

# Alton Educational System plays true 'Guardian' role with school district

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
February 24 2017 7:52 AM



**ALTON** - In times of tight school funding, the **Alton Educational Foundation** is making a financial difference in the system that few other organizations in other districts can match.

Recently, the organization held its Third Annual **“Guardians of Education” Breakfast** at North Elementary School in Alton. The purpose of the breakfast each year is to showcase grants the foundation gave out to the Alton School district teachers and students the year before. Last year, the Alton Educational Foundation provided an amazing \$22,417 in grants and this year raised the bar to \$24,700.

**Ryan Bemis**, president of the Foundation, said the organization has been around since 2001.

“What the organization does is raise funds in the community,” Bemis said. “The teachers in the Alton School District write a grant and apply for innovative projects in the classroom. What teachers have been finding out the last few years are that budget constraints make it very difficult to secure funds in classrooms. We showcase the donors, the administration and community members the grants and what the kids are doing with the donations.”

The Alton Educational Foundation was founded in 2001 as a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization. It was designed to complement and enhance the opportunities of students and staff in the Alton School District, by raising and distributing funding for programs The Alton Educational Foundation that are not financed with tax dollars.

Since 2001, the Foundation has awarded over \$175,000 in grants and scholarships fostering creative teaching and facilitating opportunities for underserved areas of education.

**Objectives of the Alton Educational Foundation are:**

- Provide funds for programs such as scholarships and grants, which are beyond the financial resources of the school district.
- Encourage excellence in learning through creative teaching.
- Promote interaction between our schools and our communities.
- Create and facilitate new opportunities for undeserved areas of education.

“This is the third year we have done the ‘Guardians of Education’ Breakfast,” Bemis said. “What better way to bring the community together with the donors and see what the kids are doing. The program has really taken off since it was launched a few years ago.

“As an organization, we originally sold bricks, blocks and benches when the new high school was being built. Then we did the Redbird Raffle where we would award a \$25,000 prize by selling raffle tickets. For the third year now we have started this Guardian campaign which has done very well. The Guardian program lets our foundation solicit businesses, individuals, school district employees or even Alton school district families.

“The various levels to donate can be found on our website. [www.altoned.org](http://www.altoned.org).”

