

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS AWARDED TECHNOLOGY GRANT FROM PELHAM EDUCATION FOUNDATION

There was an audible gasp in the Middle School technology classroom as two model cars shot across the room and, almost instantaneously, reached the finish line 24 feet away. Each of the cars suffered damage—David Morgan’s car lost a wheel, which was easily replaced, while Thomas Mendoza’s car cracked in half—but nobody seemed to care as the members of the Middle School Technology Club, together with club advisors Ed Ganbaum, Patricia Satalich and Alan Woliner, enjoyed the inaugural run of the new Paxton Patterson Raceway.

Each year over 200 seventh graders, as part of the Pelham Middle School technology curriculum, have the opportunity to design a racecar using a computer assisted design program. After creating what they hope will be aerodynamic designs on the computer, students move to the wood shop and build their designs from balsa wood. They sand the cars to a fine finish, and then test them for drag and coefficient of friction in a wind tunnel. Until recently, students were able to race the cars, which are powered by carbon dioxide cartridges, but were unable to measure their speed or acceleration.

Thanks to a successful \$1010 grant request made by Mr. Woliner and Mrs. Satalich to the Pelham Education Foundation, students can now calculate the speed of their cars to the nearest 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a second. Using their math skills, they determine the speed in miles per hour. “Students will create a chart to analyze the relationship among the length, weight, drag and speed of the cars,” says Mr. Woliner. “They will also be able to observe the various designs of the cars and try to determine what makes a car more or less aerodynamic.”

Although the class that includes construction of the cars is limited to the seventh grade students taught by Mr. Ganbaum, Mrs. Satalich and Mr. Woliner, the activity is so popular that members of the Middle School Technology Club from other grades are permitted to build and race cars as well. As Mrs. Satalich points out, “Learning should be fun, and the students love to build and race their cars.” The nearly 40 students who elected to devote an afternoon to this popular co-curricular club are witnesses to the fact that math and science are fun in the Pelham schools.

“It’s wonderful to see first-hand the effectiveness of teacher-initiated grants like this one,” observed Pelham Education Foundation Vice President Jeanne Radvany, who attended the event and even took a turn launching a borrowed car. “These grants foster teacher creativity and initiative by making funds available quickly, outside of the school district’s regular budget cycle.”

The Pelham Education Foundation seeks to enhance the quality of public education in Pelham with the help of educators, citizens, parents, students, alumni, businesses and foundations. It funds educational programs that are outside the annual school budget and awards grants for projects that strengthen and enrich the curriculum by helping to develop and promote innovative programs, support additional faculty training and resources, and provide funding for special school facilities and equipment. Founded in 1995, The Pelham Education Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization, directed by a non-salaried board of community members.