

Portrait of a Benefactor

As Parkway faces financial challenges, Hal Wagner, president of Wagner Portrait Group, makes a \$75,000 donation to Parkway's photography program. "Businesses, in general, should give back to the community," he says.



Hal Wagner and his family display the \$75,000 check to Parkway. Pictured from left to right are Chip Wagner, Penny Wagner, Mary Ellen Wagner and Heidi Wagner. Parkway superintendent Robert Malito is at the far right.

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Hal Wagner, president of Wagner Portrait Group, which provides photography services to students, is a firm believer of giving back to the community, and is a strong supporter of public education. With this in mind, it made perfect sense to Wagner Portrait Group to approach Parkway, through the Parkway Education Foundation, with a donation of \$75,000 to enhance the district's photography program. "Businesses, in general, should give back to the community," explains Wagner. "By supporting

projects that enhance education, we can stay involved in the future of the community."

The grant will be given to the district and used over a period of five years with the intent of fostering an appreciation of photography beginning at the elementary level, and continuing at the middle and high school levels. "This gift from the Wagner Portrait Group will allow Parkway students opportunities that would otherwise not be possible," says Sandy Jacobs, president

of the Parkway Education Foundation.

At the elementary level, funds will be used to purchase digital cameras for each school's art department, allowing fifth-grade art teachers to develop a basic unit of study focusing on the concept of photography as a life-long skill. At the middle school level, eighth graders will explore photography as an art and will begin to use technology to manipulate images.

Parkway currently has about 600 students enrolled in photography and digital design classes at the high

school level. With anticipated Wagner funds, students will have access to higher level software, equipment, and training for both digital and film applications. Updated technology, both in hardware and software, in addition to new digital cameras, will allow students to extend and refine their craft while preparing for the business world and exploring photography as a career. "Photography offers many career opportunities," explains Wagner. "We at Wagner Portrait Group feel blessed to work in an environment where we can make people happy with our products and watch them grow through education."

Professional development will be included as Wagner plans to offer training opportunities to both teachers and students. Teachers will be able to come and train at the Wagner Portrait Group studio on photo techniques while advanced photography students will have opportunities to apply for special studio internships.

The Parkway Art Department is delighted indeed with the expanded opportunities that Wagner Portrait Group will be providing students and teachers through its very generous grant," says fine arts coordinator Sandy Collins.