

Nashville Conference Exceeds Expectations for the CEF

By Michelle August

The COMMON Education Foundation had an incredibly successful conference. The CEF raised just over \$14,000 in Nashville! This was almost \$5,000 more than last year's conference. This success can be attributed to several different factors. First of all, we had over 100 items in the silent auction, several of which were from first time donors. We also had a few very popular items that went for \$300 or more: an XO Laptop (donated by COMMON), an iTouch (donated by OMNI), Magellan Portable GPS (donated by Quadrant Software), RPG Toolbox Software (donated by Linoma Software), SOArchitect Software (donated by Look Software), Advertisements in COMMON publications (donated by COMMON), and 2009 Annual COMMON Registrations (donated by COMMON). We also had seven different LUGs participate in our 3rd LUG Challenge. These LUGs, in alphabetical order, are FASUG, IBM Academic Initiative, IMUG, OCEAN, OMNI, SEMIUG, and TUG. These LUGs donated items to the silent auction in a competition to raise the most money for the COMMON Education Foundation. The OMNI User Group from Chicago was our winner for the second year in a row! Their items raised \$760 for the CEF and OMNI received COMMON key chains for their membership. We will be running the LUG Challenge again in Reno, Nevada, so all LUGs: start brainstorming now on what you could donate to the silent auction to raise the most money for the CEF. Thank you to everybody who donated items and participated in the bidding to make the silent auction such a success!

In addition to the silent auction, we also raised money through our nightly raffle ticket sales, our golf putting station, and our merchandise sales. We had

several new merchandise items this year that were very popular and this was the second year that we ran the golf putting station. Participants really had fun! For each hole-in-one, participants earned a raffle ticket entry to win an Odyssey White Hot XG Marxman Mallet Putter. This putter has a \$215 value and it was generously donated by **Lauren Lombardi**. The winner of the putter this year was **Ed Booth** from Suncast Corporation. Congratulations Ed and thanks to everyone who tried their hand at golf to benefit the CEF! Watch for this fundraiser again in Reno, Nevada!

A special thanks needs to go to our generous cash donors! The CEF received cash donations from **Jim and Judy Sloan**, **Bob Lane**, **Jim Oberholtzer**, and **Jeff Crosby**. Please thank these individuals when you see them!

I would also like to thank all of our volunteers: **Laura Ubelhor** for dedicating ALL of her time at the booth, **Trevor Perry** for raising additional funds during our nightly iSocials by selling the popular iCAN hats, **Jane Kimmel** for recruiting volunteers for the CEF booth through the Guest Program (**Susan Boettcher**, **Danna Trowbridge**, and **Charer Gearhart-Dekreon**), **Michael Ryan** our newest volunteer, **Elizabeth and Alexandra Kimmel** for their help with the nightly raffle tickets, all the YIPs who helped with the raffles and at the booth, all of the educators attending the conference who helped at the booth, and to all the people who stopped by the booth to volunteer whatever time they had! It was inspiring to see so many people come together to help the CEF in Nashville! Please consider helping out at our next conference in Reno, Nevada. It's a great way to meet new people and have some fun during conference!

All of these efforts help provide for the various scholarships that we offer. The CEF awarded seven educators



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free registration to the Annual 2008 conference and sponsored **Jiangping Wang** from Webster University in St. Louis to attend on the VMS Scholarship which pays for his registration, housing, and travel expenses. We also awarded two \$625 scholarships to **Herb Kronholm** and **Paul Coleman** to attend the 11th Annual IBM Summer School event being held this summer in Rochester, MN. In the fall we will award four \$1,000 tuition reimbursement scholarships to college students who are recommended by a COMMON member. The deadline for applications for these scholarships is August 1st. If you are interested in sponsoring a college student for this scholarship, please visit www.common.org/foundation for more information.

There are many ways you can get involved and help support the COMMON Education Foundation and the future of i! Please e-mail Michelle August (michelle_august@common.org) if you have any suggestions, questions, or would like to get more involved with the CEF. Thanks again to everybody helping in the success of the CEF! 

About the Author

Michelle August is Executive Director of the COMMON Education Foundation.