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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEM EDUCATION TO RECEIVE LARGE INVESTMENT

Skaneateles, New York - The Skaneateles Education Foundation and the Elsa and Peter Soderberg Charitable Foundation announced today their shared support of a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiative in the Skaneateles Central School district. The initiative, which will focus on new innovative classroom resources and programming, expanded extracurricular opportunities and enriched professional development for teachers, is expected to change the landscape of STEM education for Skaneateles students.

The two organizations have committed a total combined investment of up to one quarter of a million dollars over the next three years. Collaborating together and with the school district, the organizations will pool together financial and intellectual resources to help better prepare Skaneateles students for the jobs of the future.

Studies indicate that the gap between supply and demand for Americans with STEM skills is significant, and projected to grow rapidly. Even with more than 14 million Americans unemployed, the manufacturing sector cannot find people with skills to take nearly 600,000 unfilled jobs. Professional, scientific and technical services are expected to contribute over two million jobs between 2010 and 2020. Yet too few students in New York are working towards possessing the skills necessary to fill these jobs, or even demonstrate an interest in them.

"Elsa and I feel a real call to action," said Peter Soderberg. "The United States is falling behind other developing countries in their ability to educate and train students for the many lucrative STEM occupations in the global job market. We want to seek and catalyze new and scalable paradigms in primary and secondary STEM education in partnership with school systems and other like-minded organizations."

With the Skaneateles Education Foundation already established as the primary conduit for individuals, foundations and businesses to invest in targeted programs and projects in the school district, it was a natural fit for the two organizations to collaborate. "We will accomplish more working together," said Patti Carey, President of SEF. "In this case, we hope one plus one will equal three," said Soderberg.

“Both of our organizations will be looking for additional partners,” continued Carey. “There is room at the table for others who sense the same urgency and seek to combine resources to inspire students, improve education and prepare them for those STEM careers.”

“We could not be more excited at the prospects,” said Dr. Judy Pastel, interim superintendent for Skaneateles schools. “We intend to create a STEM culture in our district, improving education at every grade level and providing students with unique learning opportunities like camps and clubs for the younger kids, to new hands-on experiences and coursework for the older students.”

The Skaneateles Education Foundation will solicit contributions towards this project over the next three years. “We know there is great interest in this topic and many community members want to be involved in funding this initiative,” said Sharon Magee, SEF’s Executive Director. For every dollar that the Education Foundation commits to STEM grants, the Elsa and Peter Soderberg Foundation will match it.

“When we say every donation to this effort will make a difference, we really mean just that,” said Magee. “This STEM initiative will be something the entire community can be proud of. We are doing something super smart for our children.”

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