

# MPAEF for Dummies ....

Go ahead, admit it, you see “MPAEF” mentioned in the PTO newsletter and at your child’s school. You spot our bumper stickers in Trader Joe’s parking lot. Yet you’re feeling a little lost. It’s alright-- A guide to making you a plugged-in parent supporter of MPAEF has arrived!

*Myth:* MPAEF is a “think tank” headquartered at an undisclosed Silicon Valley location, with a secret handshake and everything!

*Fact:* Put down *The Da Vinci Code*! MPAEF stands for Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation. OUR Foundation. MPAEF is made up of parents, businesses and other supporters who work together to raise money to fund essential programs and personnel at the four schools in the Menlo Park City School District. We maintain an office at Encinal school, and you can ALWAYS find us online at [www.mpaef.org](http://www.mpaef.org).

*Myth:* The PTO and MPAEF do pretty much the same thing, so as long as I support one or the other, that’s enough.

*Fact:* NO! Each school has its own PTO (Parent Teacher Organization), comprised of many volunteer committees which run various programs. The PTOs raise funds to support school-specific needs. The MPAEF (also led by an all-volunteer board) focuses on providing excellence in teaching (e.g. professional development; recruitment & retention, etc.), comprehensive education programs (e.g. science aides, credentialed librarians, purchasing musical instruments & foreign language instruction), best instructional practices (e.g. funding of Jeanie Ritchie innovation grants & technology operations) and enhanced educational environment (e.g. 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom project that brings smart boards and other technology to the classroom).

*Myth:* MPAEF funds “fluff” that won’t affect my child.

*Fact:* The quality of your child’s educational experience is dependent on the success of our Foundation. In 2008, MPAEF granted \$2.2 million to fund library, science, technology, music and teacher development programs. For complete details on how our grants are allocated, visit [www.mpaef.org/grants.html](http://www.mpaef.org/grants.html).

*Myth:* Jeanie Ritchie is (a) Madonna’s mother-in-law, (b) related to Richie Rich, or (c) someone who deserves our thanks.

*Fact:* (c) Good Answer! Jeanie Ritchie was a founder of our Foundation and a supporter of innovative education. The Jeanie Ritchie Grant program has been funded exclusively by MPAEF since 1984. In 2008, close to \$60,000 was awarded to fund 26 inspiring projects at Laurel, Oak Knoll, Encinal and Hillview Schools. To see a complete list of this year’s Jeanie Ritchie grants, visit [www.mpaef.org/Jrgrants](http://www.mpaef.org/Jrgrants).

*Myth:* You have to win a contest to get a cool MPAEF supporter window decal.

*Fact:* MPAEF gives them away FREE! They cling to your window, but leave no sticky residue.

*Myth:* MPAEF is hard to say.

*Fact:* MPAEF rolls right off the tongue, even three times fast! You can also say “The Foundation”. When you’re done with that, if you have any MPAEF-related questions visit us at [www.mpaef.org](http://www.mpaef.org) and join our Foundation family today!