

Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation Sets Record in Fundraising Drive

By Niki Cervantes
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September 15, 2017 -- The Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF) announced Thursday it raised a record \$658,805 as part of a back-to-school pledge drive, with donors contributing nearly a quarter of the total on the last day.

The campaign was spearheaded by a \$50,000 match from Santa Monica Place (owned by Macerich) and Kaiser Permanente.

Officials said 1,195 donors contributed to the fundraising efforts it kicked off for next school year.

Included were four one-day, \$2,500 "Flash Matches" from local businesses CodeREV Kids, Santa Monica Music Center, Green Brooms Music Academy and That Tutor Guy, SMMEF said.

The campaign ended September 6. The \$50,000 match ran in conjunction with Pledge Days.

"This was a truly wonderful way to start our 2017-2018 annual campaign," said Linda Greenberg, Executive Director of the foundation.

Donors contributed \$157,598 on the last day of the match alone, a record for the most ever raised from community donations on a single day since SMMEF's started in 1982, said SMMEF spokesperson Ann Conkle.

SMMEF funded \$2.48 million for SMMUSD programs -- ranging from art, to STEM and wellness -- this school year. Fundraising for the 2018-2019 school year programs continues through June.

Conkle said the foundation has not yet determined how many of the donors in the recent campaign were parents from Malibu.

That part of the school district is in talks about separating from SMMUSD and creating its own district.

Less than 12 percent of Malibu families donated to SMMEF last year. By contrast, a third of their counterparts in Santa Monica contributed, a Board of Education report found (["Santa Monica School Board Member Says Malibu Parents Boycotting Education Foundation,"](#) May 16, 2016).

"We'll run the Malibu/Santa Monica numbers after our parent giving campaign ends in January," Conkle said. "Now, we are focused on encouraging everyone to participate."

In the recent fundraising drive, Santa Monica Place and Kaiser Permanente each contributed \$25,000 in matching funds.

“This experience has been incredible,” said Yesenia Monsour, Director of Public Affairs & Brand Communications at Kaiser Permanente.

“The response is a testament to our community’s dedication to ensuring an excellent public education for all our local students.”