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N E W S R E L E A S E

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LOCAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION **EPAK** CREDITS SOLID BASE OF DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR BOOST IN TEACHER GRANTS

(Menlo Park, CA, May 27, 2014) -- Solid funding from donors and dedicated service by volunteers is the key to success that provided the 409 grants to local school teachers by East Palo Alto Kids the past fiscal year, says foundation president.

"Our recent success from individual donors during Silicon Valley Gives echoes what we are finding from our large donors: they are behind us. This motivates our volunteer efforts to continue working to provide this support to students via their teachers. We've not only been able to give more grants but also to give slightly larger grants," says Tami Espinosa, EPAK board president.

EPAK has increased its *Educator Micro Grant* award from \$500 to \$600 per cycle. Teachers may apply twice in the academic year for funding for a specific purpose -- literacy projects, field trips, science and instructional materials. Two grants, or \$1,200, awarded in one school year offer significant funding to teachers who do not have access to a PTA or other support , and whose salaries are *\$23,000 less* than those for comparable teaching experience in neighboring -- and wealthier -- school districts.

Its annual showcase of how teachers have put this funding to use in their classrooms, **EPAK Day**, will be presented on Friday morning, May 30 at Willow Oaks School in Menlo Park. Featured will be a student performance, a teacher testimony and student-led tours of classrooms to showcase classroom materials purchased with grant monies. Those interested in volunteering or donating are welcome.

The small local foundation functions by keeping things simple: an all volunteer board, volunteer committees. This allows it to operate at an 8.7 ratio per donated dollar.

"Our donors, whether they are individuals or foundations value our fiscal approach. Indeed our goal is to always get close to 100 percent of donations in the teacher's hands since we believe that each individual teacher knows best what his or her students need most to be successful and to make the biggest academic impact," added Espinosa.

Now in its 21st year, EPAK has awarded *\$2.3 million* in grants to teachers in the financially-challenged Ravenswood City School District that educates about 4,200 students in K through 8th grades, and two community high schools for another 275 students. RCSD sits in the shadows of well-regarded Palo Alto and Menlo Park school districts where its annual student spending is as much as *\$2,300 less* than in those school districts.

For more information regarding East Palo Alto Kids Foundation, contact info@epak.org. Visit the website at www.epak.org or on Facebook.

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