

NEWS - LOCAL

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## Former school board member leads Foundation for Fort Mill Schools

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FORT MILL TOWNSHIP -- The Foundation for Fort Mill Schools' new Executive Director is no stranger to the Fort Mill school system.

When Martha Kinard's now-grown children were in school at Fort Mill Primary (now called Riverview Elementary), Kinard was part of the PTO, volunteered in the classroom, helped out with the annual book fair and even served as president of the PTO for a few years.

As her children grew up, Kinard took her passion for volunteering and helping out the school district to a new level, successfully running for a spot on the Fort Mill School Board and keeping that position for 12 years.



Marta Kinard

community looks at and what the teachers do.”

When Kinard decided to retire from the board two years ago, she continued her commitment to the school district by serving on two School Improvement Councils.

Now, Kinard has been named Executive Director of the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools and is looking at new ways for the foundation to help promote academics in the Fort Mill School District.

The Foundation for Fort Mill Schools was established in 2003. The primary purpose of the foundation has been to award \$500 grants to teachers within the district who have interesting or innovative ideas. The foundation also has several academic scholarships it awards to students each year.

At the beginning of 2010, the foundation was able to give out more than \$6,000 in grants. Among the ideas that benefitted from those grants were a children's garden, a reading program that used puppets and props to increase comprehension, and a math program that used a Nintendo Wii to help Algebra students increase motivation and comprehension.

“When teachers come up with ideas that are creative and innovative, the district can't fund that and they're not getting grants from the state,” Kinard said.

In 2010, the foundation focused on getting its name out in the community and making sure residents and businesses knew what the foundation does for local education. They organized the first ever Education Rocks! concert at Nation Ford High School, and hope to have similar fundraisers in 2011. Education Rocks! earned the foundation \$19,000.

The foundation board, made up of business and community leaders, will meet in January to consider other ways they can help fund school district programs. With the district expected to endure more than \$3 million in budget cuts due to decreased funding from the state, the foundation's efforts could be more helpful to teachers than ever.

But even with decreased state funding, Kinard points to the districts teachers as a light in the darkness.

“The asset we have in this district are the teachers. The teachers are always thinking of ways they can help a child,. They don't want anyone to fall through a crack. If there is something that can spark and interest and carry that child through to achieve a higher goal, that's what the