On November 8th, hundreds of education advocates gathered at the Philadelphia Education Fund’s Eddy Awards to celebrate the 2007 Stars of Public Education. Guests mixed and mingled with each other and with award winners, sharing with delight in the evening’s focus on public education.

Governor Edward G. Rendell kicked off the event as the recipient of the Star Leadership for Public Education Eddy, presented by Ed Fund Board Chair Helen Cunningham. Governor Rendell, who has increased public education funding by $1.8 billion since 2003, spoke about how education fuels our state’s economy. “People say there is no silver bullet for poverty and violence, but education is the antidote,” he said.

Ed Fund Board Member Bill Jones, dressed in red, pulled out his Temple cap to present the Star Alumna Eddy Award to Dawn Staley. The Temple Women’s Basketball Head Coach noted that she was “a product and a strong advocate of public school education.” A graduate of Dobbins Tech High School, Staley has captured Olympic Gold and All-Star WNBA titles along with starting the Dawn Staley Foundation.

The crowd was sparked by remarks from Helen Gym, an organizer for Parents United for Public Education/Asian Americans United, who was presented the Star Commitment to Education Eddy by School Reform Commissioner Sandra Dungee Glenn. Gym stressed that “we will pay for our investment or lack of investment in our children.” IBM was presented with the Star Business Commitment to Education Eddy by Ed Fund Board Member Fritz Bittenbender. Edward Quinn, VP of IBM Global Business Services, accepted the award.

The Star Community Commitment to Education Eddy was awarded to Congreso de Latinos Unidos, by Ed Fund Board Member Vik Dewan. Nicholas Torres, Executive Director of Congreso, accepted the award on behalf of the youth who have achieved success through their programs. Finally, Azsherae Gary, a participant in the Ed Fund’s College Access and Philadelphia Scholars programs, received the Rising Star Eddy from Philadelphia Scholars Advisory Committee Chair A. Morris Williams, Jr. Guests also enjoyed the music of Ramona Hunter, Kenny Pitt and Zahmu Sankofa of THREE, all alumni of the Philadelphia public schools.

Annual Giving Information Enclosed!

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE PHILADELPHIA REGION
Event Draws Impressive Crowd

Sounds of the Eddys 2007

“We have to fight for all children as if they were our own, as if tomorrow were yesterday, and with the understanding that doing so isn’t glamorous and won’t always garner headlines, but it is where the revolution begins.” - Helen Gym

“The Philadelphia public school system nurtured me, shaped and molded my young mind, and... propelled me into a world I never dreamed of experiencing.” - Dawn Staley

“By focusing on programs to ensure youth receive a quality education, Congreso is striving to break the cycle of poverty present in our communities, beginning with our youth.” - Nicholas Torres

“Because of hardships that my family has endured, I am able to appreciate the significance of struggles and value a good education... the College Access Program influenced my desire to excel and to push myself beyond my own expectations.” - Azsherae Gary

The 2007 Eddys were sponsored by:

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In June, the Philadelphia Education Fund hosted its annual Celebration of Scholars event. More than 100 students and donors gathered to mark the landmark challenge to raise $3 million for the Philadelphia Scholars Program by the end of 2008. The celebration was held at The Residences at Two Liberty Place.

Shanee M. Garner, a Philadelphia Scholar who graduated in May from Chestnut Hill College, was the keynote speaker. Garner credited the Philadelphia Scholars program with helping her achieve her dreams. “My many achievements in the last four years, give me both great pride and ambition for what is to follow,” said Garner.

Shanee is a 2003 graduate of West Philadelphia High School, served by the West Philadelphia College Access Center. Other speakers included Ed Fund Chair Helen Cunningham, Philadelphia Scholars Advisory Committee Chair A. Morris Williams, Jr., and former College Access Managing Coordinator Lai-Har Cheung.

Philadelphia Scholars provides Last Dollar Scholarships to graduates of 22 neighborhood public high schools in conjunction with the Ed Fund’s College Access Program. To donate to the Scholars Challenge or to register a team in the Score 4 Scholars Tournament, contact Carole Boughter, Director, at 215-665-1400 x3329 or cboughter@philaedfund.org.

New members said they joined the committee out of a commitment to public education. They support Chair A. Morris Williams, Jr.’s pledge "to ensure that economics do not preclude qualified students from achieving their academic goals." The Scholars Program has raised nearly $2 million towards its $3 Million Challenge. Upcoming fundraisers include the April 12, 2008 Score 4 Scholars Basketball Tournament at The Palestra and on April 14th a silent auction and party at Marc Vetri’s Osteria.

Philadelphia Scholars recently added three members to its Advisory Committee: Mark S. Blaskey, Partner, Pepper Hamilton LLP and Chair, Trusts and Estates Practice Group & Family Planning Group; Kimberly J. Evans, VP, Clinical & Support Services, Thomas Jefferson Hospital; and Barbara Gohn, retired Senior VP, Private Bank at Bank of America.

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Event current Philadelphia Scholars, along with volunteer "mentors," participated in the Returning Student Workshop last summer. At this annual event for college upperclassmen receiving Last Dollar Scholarships, students received program updates, undergraduate resources, and networking opportunities. The event included our first focus group, during which students were interviewed on their usage of online social networks. This information will be used to develop an online community of current and former Scholars.

Many thanks to Jermaine Bromell and to the National Sales Network for arranging ten volunteers to attend the event to share their college experiences and strategies for professional success with the student Scholars.
Thank you to everyone who supported the Philadelphia Education Fund during the 2007 Eddys. The stories of our award winners truly inspire us to continue our important work to improve the quality of public education for all Philadelphia students.

The Ed Fund is engaged in many initiatives that are transforming public education, including keeping children on track to graduation through targeted middle grades interventions; helping to improve math and science achievement through the Math & Science Coalition of businesses, universities, schools and organizations; engaging the community in the creation of small high schools; providing college-going assistance; and conducting research that fuels all of our work.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Philadelphia Education Fund. And, thank you for considering an end of year contribution. With your financial support, we will continue to connect partners and pilot new ideas that create opportunities for children.

Sincerely,

Carol S. Fixman, Executive Director