PRESS RELEASE
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San Mateo Park Elementary School Teachers
Awarded Innovative Math & Science Grant

Foster City, CA – The San Mateo-Foster City School District is proud to announce that in November 2010 San Mateo Park Elementary School 5th grade teachers David Silver, Jane Stein, and Catherine Waldeck were awarded $5,000 from the Math and Science Innovation Fund. On January 18, these teachers, science lab aide Sandra Jeruchim, and Principal Bob Abaya attended a special banquet to receive their award. Grants went to teachers in support of programs that give students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and apply math and science concepts to everyday life. Winning proposals were chosen by a committee of representatives from Supervisor Mark Church's office, the San Mateo County Superintendent, the San Mateo County Board of Education, the Millbrae School District Board and the county's education liaison.

San Mateo Park Principal Bob Abaya remarked, “The Math and Science Innovation Fund is a wonderful opportunity for students to extend their science understanding, connecting their learning to real life experiences. The culminating activity of building and launching model rockets is a hands-on experience that the children will never forget.”

In February, teachers will attend a training on the Challenger Program at the Chabot Space & Science Museum in preparation for students to visit the museum and participate in the program themselves. Students will then receive a packet of activities allowing them to launch a hands-on, comprehensive, science space unit, teaching ancient to modern rocketry and simulating command module controls at the Chabot Space & Science Museum and NASA.

In addition to the grant, San Mateo Park Elementary School, in connection with the Space Science & Rocketry program, applied to receive a space shuttle tile through the NASA artifact acquisition program. There are more than 20,000 heat shield tiles on a shuttle that protect the spacecraft from extreme temperatures when it reenters the Earth's atmosphere. When the space shuttle program was retired, 7,000 tiles were offered to public and private educational institutions. San Mateo Park School was one of the lucky recipients. Its Space Shuttle Discovery tile will be housed in a prominent spot at the school.

San Mateo Park Math & Science Magnet School Program engages students in hands-on, minds-on experiences that challenge students' thinking, providing exploration and development of creativity. Thematic instruction in math and science inquiry creates a seamless integration of the Magnet emphasis. The curriculum is developmentally appropriate for each child and actively engages students in cooperative learning and critical thinking experiences. Standards-based activities are developed sequentially, to scaffold learning and build strong analytical skills. For more information, see the school's website at www.smfc.k12.ca.us/park.

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