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NORTHJERSEY.COM NEWS

RHS phone-a-thon gets a challenge grant

WEDNESDAY MARCH 23, 2011, 4:04 PM
THE RIDGEWOOD NEWS

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The [Ridgewood Education Foundation \(REF\)](#) has offered a \$6,000 challenge grant to [Ridgewood High School \(RHS\)](#) parents and alumni who will hold a phone-a-thon next week, seeking donations to help RHS administrators purchase much-needed items.

The REF will match the first \$6,000 raised in the phone-a-thon. Foundation board members "felt it was important to support this effort to address important and immediate academic needs at RHS," said foundation President Elizabeth Gordon.

In a letter sent last week to parents, school and RHS Home-School Association (HSA) officials noted that "three years of significant cuts to the budget have brought us to a critical point in [Ridgewood High School's](#) future. Currently, the school is operating from reduced resources and is experiencing difficulty in maintaining and improving its academic programs, which have earned the school its well-deserved reputation as one of the top-flight public high schools in New Jersey."

According to RHS administrators, the most urgent needs include new microscopes, large-screen projectors, student laptops and portable recharging cabinets with printers, interactive white boards (smart boards), and replacement laptops for staff.



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The phone-a-thon will be held on Tuesday, March 29, Wednesday, March 30 and Thursday, March 31. At this month's home-school meeting, HSA President Arlene Sarappo noted that parents are very involved in school fund-raisers during elementary and middle school years, but high school fund-raisers tend to focus on specific sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities.

A mail appeal last year resulted in donations from just 9 percent of RHS families, she said. HSA dues collected this year - totaling about \$25,000 - helped fund programs and classroom needs including an anti-bullying assembly; viewings of the Race To Nowhere documentary; the College Speaker Series; the RHS literary magazine; a support system for staging platforms in the Campus Center, and more.

The high school has 1,100 families "united in our desire to maintain Ridgewood High School's long-standing tradition of excellence," according to the letter, which was signed by Sarappo, development chair Tina Telesco and RHS Principal Jack Lorenz. "Every gift, regardless of its size, will move us toward our goal and make a real difference for today's students and those yet to come."

Families that make a donation before the phone-a-thon will not receive a phone call, Sarappo said. Donations are tax-deductible and can be made three ways: a check (payable to RHS HSA) mailed to Maryam Alsop, 328 Manchester Road; credit card payment made online at rhhsa.org; or via a pledge made through the phone-a-thon appeal.

-Joyce Venezia Suss

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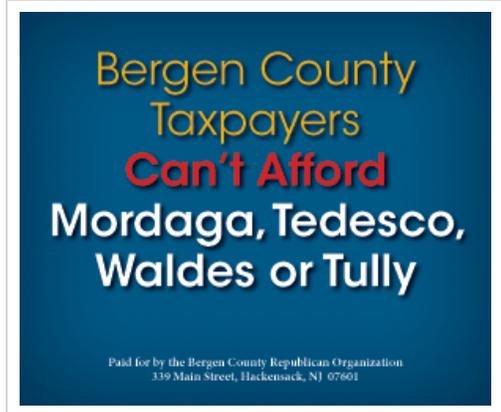
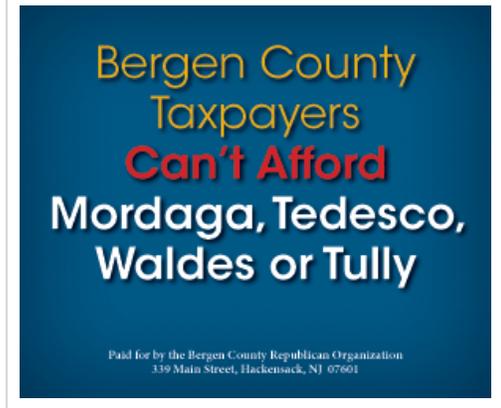
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