

**Megan Fonseca, Executive Director of the Rincon Valley Education Foundation,
presents at the June 9, 2020 Regular School Board Meeting via Zoom**

First, I would like to say thank you to the Board of Trustees for inviting me. My name is Megan Fonseca and I am the Executive Director of the Rincon Valley Education Foundation. RVEF is in its 17th year of existence and I have been in this role for just over a year and a half. The E.D. works with and supports the Board of Directors to define its priorities, build and develop teamwork among its members and other volunteer leaders, and ensure program and fiscal accountability. Partnering with the Rincon Valley Union School District, RVEF works alongside with the superintendent and school board to support the mission of educational excellence for all students.

In this past year, there has been an ever present theme of collaboration, taking chances, and continuing traditions.

It was just about a year ago that a fairly new Executive Director and a very new Superintendent sat down together for the first time. Each brought their tools of the trade to the table and identified themselves as advocates for the students of RVUSD.

From the beginning of our relationship, Tracy Smith and I welcomed each other's insights on the multiple ways to enrich a student's educational experience. The garnered knowledge from life experiences and conversations had with the community have been shared during many meetings, emails, and run-ins in the hallway. It became clear, early on, that we were on the same team and Tracy showed her team spirit by volunteering at the Montgomery Village Rockin' Concert Series' beverage booth hosted by RVEF in August. She dove right in, slinging bags of ice to keep drinks cold and then stepped up to take orders and man the register when the line became too long. She let us know that partnership was her middle name.

The Rincon Valley Education Foundation is steeped in partnership. When I met with RVEF's Board of Directors at the beginning of the fiscal year, we started off with the questions of who are we, why are we here, what have we done, what are we going to do, and how are we going to find support? We identified that what had worked in the past, may not work as well in the future and agreed that it was important to maintain an open line of communication with the district. In order to make sure that we were on the same page, RVEF invited members of the school board to collaborate in identifying both the short and long term needs of our community and the process on how to do that. With many great minds and hearts at the table, we were able to redefine our partnership and it was evident that we shared the same goal: that our students should have an exemplary education filled with learning opportunities that broaden and enrich their lives.

With a renewed sense of purpose, RVEF members planned a variety of programs and events that would ensure a successful year. Based on our means for carrying out the annual giving campaign, running an after school enrichment program, and executing an adults only gala, along with a lineup of operational revenue generating undertakings, we were confident that we would meet our \$40,000 pledge to supplementally fund the science facilitators' salaries for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. However, science was not our only passion and the board agreed to fund \$12,200 worth of needs based in art, music, and social emotional learning.

While there were measures of success, there were also challenges. Based on RVUSD's increased movement toward communicating electronically, RVEF decided to follow suit and update our form of communication by advertising and distributing information and materials solely via email, Facebook, and our website. We took a chance and soon found out that moving away from the tangible item found in a child's backpack and held in a parent's hand at the end of the day, i.e. a paper flyer or newsletter, was the incorrect choice. Contributions and enrollment in after school enrichment went down. There wasn't as much buzz about RVEF on school campuses. And so, the choice has been made that we will go back to distributing paper notifications at the beginning of the school year in addition to electronic publication.

While we tried something new, we didn't completely throw out the old. This was also a year of continuing and bringing back a few traditions. RVEF first published a directory for each school in 2006. Last year was the first year we went online and this year we kept the same format of using a web based system that allows parents to verify and edit their own directory listings. This platform was relaunched in early October, several months earlier than previous years, thanks to RVUSD's parent portal and the guidance of the office managers.

This was also the year of the return of Dine & Donates. Kevin Cronin, owner of Rosso Pizzeria and Wine Bar, offered to host a Dine & Donate for RVEF. The timing couldn't have been more perfect when both a heat wave and PSPS struck the end of September. It was too hot to cook and there was no electricity to do so. In early spring, Linn Bruno of Ricky's Eastbound hosted another, and the Foundation was fortunate enough to have it just a couple of weeks before the shelter-in-place took effect. I attended both events and after thanking all I knew for coming, I sat back down at my table with my extended family and heard what a wonderful way this was to build community and show support.

RVEF hopes to strengthen the connections between community members through our endeavors. While it is important to provide, we also participate in team building opportunities. I am honored to represent RVEF at the Superintendent Parent Advisory Council (SPAC). Each month, RVUSD parent club representatives and myself meet with the superintendent to exchange information and share ideas about happenings at the district and schools. It's fantastic to see and hear these leaders' levels of commitment to help provide the best possible school year a student could have.

For the past several years, RVEF has run the after school enrichment program. Classes offer the opportunity for students to be exposed to new subjects and/or develop already learned skills. It's also a chance to meet new friends because most of these kids will be together in either middle or high school.

After successfully learning the ropes the year before, I recommended to the board that we set our sights on enlarging the program. We reached out to instructors months ahead of time with the opportunity to teach multiple 6 week sessions. We found more instructors, accommodated their requests to hold additional classes, and frequently updated them as to what their current registration numbers were. By garnering this relationship, many chose to still teach their classes even if their minimum number had not been met. We also added an after school pick up program. Long term planning with instructors secured their skills with our program and not others, and earlier communication with office managers led to opening registration sooner so that families could better plan childcare needs. An increased effort to communicate to families of classes in danger of being cancelled led to more sign-ups and fewer struck from the roster. While we were not able to host a full

year of enrichment due to Covid-19, our refunded revenue led us to believe that this endeavor would have been as successful as we had budgeted for.

With the year underway, it was time to plan the gala. So many of our community asked us to bring back a big event, and many identified that an adults only evening out was the way to go. "A Starlight Gala," scheduled for Saturday, April 25, was to be the Foundation's major fundraiser of the year. Dinner and drinks, live music and dancing, and a silent auction and raffle would both entertain our attendees and benefit RVUSD's science program. It was just days after the invitations went out that planning came to a standstill. The Covid-19 pandemic had taken hold.

With the announcement on April 1 that distance learning was to continue for the remainder of the school year, the reality that all the Foundation planned to host and participate in was shattered. The shelter-in-place was in effect and it looked like it was going to be extended. The Gala, our entry in the Human Race, Spring

Enrichment, and other revenue generating opportunities including ticket sales for the Summer Movie Series were canceled. The possibility of further developing a summer camp session was halted.

Grappling with these financial consequences, RVEF continued to plan for the future. The #GivingTuesdayNow campaign was how we took action in order to try to honor the commitment made to RVUSD at the beginning of the school year. The district supported whatever decision we took to accomplish our goal given the situation and understood that this year all major fundraising efforts were cut short. The #GivingTuesdayNow campaign brought in thousands of dollars, but not the tens of thousands that we had predicted the Gala would.

No one saw this coming. With so much uncertainty hanging in the air and the close of the fiscal year quickly approaching, we needed to amend our original budget and plan for the following year. After reviewing our current financial circumstances, predicting future funding opportunities, and plugging in multiple scenarios, the outcome was always that the Foundation would go into the 2020-2021 fiscal year with a deficit.

RVEF has not given up. Working on a preliminary budget for next year shows that we are committed to moving forward.

We are collaborating with the superintendent and school board to identify the needs for next year.

RVEF is continuing to recruit new board members who represent multiple facets of our community (parents, district staff members, small and large business leaders, and community volunteers and activists). Several new members came onboard at the beginning of last year and in the past few weeks more have expressed an interest in lending a hand. Invitations to join, based on participation in this past year's campaigns and programming, will be sent out soon. We encourage any and all who are interested to contact myself or a Foundation board member for more information.

A board retreat is being planned for this summer to set goals, outline programs and events, elect officers, and finalize our budget for the new fiscal year.

We are unsure what after school enrichment will look like in the fall and are using the district's three options for a safe return as a model. At this point in time, RVEF is working to provide an online alternative.

In conclusion, while times of uncertainty still lay ahead, RVEF knows that we are surrounded by a community who is adaptable and has the strength to persevere. Because of this support system, we will maintain a positive outlook and recover quickly. It is with your help that we will continue to foster resilience in the face of adversity. Due to this understanding of how strong we are together, RVEF is able to offer this additional gift to RVUSD.

On behalf of the Rincon Valley Education Foundation's Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present a check to the Rincon Valley Union School District in the amount of \$35,000.00 RVEF is proud to have donated \$12,200 earlier in the year so that the total funds provided to the district for the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year equals \$47,200. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent cancellation of half the scheduled programs and events for the year, RVEF is unable to fulfill the original pledge of \$40,000 to supplementally fund the salaries of the science facilitators. However, it is our intention to continue to collaborate with the district in identifying the needs of our students and to rally our community to successfully fundraise for them.