

## Williamsville Education Foundation

# Grant will fund studying of guitar

by JESSICA L. FINCH  
Associate Editor

For the first time in Williamsville School District history a unit will be dedicated to studying the guitar — thanks to a grant from the Williamsville Education Foundation.

“I am very thankful to the Williamsville Education Foundation. This is just wonderful,” said Sara Abrahamian, a music teacher at Transit Middle School. Also assisting in applying for the grant was fellow music teacher Catherine Sutherland.

Abrahamian’s application for a mini-grant from the foundation was accepted and will be used to purchase 12 guitars at a cost of \$480. The grant was one of six awarded this year.

She said the guitars will be available for the entire district.

“Guitars are a popular social instrument. This is a nice way to get everyone interested in class,” she said, adding that it can be a struggle to get seventh-grade boys interested in music class.

There is already excitement about the unit, and the guitars haven’t been purchased yet. In the past, Abrahamian has invited students to bring in their guitars from home to play in class.

“Rather than just sitting and learning the history, they will learn through playing the pieces,” she said about composers.

In her grant application, Abrahamian wrote, “Learning to play the guitar is an excellent way to teach students music notation, give performing opportunities to those who would not normally have a chance to perform, and give the students a skill that they can take with them beyond the school walls.”

Abrahamian said the first unit will begin in January, as soon as the guitars arrive, and will be initially used for fifth- and seventh-grade general music classes.

“Performing on instruments, reading and writing music, and listening to performances of music are all integral components of the Williamsville standards for music,” Abrahamian wrote in

her application. “The use of the guitar in the music classroom will be a hands-on, real world way to teach these important concepts and skills.”

Nearly \$2,500 in grants were awarded to support six projects at five different Williamsville schools. Foundation President Trey Measer said the money will be used to fund worthwhile items or programs that enhance the learning environment for Williamsville students but may not be attainable otherwise due to budget constraints.

“The school’s budget can’t buy everything for everybody,” Measer said. “This is where the founda-

**“The use of the guitar in the music classroom will be a hands-on, real world way to teach these important concepts and skills.”**

— Sara Abrahamian



Sara Abrahamian, a music teacher at Transit Middle School, instructs Joey Coppola, seventh grade, on the guitar, as Emily Faltisco, seventh grade, observes on Dec. 14 at the school. Abrahamian

recently learned she is being awarded a grant from the Williamsville Education Foundation for additional guitars for her classes.

Photo by John Rusac

tion comes in, to buy extra tools to help educate our kids and support the efforts of teachers.”

This is the sixth year the foundation has awarded mini-grants, which are items or activities that cost about \$500.

This year, the foundation received 25 grant requests from teachers representing nine different Williamsville schools. Recipients of the 2006-07 Williamsville Education Foundation mini-grants are:

- East High School — Cameron Townsend, health teacher, \$221.76 to purchase two electron-

ic blood pressure monitors.

- Heim Elementary School — Elizabeth Fidel, kindergarten team leader, \$237.22 to purchase awards in support of the kindergarten “Kids for Character” program.

- Heim Middle School — Michael Russo, computer teacher, \$697.90 to purchase a two-channel wireless microphone system.

- Maple East/Heim Elementary English language Arts — Jennifer DeWind, K-4 ESL teacher, \$357 to purchase two sets of Rookie Read-About Multicultural Holidays books.

- Maple East Elementary — Renée Tabone, second-grade teacher/technology facilitator, four digital cameras, valued at \$545.79, donated by the Eastman Kodak Company to support the formation of a digital photography club.

Since the program began in 2001, the foundation has provided 19 mini-grants totaling nearly \$8,000. For more information about the Williamsville Education Foundation, Inc., contact Measer at 204-4900 or visit [www.wedf.org](http://www.wedf.org).

e-mail: [jfinch@beenews.com](mailto:jfinch@beenews.com)



**WONDERLAND** — Natalie Bucholtz, 7, and Sydney, 10, help arrange their grandfather’s holiday miniature display in his Arend Avenue home. Ed and Pat Bucholtz, not pictured, said the scenery is more than 60 years old and features a farm, park and village.

Photo by John Rusac

## Public hearing raises question: are village residents anti-development?

by JILL SCHMELZER  
Reporter

The Village Board held a public hearing Monday to discuss rezoning the Stereo Advantage warehouse building at 56 S. Union Road from residential to commercial.

The purpose of the rezoning would be so Paul Iskalo of Iskalo Development could build a Class “A” office building at 56 and 52 S. Union with mixed use of medical and office space. The purchase of both parcels would allow Iskalo to add 31 parking spaces to the 68 pre-existing ones, totaling 99.

After Mayor Mary Lowther opened the public hearing, residents began protesting the project, which prompted resident Sean Michel to raise the question: Are village residents anti-development?

The purchase of the parcels depends on the board’s approval of the rezoning, Iskalo’s attorney, Sean Hopkins, said.

A North Union Road resident said she opposed the office building because the corner is already “jam packed” with traffic.

She said traffic is horrendous during peak hours, and she urged the board to do a traffic study of the area.

Hopkins noted that his client appeared before the Traffic and Safety Committee, and the members unanimously supported the project. He said the stipulation was that Iskalo would have to come back before the committee during the site plan phase for recommendations.

Victor Paquet of Howard Avenue said the plan was a bad idea.

Paquet, a member of the Community Plan Committee, said in the next six months the 20/20 Vision Plan will be taking an in-depth look into land use and recommended the board hold off until the recommendations could be made.

Michel then took a stand at the microphone.

“Every time someone wants anything in this village, people say ‘I don’t want the business,’” he said. “We’ve tripped over our feet, and we can’t wait for the 20/20 plan.”

He pointed out that there is already a pre-existing building in that location, which may become vacant if Iskalo doesn’t move office space into it.

“Why have one more empty parcel?” Michel said.

He asked the board to research the taxes on the property.

“I’m all for business,” Michel said. “We need it. I don’t know if the tax amount is the same or not.”

Hopkins said although he can’t guarantee it, he is confident the value of the buildings would increase and the tax assessment would rise.

Lowther said the board would vote on the rezoning at the next board meeting, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8 in Village Hall, 5565 Main St., in Williamsville.

e-mail: [JSchmelzer@beenews.com](mailto:JSchmelzer@beenews.com)

## Library trustees resign

Robert H. Miller, the President of the Amherst Public Library Trustees, and John P. Robshaw, the trustee secretary, will be resigning Dec. 31 after 12 years of service.

The past dozen years at the Amherst Public Library have been a period of development and growth which the facilities have provided exemplar service to the community.

Paul Wietig, acting superintendent of Amherst Central School District, and Jeffrey F. Voelkl, partner, Robshaw & Associates and Village of Williamsville justice, will join the board in 2007.