

What exactly is the Warrenton Schools Foundation?

The Warrenton Schools Foundation had its origins in 2004 when the Warrenton Governing Board was forced to cut funding for high school assistant coaches and all middle school coaches due to budget restraints. This was potentially a major setback for these valuable programs. A small group of citizens who were already active with Warrenton Kids, Inc. stepped up and decided to raise the needed funds to preserve our athletic programs. Under the leadership of local business people and parents, Don Patterson, Dianne Burkhart, and Cindy Johnson, along with Athletic Director Doug Calvert, the community banded together and raised over \$60,000 each year for the next three years. Gold (\$1,000), Silver (\$500), and Bronze (\$250) sponsorships were sold to businesses, families, and individuals and a Dinner/Auction was hosted at Camp Rilea to raise these funds. This was very much appreciated and the organizers recognized that many community members attended and dug deep into their pockets so our kids could continue to participate in sports in our schools.

In 2007, true to their word, the Governing Board reinstated the funding for coaches when they were financially able to do so. The need for the community to pay the coaches was over. For three years, the Dinner/Auction was an incredible community event and was attended by about 250 people each year. It seemed a shame to have it end. Many of the donors expressed an interest in continuing their donations, even though it was not needed for coaches. They thought the money could be put to good use elsewhere. Thus, the Warrenton Hall of Fame Foundation was created. The Foundation name was changed to the Warrenton Schools Foundation in 2015.

The newly formed Foundation's Board of Directors; Don Patterson, Doug Calvert, Dianne Burkhart, Cindy Johnson, Dianne Collier, and Rod Heyen contacted all previous donors and sincerely thanked them for their help during this time of need. It was explained that there was no longer a need to raise funds to pay for coaches and that their support was appreciated. Given the opportunity to continue making donations, now to a Foundation, about half the donors chose to continue purchasing sponsorships and donating money. Now the Warrenton Schools had a way for people to make tax deductible donations to a Foundation that would use the funds to make Warrenton an even better place to go to school.

Why was the name changed to the Warrenton Schools Foundation?

The Warrenton Hall of Fame Foundation seemed to be a natural choice since the same people that were involved in the original fundraising effort were the ones who decided to create a Foundation and also start the Hall of Fame and host a banquet. Due to its name, The Warrenton Hall of Fame Foundation, people often thought that their donations were being used to fund the banquet or due to the fact that funds were originally solicited to pay for coaches, people were under the impression that it is solely used to fund athletics. Neither is true but the name was changed to the Warrenton Schools Foundation to avoid these perceptions.

What is the Warrenton Hall of Fame?

Since the dinner/auction was such an enjoyable and successful evening, the organizers decided to continue hosting the event through the newly formed Foundation but, instead of raising money, honor outstanding Warrenton alumni, staff, athletes, and coaches as well as community members and contributors. The Warrenton Hall of Fame was created in 2007, the same year the Foundation was formed.

The Hall of Fame Selection Committee receives nominations and selects deserving recipients for induction into the Warrenton Hall of Fame each year and the former dinner/auction now serves as a banquet/induction ceremony and celebration to welcome new members into the Hall of Fame.

How are the Foundation and the Hall of Fame related?

There has been some confusion through the years regarding the relationship between the two. The Hall of Fame was created at the same time as the Foundation as they are both a spin-off of the original fundraising efforts to pay for coaches, so they share a common beginning. The Foundation is the organization that raises funds and decides where those funds are to be spent. The Hall of Fame is the branch that selects and honors teams, groups, and individuals and produces the ceremony that inducts them into the Warrenton Hall of Fame. All financial transactions related to the banquet are run through the Foundation. The banquet funds itself through ticket sales and donations and none of the money given to the Foundation for the kids is used to buy plaques or food or pay any other expenses associated with the event. Money donated for the kids is spent on the kids.

Who does the Foundation serve?

The Foundation is charged with disbursing funds to Warrenton-Hammond School District administrators, teachers, coaches, staff, athletic teams, clubs and organizations in grades K-12.

What will the Foundation fund?

This appears to be the major question on everyone's mind. The philosophy of the Foundation with regards to who, what, how, when, and where they will grant funds has remained consistent since its beginning. The general guidelines center on using the money to serve the most kids.

There has been a tendency towards "bricks and mortar" purchases, those items that can be used over and over and for a long time. Ideally, Foundation purchases can be seen years after their purchase and are still being used by many kids. Some of the items purchased that fall into this category include two pianos, a stage curtain, a podium, weight room equipment, sports equipment, district-wide classroom technology and computer equipment, band instruments, a high jump pit, tools for the Auto Club, wall pads for the high school gym, and a volleyball net system for the middle school, just to name a few.

Other grants have been awarded to finance a school newspaper, supplement donations made for the creation of a softball field at the high school; match state funds for technology; and also match a state grant to create a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program in the district. Some items have been purchased with funds donated for a specific purpose such as a new football scoreboard and choir and band music.

All requests will be considered but historically, preference has been given to these types of requests. Examples of some of the requests that have not been approved in the past include; requests for individual classroom activities and projects using consumables; requests for t-shirts and other such items that will be provided to kids to keep; and requests for extracurricular activities involving individual students or groups, such as donating to a student/team/club that wishes to raise money to participate in a camp, clinic, or take a trip.

How do I apply for funds from the Foundation?

The first question asked by the Board will be 'have you checked with your administrator, athletic director, or the District Office to see if the District has funds available to finance the request?' The Foundation's role is to provide monies when the District is unable to do so. Please take this step before submitting a grant application.

The process involves completing a mini-grant request form that can be found on the school website, "gowarrenton.com", under the **Foundation** tab. A complete description of how the funds will be used is required. If an item is to be purchased, it is expected that the person making the request get bids and come up with exact figures (including shipping when possible) explaining the amount being requested. The Foundation will pay the bill to a company for the exact amount when an item is purchased and will not deposit money into a school account in most cases. Requests such as \$2,000 for new uniforms will not be considered. The Board would like to see a quote from a company and know that it is considering a bill for \$1,925.50 for new uniforms. The requestor is expected to put some time into the request and know exactly what they want, how much it will cost, and from whom they plan to make the purchase when they submit their mini-grant form for consideration.

Once a mini-grant form is completed, the requestor must get it to the Foundation Board of Directors. This can be done by giving it directly to a Board member or a school administrator. The request must be represented at the Board of Directors meeting by someone knowledgeable about the request. This can be an administrator, a Board member, or the person submitting the request. It is usually an administrator or Board member who has had a conversation with the person submitting the form, but individuals are welcome to come to a Board meeting to represent their request. It is the responsibility of the person submitting the request to make sure someone is present that can answers questions about the grant. If there are unanswered questions or gaps in the application, the request will not be approved.

When does the Foundation decide which grant requests it will fund?

The Foundation Board of Directors has typically met within a month after the Hall of Fame Banquet, usually in October to consider grant requests. Other requests can be discussed anytime during the year when a Board meeting is called for that specific reason, but once the funds allocated for that year are doled out, no other requests can be granted.

What is expected of me if my grant is approved?

We will return to the original philosophy of the Foundation when answering this question. Since the money came from the community, the Foundation Board would like to see something given back to the community when possible. We want the donors to know their support is appreciated. Guidelines for this were never formally established on purpose. Teams, groups, and clubs can perform community service in a variety of ways. Creativity was encouraged as grant recipients found a way to thank the community for its support. When an individual staff member requests funds, it is not expected that the individual personally find some way to give back by themselves from a physical work standpoint. They do not need to recruit a group of kids to perform community service because they got a speaker system for their classroom. A simple verbal or written thank you to sponsors or a personal invitation to donors to attend their play, concert, game, event or visit their classroom to see how their contributions were used is probably a sufficient way to acknowledge our sponsors.

Once my grant is approved, how do I get the money?

When a grant is approved, the person submitting the request is informed of the approval and they will contact a Board member or administrator to move forward from there. If a bill has been submitted, the item(s) can be ordered and the Foundation secretary can write a check to send with the order. The company can also bill the Warrenton Schools Foundation and the secretary will pay the bill once it is received. It is the responsibility of the person who submitted the request to make all necessary contacts to get the item(s) ordered and billed. It is also their responsibility to inform the Board once the item is received.

How much does the Foundation spend each year?

The Foundation will determine how much has been raised each fall from sponsorships and donations and then consider grant requests. The amount spent varies from year to year. Funded projects and purchases for each year can be viewed on the **Foundation** website.

A goal of the original Board was to have a reserve large enough to be of assistance if another situation like the one in 2004 arises, when coaching salaries were eliminated. Some of the raised funds will be placed in the Foundation to help it grow with hopes that it may become an on-going source of funds someday.

Can money be donated for a specific purpose?

The Foundation was created to make it easy for individuals and businesses to contribute directly to the kids in our community in a tax-deductible way. If it is the desire of the contributor to give the money to a specific team, club or organization or for a specific project, that option is available. When donations have been made accompanied by requests that they go to a specific program, the principals/coaches/advisors are informed that donations have been received and the donors wish is to have their money spent in that particular area. There is no formal separation of funds and, again, money is not deposited in school accounts.

The Board is charged with making responsible decisions regarding the use of money donated by the community for the kids. In the past, almost all of the donations have been made to the Foundation and the Board has carefully considered requests and spent the money where they thought it was of most benefit to the most kids. The Board is very transparent with where and how the money is spent. We feel confident that good decisions have been made thus far and that good decisions will continue to be made by the Board when trusted to make sure the money is used in ways that benefit our kids if donations are made directly to the Foundation.

Can I donate goods or services?

A donation of goods or services is called an **in-kind donation**. Many local businesses and individuals have made non-monetary contributions to and through the Foundation. As with charitable donations, monetary amounts will not be assigned to in-kind donations by the Foundation. It is up to the contributor to determine the value of such donations when claiming them on their taxes. If the donation merits, sponsorship recognition may be awarded for the contribution. Gold, silver, and bronze sponsorships may be assigned depending on the amount of, and nature of the donation of the goods or services.

In-kind donations are always welcome and very much appreciated. Examples of in-kind donations received in the past include; legal services, signs, concession items to be sold, catering services, beverages, food, supplies, and photographic and printing services to assist with hosting the banquet. Construction services were donated to install the football scoreboard and electrical services were donated to wire it. Many community members who cannot find ways to contribute to our schools monetarily do so by offering their labor, time, and/or goods and services from their business or family.

How can I help?

The Warrenton Schools Foundation and the Hall of Fame Committee both need interested individuals to help in a number of areas. Many people hesitate to volunteer to become involved with organizations for fear that they will be asked to do something they don't want to do. They are also hesitate because they "do not know what they are getting into" time-wise. When deciding to become involved with these organizations, the first thing to consider is how much time you have to give and what you would like to do. You have our assurance you will not be "roped into" doing something you don't like to do or don't have the time to do. All we ask is that you do what you say you will do.

Areas in which the people can volunteer with the Warrenton Schools Foundation

- Fundraising
- Public Relations
- Website Creation and Maintenance
- Production of Newsletters
- Investment of Funds

Areas in which people can volunteer with the Hall of Fame Committee

- Service on the Selection Committee
- Contacting and gathering information from Inductees
- Preparation of the slideshow for the banquet
- Setting up the lighting, sound system and video presentation equipment for the banquet
- Preparation and production of the program for the banquet
- Assisting with the banquet (planning, taking tickets, set-up, serving, decorating, making centerpieces, clean-up)

Where can I learn more about the Foundation?

More information about the Foundation and the Hall of Fame can be found on the Warrenton Schools website at "gowarrenton.com". Both the district site and the high school site have tabs for the **Foundation** and for the **Hall of Fame**. By clicking on these tabs you can find grant request forms, information about donors, Hall of Fame nomination forms, Hall of Fame members and a variety of other information about each organization.

Summary

Through the years many people have expressed concerns that they just didn't understand what the Foundation was and how everything with the Foundation worked. This Q & A was created to answer questions and hopefully clear up any misconceptions about its purpose and its workings. Both the Foundation and the Hall of Fame are positives for our schools and our community. With the communities support, we can continue to build a Foundation that provides financial resources for our kids and our schools; honor deserving people by inducting them into the Hall of Fame; and bring the community together at a banquet to recognize these people.

If you have any questions about any of the information presented in this article, or would like to help, please contact Doug Calvert at the High School (503) 861-3317.