

Friday, May 27, 2011

Harvard Schools Trust receives state award

by Marty Green

As the meeting room rang with applause, co-presidents Debbie Kaegebein and Molly Cutler of the Harvard Schools Trust accepted an award naming the Trust an Outstanding School Partner. The honor, which was announced by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) in mid-April, was formally presented in a ceremony at the beginning of the May 23 School Committee meeting.

MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher explained that the association had established the Outstanding School Partner award about eight years ago “to recognize individuals and organizations that provide continuous, meaningful, and sustained support for schools.” Koocher then turned the proceedings over to School Committee Chairman Keith Cheveralls, who read the letter he had submitted to MASC, nominating the Trust for the award on behalf of the committee and the community as a whole. Cheveralls then presented the certificates of award to Kaegebein and Cutler.

After accepting the award, Kaegebein responded, “It’s a privilege to serve this community and the local school system.” She recognized the presence of Carole Christensen, one of the founders of the Harvard Schools Trust and its first president. Another round of applause swept the room as Kaegebein called on past and current Trust board members to stand, and a dozen or more people rose to their feet.

Members of the School Committee congratulated the Trust on its accomplishments and expressed their gratitude for its continued support of the schools. Piali De noted, “It’s a wonderful partnership. . . . As a School Committee member and as a parent, I am very grateful.”

School Superintendent Thomas Jefferson commented, “One of the things that is so impressive about the Trust is that it has been a vehicle where many people have continued to contribute long after their kids have been in the district. And that says something special about the organization and about Harvard. And, to me, you embody the best characteristics of public giving. Thank you for everything you have done.”

Later in the evening, the School Committee announced the acceptance of yet another gift from the Trust, as happens at many meetings each year. In this case, the Trust supplied funds to expand the Weather Bug program, so that more elementary students can monitor local weather in science class