

Shreveport Times

Caddo school system recognizes donors to math, science and technology programs

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Donors

Caddo Parish School Board members recognized the following donors:

AEP/SWEPCO, Biomedical Research Foundation, Charles T. Beaird Foundation, Emma Boyd, Capital One Bank, Committee of One Hundred, Community Foundation of Shreveport-Bossier, Billie Corley, Stella Chapman, General Motors Shreveport Assembly Plant, Bobbie Hicks, George Khoury, Magale Foundation, Patricia Peyton, Poindexter Foundation, Jon Chumley, Rotary Club of Southwest Shreveport, Virginia Shehee and Dorothy Tatum.

By Melody Brumble
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Caddo Parish schools have come a long way with computers since Shreveport entrepreneur Jon Chumley sat in a classroom.

"There was nothing with technology," said Chumley, 30, who owns a local RESCUECOM franchise. The company provides computer services and repairs primarily to small businesses. He attended University Elementary School and First Baptist Church School before heading to high school in Atlanta, Ga. He returned to Shreveport to attend LSUS.

Chumley, a Shreveport native, was among 19 individuals, companies or organizations recognized by the Caddo Parish School Board for donations totaling \$124,000 to math, science and technology programs at west and southwest Shreveport schools in the past year.

Most of the money went for equipment like computers and projection systems, including equipment for a new biotechnology magnet program at Southwood. Some is earmarked for robotics teams who will travel to regional and national competitions. Five programs operating in middle and high schools benefitted from the donations.

The largest donations, totaling \$40,000, allowed Southwood High School to double the capacity of its Environmental and Spatial Technology lab. Up to 320 students a year will participate in the program each year. Dubbed EAST, the lab focuses on teaching computer and thinking skills through community service projects. Last year, students designed a football stadium for Southwood using architectural and engineering software. They've also created public service announcements and worked on a school Web site.

Chumley said he got involved with the technology programs after hearing about them from a Southwood High assistant principal. Besides donating equipment, Chumley is talking up the programs to clients who also could help out.

"I think the EAST program has more to do with what my business is," Chumley said.

He also wants to see the program offer hands-on training in hardware applications, like wiring, for students who may decide to work right after high school.

"That stuff is always in demand," Chumley said. "They would have hands-on skills."

Caddo school system employee Jeff Roberts praised Chumley's enthusiasm. Roberts is the math, science and technology program coordinator.

"We need a lot of the start-up businesses, which is what Jon is," Roberts said.

Without the extra money, the district wouldn't be able to fully implement the speciality programs, he said.

The math, science and technology program's next major fund-raising effort is finding money for sophisticated microbiology and cell biology labs at Southwood comparable to those at LSU Health Sciences Center. Roberts estimated equipment will cost more than \$300,000.

"Those are second- and third-year classes for the biotechnology magnet students," Roberts said. "We've applied to some foundations for some of the funding. Once we have that secured, that will wrap up most of that program's projects."