We’re grateful to the community for donating the machines we currently use, but they are well-used and sometimes have problems, so we are very excited about new machines.”

The Education Foundation granted Librarian Ann Marie Jinkins’ request for MP3 audio book players.

An MP3 player is a computer file standard for downloading compressed books or music from the Internet. “An I-pod is a brand of MP3 player,” Jinkins explained to the foundation board, “however I-Pods are for music downloaded from the I-tunes network. The MP3 players I purchased allow us to download free audio books so students can enjoy the book in a ‘read aloud’ fashion, or, they can do ‘read along’

with the text version, reading along as the narrator speaks.

“It will model fluency and improve comprehension which is a need for many of our students,” Jinkins explained. “As our test scores have shown, there are some students who are not reading at grade level. There is evidence that MP3 players assist below-grade-level readers as well as English Language Learners (students learning English as their second or third language).”

The grant allowed Jinkins to purchase 16 Playaways, the newest format of audio. It combines a wide variety of content with an easy-to-use player in one small unit, the size of a deck of cards. To use the Playaway, all you have to do is press ‘play’ to begin listening - there is no need for a second player, and it comes with earbuds and batteries.”

Jinkins also purchased 10 MP3 players onto which she will load free audio books through Overdrive, an online service provided through the school’s annual membership to the Prairie Area Library System. “Using Overdrive will give us flexibility to download a variety of books one at a time per MP3 player as we need them, no need to go on the wait list for a popular text-version. Playaway is immediately available.”

Jinkins said her staff will document the effectiveness of the equipment by the number of items checked out and the subsequent requests for other titles. Teachers like Peggy Alm, Angie Buskohl, Mark Lamb, Nicole Maxwell, Gloria Welcker and Danae White will be able to assess the progress of the students who use MP3 players in conjunction with their texts.”

Jinkins, an avid reader, has long enjoyed audio books, “as it frees me up drive or to garden while I enjoy a good story.”

For more information on the RTHS Education Foundation please refer to the “Local Links” on the RTHS homepage. Also remember to mark your calendars for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 30 Men Who Cook, September 20, 2008, at the Rochelle Country Club.