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## SOUTHINGTON

### Residents In Southington Form Foundation To Help Pay For Educational Initiatives

By KEN BYRON

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SOUTHINGTON —

Residents concerned about increasingly tight school finances have formed a foundation they hope will pay for educational initiatives that often get cut from the budget or that might never be included.

The Southington Education Foundation, started in the spring, has scheduled its first fundraiser Friday (7 p.m.-midnight) at the Aqua Turf Club in the Plantsville section of town.

Dawn Miceli, a spokeswoman for the foundation, said the organization hopes to make its first grants this winter. She said the foundation has received some donations.



"I think this is an idea that people in town are ready to latch on to," she said.

The foundation plans to start by making small donations to teachers who need money for special projects, but also plans on raising money for major expenditures.

Miceli said ideas for such projects could include buying a mobile science lab or funding enrichment programs for students.

"We are looking to fund big-ticket items that tax dollars can't support," Miceli said.

The foundation joins a growing number of such organizations in the state. There are at least 84 in the state, according to the Connecticut Consortium of Education Foundations (CTCEF).

Miceli said the town's school superintendent, Joseph Erardi, took the lead in forming the foundation. Erardi said he sent letters to 50 people in town asking for help.

"I am surprised and thrilled by the response," Erardi said.

Erardi, who is on the board of directors for the CTCEF, said Southington has joined the growing trend of using a foundation to help a cash-strapped local school system.

"Communities that do not have foundations are looking to do something," he said.

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