



## SEPTEMBER UPDATE



Hundreds of eleven and twelve year old youngsters should wear head visors to school designating their prize as participants in ***Stocks in the Future*** (SIF) classes learning financial life-skills. Parents ask us for the same opportunity. The striking need to grasp business fundamentals became especially apparent with the recent economy's collapse. And though we can rightfully question the wisdom of our decision-makers in contributing to and trying to solve the current conditions, we rightfully should glance at mirrors to see our own contributions. It is these visored- students whose early introduction to financial concepts offers the silver-lining.

SIF proudly announces that one hundred percent of this year's schools continue last year's participation. Six schools boast four and five years of devotion. The remaining schools presented SIF for the first time last year. This vote of confidence marks recognition of SIF's value that is accompanied by a reduced number of students, the results of these difficult economic times. Apportioning minimal discretionary funds led principals to offer single classes rather than multiple ones. As one principal said when discontinuing SIF classes previously offered to all three middle school students and instead made it available only to new sixth graders, that "limited money necessitated my apportioning this important program to new students so all students get some exposure to it."

Similar belt-tightening crops up everywhere. However, there is irony in minimizing SIF student numbers. Multiple surveys highlight the public's lack of financial knowledge and there is movement to require financial fundamentals prior to high school graduation. Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Maryland's State Superintendent of Schools noted, "...if our students are not financially literate, this can impede their ability to have a successful career." SIF supplies this introduction.

Students taking SIF in middle school must wait until high school graduation and turning eighteen before receiving their earned stock certificates. An SIF graduate from Frances Scott Key Middle School stated, "This program has helped me to be more confident in subjects like Math and English Arts. Excitement came as you got into it, knowing that can own stock just by coming to school and getting good grades. It became more fun and interesting learning new things that you were able to tell your parents about. I feel great. I feel like I can go out and invest in a good company."

And a letter from Dr. Andres Alonzo, Baltimore City's Superintendent of Schools stated: "While numerous programs offer incentives to students, Stocks in the Future has demonstrated results in both short and long-term...The importance of learning financial life skills is critical to our goal of preparing every student for success..."

It is your financial support that enables continuation of this vital education. Thank you.

*Pat Bernstein*, Chair & Founder