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WAYLAND HIGH SCHOOL UPDATES ITS LANGUAGE LAB

Financed by \$47,000 grant from Wayland Public Schools Foundation; students improve rate of learning.

Wayland, MA, 10/4/04

Thanks to a grant from the Wayland Public Schools Foundation, Wayland High School opened its newly renovated language laboratory at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year.

When the Wayland Public Schools Foundation announced its grants for 2004, Helene Lerner, chair of the Classical Studies and Modern Languages Department at Wayland High School, was thrilled to hear the good news: the Foundation awarded its largest grant ever, \$47,000, to update the High School's Language Laboratory.

The lab needed upgrading. It was hard for students to hear the real-life foreign language examples and hard for teachers to keep track of what students were saying. Exercises and simulations using old-fashioned tape technology took a lot of time and effort for teachers and students.

Now the lab upgrade is complete with digital technology and new headsets. Students can hear everything more clearly, communicate directly with other students, and respond independently to teachers. Teachers can quickly record and playback video and audio material, and focus on individual students, providing immediate feedback.

The new lab came online in January '04. By May students were able to take the Advanced Placement tests the way the College Board intended. This year will be the first full school year of use.

Lab technologist Lynne Allen is excited about the rate of progress experienced by students and teachers. Students have more opportunities to listen to a wider variety of materials than ever before. Juniors Chris Hoy and Lauren Block find learning easier and more enjoyable. And teachers Dean Putnam and Jessica Skehan look forward to using the Internet for real-time language examples, a capability that will become a reality within the coming months.

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The renovated lab is used to capacity with classes booked every period. Lerner wishes there were more time for classical studies students to get into the lab.

All of the new equipment is portable and can be moved if necessary.

The Wayland Public Schools Foundation's decision to fund the lab upgrade was controversial, according to School Committee Chair Lori Frieling, who is the School Committee's liaison to the Foundation's Board of Directors. "Some board members felt that the lab improvements should be part of the regular school budget. And they are right. But the school budget simply can't handle all of the improvements that are needed every year. The Foundation and the Wayland schools are partners. We work hand in hand, along with the PTO, the Boosters and CAPA [Creative Arts Parents Association]. We're all pulling for the success of our children and are grateful to the Foundation for its help."

About the Wayland Public Schools Foundation:

The purpose of the Wayland Public Schools Foundation is to enrich the education of Wayland's children by funding grants for innovative projects and creative units of study not funded by the regular school budget. Grants are made possible through the generosity of Wayland residents who contribute to the WPSF through its fall letter campaign, spelling bee, and Evening of Tastings in the spring. Proposals to the Foundation come from Wayland public school teachers with the support of school principals and the superintendent. To help support innovation in Wayland's schools, please visit the WPSF website: www.wayland.k12.ma.us/foundation.

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