

# Trumansburg Troubadour

## Staff Cuts

By Cassie Proctor

The budget has passed! On May 20 the new budget was officially voted on and adopted, and there will soon be some changes in the district. In the 2014-2015 Budget Brochure that was circulated through the community these numbers were given to show the cuts our district would most likely face from the new budget:

- (2) FTE Elementary Education
- (2) FTE Attrition
- (2) FTE School Monitors Abolishment
- (.5) FTE 7-12 Social Studies Abolishment
- (.5) FTE 7-12 Mathematics
- (1) FTE Attrition
- (.66) FTE Foreign Language Spanish
- (.66) FTE Abolishment
- (1) FTE 7-12 Science
- (1) FTE Abolishment
- (.5) FTE 7-12 English
- (.5) FTE Abolishment

To many, these numbers are just that, numbers. It is difficult to realize the full

impact of the changes to our staff without diving into the personal stories and reactions of the people who will be affected the most.

A.P World History teacher Mark Kimmerly has been with the district only two short years, and was actually cut to half time for this year. Sadly, with the new budget, Kimmerly's position will no longer be possible next year, and he will be leaving the district the upcoming year. Though he has only worked here for a short time, Kimmerly has fully immersed himself into the school. Not only was he a teacher, but was also the J.V baseball coach, a basketball coach, and a chaperone on different school trips, such as a trip to Costa Rica last spring break, and a trip to New York City toward the end of May. "I am extremely appreciative for the opportunity to have worked with lots of hard working, respect-



STUDENT EDITOR IN CHIEF: CASSIE PROCTOR

ful, and grateful students here in Trumansburg. The majority of the students I was able to interact with through teaching Social Studies and coaching basketball and baseball achieved amazing feats. I am also thankful for being able to build lifelong friendships with colleagues who have played an important role in my successes in the high school. Paul Pennock, Patrick Edwards, Larry Glanton, Matt McLennan, Mimi Duncan, Deanna Crance, Amy Kenney, April Leiter, Matt Taves and Jon Koeng all played a tremendous role in my career." Kimmerly was both an educator and a friend to many students, and we will all be saddened to see him leave.

Jane George, an English teacher at the high school, will also be affected by the reductions. George has worked

**continued on page 2**

STUDENT DESIGN TEAM:  
ASHLYN LIGHTBOWN  
ANNA REDMOND

### Special points of interest:

- ◆ Renovations
- ◆ Junior Reporters
- ◆ Club News
- ◆ Travel
- ◆ The Arts

### Inside this issue:

Staff Cuts	1, 2
The Capital Project	1
The Trouble With Testing	2
Junior Reporters	3
Gordon Bonnet: No Ordinary Science Teacher	3
Envirothon, Robotics and Feats of Clay	4
Ireland, Whales, and England	4
The Art Show Was a Success!	5
The APPR	5
Interview with The President of the TCSD Foundation	6
Tara Masters	6

## The Capital Project

By Anna Redmond



Anyone attending, visiting, or just residing close to Trumansburg Schools in the last few years probably noticed that some kind of construction was happening on one of the three schools. Work on a new high school track and football field is well underway. Together, all of these concurrent events are pieces of a larger project to enhance the dis-

trict's overall efficiency.

Back in early 2009, the Trumansburg Central School District began formulating a plan to improve the quality of the school's buildings and grounds. This undertaking would not officially commence until the Summer of 2010, but would come to be known as the Capital Project, scheduled to be completed within the following 5 years.

Ever since the idea was proposed there has been some

concern that the funds needed to pay for such a large operation could be put to better use maintaining district teaching positions. Unfortunately, the Capital Project has been almost entirely funded by a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) with a grant which specifically can only be used for this venture. NYSERDA is a statewide program whose mission is to increase energy efficiency and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, objectives that have been embraced throughout the Project.

Most of the capital project's goals have already come to completion and with any luck the whole matter is schedule to wrap up before the end of 2015. ♦

**Trumansburg Troubadour welcomes your feedback!**

**Please contact Adviser Jane George with comments and story leads.**

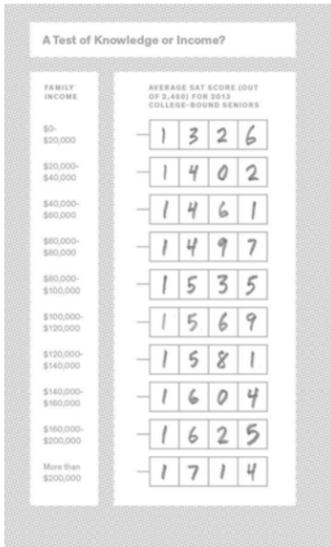
[jgeorge@tburg.k12.ny.us](mailto:jgeorge@tburg.k12.ny.us)



TCSD  
FOUNDATION

## The Trouble With Testing

By Baylee Spackman



The education world has been under much scrutiny lately. With the implementation of common core, and the accompanying revised regents, the new SAT test, and the updated format of many AP Ex-

ams, a lot is changing. Revisions to the SAT test come from the test's producer, The College Board, and began in 2012 when the company hired a new president, David Coleman. When he took control of the company, he was well prepared with an array of complaints from people all over the education world. Students, teachers, parents, and college admissions officers had been quite vocal with their complaints. Students and parents alike despised the test because of the anxiety they produced, and they felt as though the SAT was the only thing stopping them from attending the college of their dreams. Teachers hated the test because they felt like the test wasn't a good representation of what students were being taught. Plus, the mean

SAT scores of high schools were being released by the state education departments which then reflected badly on the teachers, when in reality the content of the SAT was material was irrelevant to high school curriculum.

In 1926, the test was originally created as a tool to measure innate intelligence, and was loosely modeled upon the World War I IQ test. Shortly after its conception, a man named Stanley Kaplan created a program promising higher SAT results, and thus began the 4.5 billion dollar per year industry that works solely with high school students who are preparing for their SAT test. Kaplan's growing popularity, however, had a socio-economic impact on test results. Affluent students had an advantage because their families had the money to afford the expensive test-prep courses and tutors to ensure a satisfactory result. The children who came from wealthier families were displeased because they felt as though their achievements were viewed as tainted because they "bought" their good score. And middle class students were upset because they didn't have access to the same preparation as the students from affluent families. Students with less means, often minority students, were excluded from the test-prep process completely. In an op-ed piece in the San Francisco Chronicle, Mitch Kapor

suggested that colleges require a mandatory disclosure of students of each and every form of purchased help, in an effort to make the process more fair. Khan Academy, an online teaching website which offers many online educational videos has offered free online SAT preparation classes in an attempt to level the playing field.

David Coleman saw these problems, and wanted to create change. "Unequal test-prep access is a problem," he said in a statement to Todd Balf. "It is a problem that it's opaque to students what's on the exam. It is a problem that the scoring is too complex. I knew some of the science behind the SAT and actually admired a lot of it. On the other hand, I felt that something really had to happen, because what had grown up around it, the way in which the test evolved from a vehicle to encourage meritocracy to a reinforcement of privilege in American education, threatened everything."

The new test will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2016. According to the College Board website, there will be eight key changes; problems grounded on real-world concepts, analysis in science and social studies, no penalty for wrong answers, founding documents and great global conversation, focusing on more important and relevant math concepts, analyzing a source in an essay, relevant words in context, and a command of evidence. The College Board also plans on making an effort to increase accessibility to higher education by waiving college application fees, promoting excellent, relevant class work and support for students who are behind, and providing high-quality test preparation to the world, free of charge. ♦

## Staff Cuts (continued from page 1)

By Cassie Proctor



High School staff family photo 2013-2014

at Trumansburg for 5 years, and was a student teacher here before that. She has taught 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, multiple 12<sup>th</sup> grade electives as well as AP English. Along with teaching English, George is also the adviser of Femtastic!, Trumansburg's gender equality group, and the adviser of the previous school newspaper as well as the current one. "I live in Trumansburg and my son attends school here. I have admired Trumansburg School since I was a teenager. From the moment I decided that I wanted to be a teacher my dream

was to work in this district. It has been 5 incredible years of hard work, interaction with the wonderful minds of our youth and the reward at the end of every year when the time comes for bitter-sweet goodbyes as we send our seniors off to their intended destinations." Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds, George's position is being cut to half time. As of now, she does not yet know if she will stay at Trumansburg for the coming year. George is a teacher, a confident, a mentor, and a personal friend to countless students through her year in the district and if she does decide to move on next year, she will be sorely missed.

With the new budget, it was suspect-

ed that the district would lose a few more teachers, including earth science teacher Ryan Radley and special aid teacher Mike Rocco. With the loss of Radley, the high school would have been without an earth science teacher so Nadine Saleb, middle school earth science and physical science teacher, would have come over to the high school and Sue Stein, a biology, zoology, and anatomy teacher, would have moved to the middle school. Fortunately, funds were shuffled and these changes are no longer required. When asked how he felt about this, Radley responded, "I was ecstatic to find out my position was saved. Ultimately, I'm disappointed that some of my colleagues will not be able to be here with me next year. We're losing some passionate teachers, coaches, advisers, and pillars in the high school community here at Charles O. Dickerson. I encourage the students here to talk to their parents and along with them call and write to their local congressmen and repeal the Gap Elimination Act. If this was not in place, our district would most likely be able to secure some of the teachers our district is losing. It really is a loss for our district". The Gap Elimination Act, or the GEA, is responsible for the loss of over \$7 million in state aid since 2010. The GEA is incredibly harmful to our district and should be repealed before it allows for any more damage. To prevent future loss in aid and the loss of staff that will inevitably come with it, please do your part and send a letter to your legislator. ♦



TCSD  
FOUNDATION

*Junior Reporters: Articles from the Elementary and Middle Schools*

### Interview With the Superintendent Evelyn Van Ness

This past Friday I had the pleasure of interviewing our school superintendent Mr. McGuire. I asked him various questions that have to do with Trumansburg and the school district.

Q: What do you feel have been your major accomplishments?

A: I feel my major accomplishments have been in the areas of working with our Board of Education and Leadership Team to present a budget that maintains educational programs and extra-curricular opportunities for our students, supports our staff in their work with students, and takes care of

our buildings and grounds. There was also a period of time when our district experienced leadership and staff changes and I'm hoping we'll have stable leadership moving forward.

Q: What challenges have you had at Trumansburg schools?

A: The main challenges are the budget and finding the resources to support our teachers in bringing the Common Core standards into our classrooms.

Q: What are your major goals for Trumansburg schools?

A: My major goals are to maintain the best of what our school district now offers our students while looking to make sure our students are being educated to prepare them for whatever they choose as they graduate from our school district.

Q: How does Trumansburg compare to other schools you have worked at?

A: Trumansburg definitely provides a lot of resources to our students. Our curriculum, our extra-curricular sports, and the arts offer something for every student to be involved in and there many other ways we support our students. Our community support is definitely a strength!

Q: What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?

A: Right now, my wife, Char, and I love

walking through the gorges in the area with our two dogs, Katie and Bear. We love how green it is and it is so beautiful here!

Q: Where are you originally from?

A: I was born in Minnesota but spent my childhood through high school years in central Montana. I went to college in Spokane, Washington and have worked mostly Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho for most of my career.

Q: What do you miss from your old town?

A: We do miss the mountains and the pine trees from the Western United States but New York is really beautiful and there's a lot to do here so we are definitely happy we made the move!

Q: What is your favorite thing about living in Trumansburg?

A: We love the variety of birds, how green everything is in the spring and summer, the variety of trees and flowers, and the many, many places we can walk and explore. We also are impressed about how much Trumansburg cares for and supports our young people and finally, Trumansburg has been very welcoming to us.

I really enjoyed interviewing our spectacular superintendent, who gave me great insight about his thoughts on Trumansburg and the school district. ♦

*“My major goals are to maintain the best of what our school district now offers our students while looking to make sure our students are being educated.”*



### My Trip to the Past

By Blythe Van Ness, 4<sup>th</sup> grade



My fourth grade class took a field trip to Eight Square School House. We had a great time learning what school was like in 1892. In math we did the problems on our own little chalkboards instead of paper. Later in the day we practiced penmanship. We used a pen that had to be dipped in a bottle of ink to write with. At recess we played games that kids would have played in the 1800's. We played crack the whip, bean bag toss, and walked on stilts. What made Eight Square School House so fun was we got to learn what it was like to be a kid in 1892 and dress like one as well.

Thank you TCSD foundation helping make this field trip happen. ♦

### Trip To The Cornell Plantations

By Ella Koski, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade



Hi, I'm Ella Koski, and I am in 3rd grade. I took a field trip to the Cornell Plantations. I am going to tell you about my experience.

First, we were separated into groups: red group, green group, and yellow group. Then we set off on the trail. We were all assigned a flower to learn about it. I was assigned Virginia Bluebells. We traveled on the trail and stopped at a flower to observe it. When the group stopped at a child's assigned flower, the child told the group one fact and asked one field trip question.

After we finished exploring the garden, we had a picnic lunch. Then we did another activity. In this activity, there are letters written on each bench in the garden. You write down the letter that is written on the bench. There is a map you follow to give you hints. Then you return to the teachers and check if you have the correct answer.

Finally, we went to the busses and returned to school. I had lots of fun, learning about nature! ♦

(This field trip was sponsored by TKED, an organization that offers field trips to grades Pre-kindergarten to 6th grade. TKED stands for Trumansburg Kids Explore and Discover. Visit [tcsdfoundation.org](http://tcsdfoundation.org) to learn more about TKED.)

### Gordon Bonnet: No Ordinary Science Teacher

By Cole Vermillera



Gordon Bonnet: teacher, writer, and explorer extraordinaire.

Gordon Bonnet is one of the most well respected teachers in the Trumansburg school district.

Gordon Bonnet was born in Quantico, Virginia on October 26, 1960 but shortly after moved to southern Louisiana.

Gordon had no siblings growing up; an older sister died in infancy. Gordon went to college at the University of Louisiana, and attended graduate school at the University of Washington, finishing his Master's at Empire State College in Saratoga Springs, New York. After college he relocated to Seattle to begin teaching. Gordon then moved to New York and joined the faculty at Trumansburg High School. Today he teaches Biology, AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, Critical Thinking and Brain and Senses. He

also offers Latin and Ancient Greek as independent studies. He plans to retire in 9 years and continue his career as a writer while traveling on the side. Gordon Bonnet lived a very normal childhood. He grew up in a strict French Catholic family. His father was in the military, which led to his family leaving Virginia when he was only six months old. Growing up, he spoke both French and English, but later he learned a smattering of different languages, including Greek, Latin, and Norwegian.

One of the people that inspired Gordon was his high school Biology teacher. At that time he wanted to work for the Park Service; the thought of being a teacher had never even crossed his mind. He described his biology teacher as fun, insightful, and witty at the same time. His respect for his mentor is evident in the smile on his face when describing her. Having attended many of his classes it's obvious that Gordon possesses some of the same qualities as his former teacher.

After choosing education as his profession, his first job presented unexpected challenges. Some of these obstacles included gang violence, and budget problems. After leaving Seattle, Gordon sent out applications all over the country. Fortunately for our community, Trumansburg was the first to respond. He moved to Tompkins County and started

working in 1992.

When asked why Bonnet enjoyed science he responded with "Because it explains the Universe". Growing up in a catholic family Gordon went to church but as he got older he became an atheist. Though he is not religious, he has no problem with people who are religious, and he has no opinion about an afterlife. But as an author of a popular blog he has many opinions regarding other subjects. Very recently Bonnet has reached over a million hits on his blog (Skeptophilla), self-published books, and got his diving license.

Bonnet hopes to retire at the age of 62 and pursue his career as a writer and travel along the way.

Gordon Bonnet has lived a very interesting life and has had great achievements throughout. As one of Mr. Bonnet students, I find that his curiosity and quest for knowledge makes his class is stimulating and inspiring. Every person who walks into Bonnet's class should be prepared for the wave of knowledge that will sweep them toward new view of the world. In the same way that Bonnet's biology teacher inspired him, he in turn inspires his students every day. ♦



TCSD  
FOUNDATION

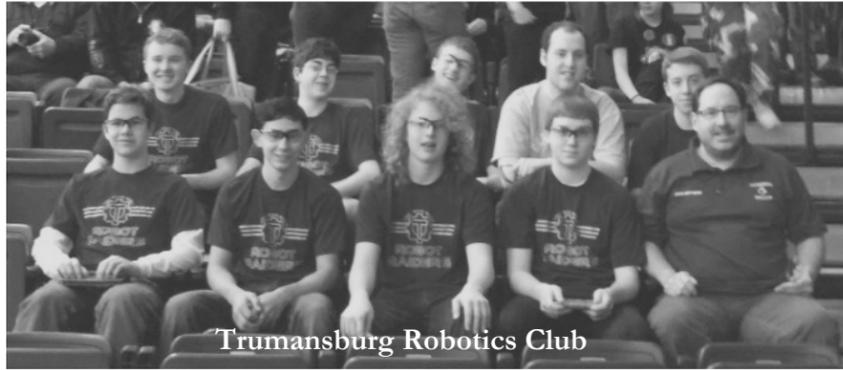


## Envirothon, Robotics and Feats of Clay

By Renee Morris

At Trumansburg High School we have an exceptional science department and each and every student is encouraged to study and take interest in Science. Sue Stein, the primary biology teacher for Trumansburg, is also the advisor for the Trumansburg Envirothon team. The team consisting of 3 seniors and 2 juniors all participated in the Regional Competition which took place in Owego, NY where they competed against other teams in the Region on their knowledge of several different topics all associated with the Environment. The team did well but the results were inconclusive as part of the assessment was misplaced.

This year is the first year that Trumansburg High School has offered a Robotics Club to students who are interested. Their meetings took place after school for the most part and each and every member of the team, Robot Raiders, put in extensive hours of their free time into creating the robot. Sylvan Donenfeld and Kevin Griswold, two members of the team, explained to me a little bit about the process of creating the robot. The team had to create many different designs, first using paper and pencil, then they took that design and put it into a Computer Aided Design program which then gave them a better idea as how to create a



Trumansburg Robotics Club

wooden prototype of the robot. From there the team went on to create the actual robot using a drive train they built, various different types of motors, air tanks, electrical wirings and the frame was made of aluminum. The team was able to create this robot through sponsorships of local companies such as TCSD Foundation, Millsbaugh Brothers and Ehrhart Energy. The team will use the frame and base again next year and will reassemble the components they currently have in order to reduce the cost of build next year. Jim Perkins, an advisor of the team, plans on continuing the robotic team again next year because he thinks that it is a great experience for the kids and believes that this is one of the most important clubs Trumansburg has to offer. The team was challenged during the course of the making but they endured through it, "It's a hard process to go through. It really tests a person's resolve, but it is 'difficult fun'. It is extremely rewarding when the robot performs well, and ours performed so well." Mr. Perkins said. At the regional competition in Rochester hosted at the Rochester Institute of Technology, the Robot Raiders excelled in their matches and placed 14th out of 49 overall. The winning team gave the Robot Raiders an award for being the "best rookie team". Mr. Perkins had a great robotics season with the team and believes that everyone on the team will come back next year to participate again.

Trumansburg School also has some wonderful art programs to offer such as Studio Art, advanced placement Art, and even Ceramics. In Ceramics during the first semester students learn how to hand build various kinds of pieces and in the second semester students learn how to throw clay on a wheel to create pieces that are completely symmetrical. The students then volunteer to participate in a competition called Feats of Clay at Onondaga Community College. Feats of Clay is a team competition where 4 different groups of 4 people compete in various events such as the "No Hands" event where the goal is for 4 people to create a large bowl without use of their hands. At the Feats of Clay event, there was also a showcase of student ceramic works where 4-5 students from Trumansburg submitted pieces for the show. This event is extremely messy but everyone had a blast and no one minded being covered in clay! ♦



T-Burg participants on their way to the event!



## Ireland, Wales, and England

By Ashlyn Lightbown



Over Spring Break 2014, the South Seneca Yorkers Club provided me with an experience I will not soon forget. From April 12 to the 20, I traveled to Ireland, Wales, and England with 22 other students, six of them from Trumansburg High School. Ireland was

breathhtakingly beautiful with its enchanting, vibrantly green scenery, and Dublin is so charming that you can't help but want to walk its historic streets over and over again until the end of time. Snowdonia National Park in Wales looked like it was taken from a postcard photo with the reflection of the dense forests on the surface of the shimmering lakes. The small villages were quaint with their thatched cottages and abundant spring flora. The people we spoke to were so helpful, kind, and friendly that I don't remember meeting a single person in Wales that wasn't absolutely lovely. England was filled with timeless elegance, as one might expect. Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Shakespeare's birthplace were carefully maintained and looked after. The tulips were in full bloom at the cottage in lively shades of yellow, red, and orange. London emanated class from

the centuries-old architecture, the endless shopping streets, and the bustling crowd of fashionable people. All of these sights and experiences were made possible by this club, and I can't begin to relay just how grateful I am to them for giving me this opportunity.

The Yorkers Club offers a trip to a foreign country every year for a set price in order to expand a number of students' horizons through cultural immersion. This year our trip was planned through EF Educational Tours, a company that presents these opportunities to high school students all over the globe. Our advisors were Kelly Paonessa and Karen Sanchez, two wonderful people who really cared about accompanying us on a safe, enjoyable trip. The club required us to write a journal entry every night in order to record memories, and we are putting together a video project as well. The 2015 Spring Break Trip is to Spain, and the current price to sign up for it is

\$2633. If you are interested in going, visit the Yorker's Club page on the South Seneca School District's website for details on how to sign up, or contact Karen Sanchez at [ksanchez@southseneca.org](mailto:ksanchez@southseneca.org). My trip to Ireland, Wales, and England caused me to experience a part of a whole new continent and it's people, leaving me with the desire to explore many other countries in Europe after a truly amazing first overseas journey. The Yorkers Club is a great program that gave me a chance to see this part of the world and become a part of another culture, and for that, I thank them all of my heart. ♦



TCS D  
FOUNDATION

## The Art Show Was a Success!

By Maria Pomacusi



On March 27th the Youth Art Month culminated with the Third Annual Art Show. This year the Art Show included an Art Auction to raise funds for the TCSD Foundation and support Youth Art Month. This event took place in the High School Cafeteria and those who attended it could ap-

preciate the artwork done by the students from our school district during Youth Art Month, March, the month in which art is celebrated in thousands of schools around the country. According to the TCSD Foundation website, the Youth Art Month Auction is one of the most successful events they have had. President of the Foundation, Tara Masters said "the collaboration between the three buildings, meaning the Elementary, Middle and High School, and the art teachers are really unified and have had a spectacular showing of artists coming in and educating the children above and beyond what they are ready putting for, which is fantastic. And so, the fact that they are collaborating together and really putting a focus on art and putting energy towards it, engaging kids who might not otherwise feel comfortable with art feel comfortable." The auction was well attended. "I would say there were pretty close to 175 people there." indicated High

School Art teacher, Mrs. Pennock.

Different types of art works were displayed, including weaving projects done by Elementary School students, paper making projects and paper clay sculptures done by those from Middle School, and crafted paper clay sculptures created by High School students. "The theme was Youth Arts Month with a sub theme 'A Hand In Art', like everyone participating in art, so you put your hand in art" stated Mrs. Pennock, when asked about the theme of the Art Show.

Some of the students agreed to donate their art pieces for charity, and a number of them in fact worked for weeks pieces specifically for the auction. The auction prices ranged from \$5 to close to \$90, according to the High School art teacher, and the total amount raised from the auction was nearly \$700. This money will help support future efforts of the Foundation throughout our school district, including teacher grants this June. ♦

“

**According to the TCSD Foundation website, the Youth Art Month Auction is one of the most successful events they have had.”**



## The APPR

By Gage Step



The APPR, or Annual Professional Performance Review, is a program designed to assess teachers on how well they do their job. While there are both benefits and drawbacks to this, we asked a couple of the people whom it affects, along with the opinion of our principal. When asked how he felt about the APPR, Mr. Koeng said that it has "changed the way teacher supervision works, but opens up conversations with teachers, he believes that it is both good and bad. Along with Mr. Koeng, we also asked Mr. Bonnet,

who said that he feels that the APPR is "completely unfair" Another teacher that we asked was Ms. George. When asked how she feels on the matter, she said "the APPR serves a purpose; the current system is flawed and allows for error in evaluating educators." Another question she was posed with was how is she affected by it? To which she replied: "APPR has added a lot of stress and additional paperwork for teachers, students and administrators. Evaluation is necessary at all levels and reflection is an important tool for progress." The final question she was asked was: how long do you think it will be around? She said: "In my experience, education is in constant flux. In the five years that I have taught at Trumansburg I have seen many changes, some of them effective, some of them not. A system of evaluation will always be part of education, APPR in its current state is sure to change." The staff who were asked these

questions seem to have mixed feelings about it; but hopefully the APPR will be improved upon throughout the years. ♦

*Taken from a letter to Superintendent Michael McGuire and the Trumansburg School District from Commissioner of Education John King:*

*"Please be advised that, pursuant to Education Law §3012-c, the Department will be analyzing data supplied by districts, BOCES, and/or schools and may order a corrective action plan if there are unacceptably low correlation results between the student growth subcomponent and any other measures of teacher and principal effectiveness and/or if the teacher or principal scores or ratings show little differentiation across educators and/or the lack of differentiation is not justified by equivalently consistent student achievement results."*

“

**the APPR serves a purpose; the current system is flawed and allows for error in evaluating educators.”**

## Tara Masters

TCSD Foundation



The TCSD Foundation was organized in 2006 to enhance the education of students in our school district. Tara Masters has been involved in every aspect of its organization and operation, including proposing and leading development of our Trumansburg Kids Explore & Discover Program. 2014 was the 5th year of this important program that takes each Pre-K - 6th grade student to a Discovery Trail site for a curriculum based learning experience. Tara has been our President for 5 years, and a tireless leader throughout her tenure. Tara's term as President and Director ends in June. The Foundation Board and volunteers would like to thank Tara for her leadership and efforts over the past 8 years, which have been essential to achievement of our mission. Thank you, Tara! ♦



**TCSD**  
FOUNDATION

---

**On the Web!**
<http://tcsdfoundation.org>


---



**TCSDF Foundation, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 486  
 Trumansburg, NY  
 14886-0486

**TCSDF Foundation President tells us about the Foundation's labor.**

By Maria Pomacusi

The TCSDF Foundation (TCSDF) is perhaps not known by many people in the community, however, it has had a very positive impact in our students since it was founded, in 2006. TCSDF is a non-profit organization that financially supports educational programs in our school district, based on its mission: to improve educational opportunities for students of pre-k through 12th grade and promote personal growth and encourage excellence. TCSDF raises funds and awards grants to different projects and programs that are outside the school budget. As a matter of fact, the newsletter you are reading at the moment is made possible thanks to their support. But TCSDF helps our community in numerous other ways. Tara Masters, TCSDF president tells us all about it.

**Interviewer:** What was the initiative to found this organization?

**Tara Masters:** The Foundation began in 2006 and it was originated out of a group of community members, parents, grandparents and business members that recognized that the nearer future was likely to be an economic climate that was going to put a lot of strain on the resources available for the school district, in particular for any curriculum beyond the basics that is expected of schools. A lot of the extracurricular or enhancements would be really affected by what was going to be happening, and so, a group of folks got together and formed the foundation because we had a singular feeling that we wanted to keep Trumansburg as high ranking as it has been in the past; and (regarding) the future generations coming forward, (we wanted) to make sure that there were activities and learning engagements that are available that will allow students to really explore beyond the standing parameters.

**I:** What made its foundation possible?

**TM:** A lot of energy, a lot of positive communication, a lot of support by both the community members in our area as well as the school district being open to having a group of community members coming in and proposing opportunities for programs, or asking for applications for teacher grants and so forth, and really, the teachers getting right on board and saying "absolutely" and you know, "here's an idea I have" and just going with it, it's phenomenal.

**I:** In what way does and has the TCSDF Foundation supported students and educational programs?

**TM:** We really have supported the students through the teachers and through community educators, including the library, conservatory, and other educators that are not for profit organizations in the community. It is really through them that the Foundation has been able to support the education of students, so it is the engagement and enthusiasm of educators that came up and said "I have an idea, I want to teach Canadian dance" or "I want to teach kids about different styles of art that wouldn't be available during the school day" or "I want to teach the kids about science", and just really the engagement of the teachers in our community.

**I:** How does the TCSDF obtain money to grant?

**TM:** We have a very generous community. We do ask for donations from businesses and individuals. We have just begun doing some fund raising through a platform that is web-based, and so we can put out a project, for example,

**Newspaper Citations**

"Mission Statement." *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Mar. 2014.

Simon, Stephanie. "POLITICO." *POLITICO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Mar. 2014.

Strauss, Valerie. "The Coming Common Core Meltdown." *The Washington Post*. N.p., n.d. Web.

Strauss, Valerie. "NY Teachers Union Pulls Its Support from Common Core, Urges Removal of State Ed Chief." *The Washington Post*. N.p., n.d. Web.

the Food Is Elementary program and ask for donations, for a specific program; but generally we have had a really great response from individuals.

**I:** So it all comes from donations?

**TM:** It's all donations. We have written some grants for the Trumansburg Kids Explore and Discover Program (TKED), which takes every single kid pre-k through 6th grade to Discovery Trail Sites. Funding to make this possible has come from us writing grants.

**I:** Which projects are in process or are part of future plans?

**TM:** On-going is the TKED program, so that is one section of programming that started about five years ago and has continued very consistently, thanks to our fundraising team, the community, and their efforts to write these grants; together with the Discovery Trail, being able to put these trips out. All the kids get to go to one Discovery Trail site for a curriculum based visit. The other programs that are on-going right now are a combination of grants that we are giving out in the fall, after the spring grant cycle. One of these grants was for the Robotics Club, and I know that they were very successful in getting the materials and the team together for the competition in the winter. Right now we are actually reviewing grants for the current cycle. During the month of May we are receiving grant applications that teachers are now writing so we are kind of in an in-between phase at this particular moment. We are always seeking more money from our community to be able to help support the teachers' ideas.

**I:** Have you been meeting your mission as a Foundation?

**TM:** We definitely have been meeting our mission and it has been through the tremendous turnout of board members over the last seven, or eight years that we've been running as an organization. It is just a really positive energy and enthusiastic group of people that have come through and worked really, really hard to make sure that the mission is met and cared for.

**I:** This year you are innovating with Food Is Elementary, what is the objective of this project?

**TM:** The objective of Food Is Elementary is to really reach out to every single child and have them understand where their food comes from, how food is grown natu-

rally, and as organically as possible, and then how easy it is for children to be able to do that themselves and grow their own food and then with that food prepare their own meals, and so on, many of the factors of this education curriculum that Antonia Demas has created. She is very committed to making sure the kids understand where their food comes from and that they become more comfortable when preparing their own foods, which is tremendous because regardless of parent interaction, the kids can always feel confident that they can create a healthy meal on their own plate. It is very cool.

**I:** Does the Foundation receive support from the community?

**TM:** Yes, I can't say enough how generous this community is. It really has been phenomenal.

**I:** How can someone help the Foundation?

**TM:** We have a variety of different opportunities. If you have resources to donate, we appreciate that. We do offer the opportunity that if you have a specific area that you would like to donate to, for example, if you are very committed to science, or to music, or whatever your interest as a donor is, we do offer pass-through grants or pass-through donations so you can specifically buy books for the library, you can say "Here's my donation, specifically for the high school library", or "I want to fund a trip for the music department to go to New York City", so we can do pass-through grants. Any of that kind of support is welcome. We do have opportunities throughout the year for volunteers for the grant panels, where we are reviewing the teachers' grant applications, and then there are board member and community member opportunities for people who feel that they want to take on a little bit of a leadership role.

**I:** What message would you like to send the Tburg community as the TCSDF Foundation President?

**TM:** Just thank you so much for all of the support that the community has given. Thank you to the teachers, for all of your energy and engagement in this turbulent time education, and for the community effort that rallies behind the teachers. ♦

**For General Questions**

[contact@tcsdfoundation.org](mailto:contact@tcsdfoundation.org)

**To Give or Donate**

[give@tcsdfoundation.org](mailto:give@tcsdfoundation.org)

**To Volunteer**

[volunteer@tcsdfoundation.org](mailto:volunteer@tcsdfoundation.org)