

Incline Education fund exceeds \$1,000,000 mark

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INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. – [Incline Education Fund](#) (IEF) has exceeded the \$1 million mark as it heads into the new year.

“It’s well over \$500,000,” said Executive Director Mary Danahey after tallying its donations and grants. “Plus the \$600,000 endowment.”

In June 2019, IEF started as a fiscal project under the [Parasol Tahoe Community Foundation](#). The foundation is a leader on regional issues and a catalyst for non-profit collaboration at Lake Tahoe.

In February 2021, Danahey and Chief Administrative Officer Sharon Schrage filed for a 501(c)(3) status. The government gives nonprofit designation to charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literacy, public safety and sports groups.

IEF was awarded the 501(c)(3) designation in August 2021, but the government back-dated it to the February 2021 filing date.

“So what we’ve done is we’ve raised money along the way and we actually inherited the monies that were from the Incline Schools Academic Excellence Foundation that had dissolved,” Danahey said.

Through IEF’s programming, advocacy and fundraising, the fund helps ensure academic achievement and skill development are realized.

This volunteer-driven organization has more than 99% of donations/grants going directly to the programs it supports. The fund has no staff, salaries, or overhead.

Because of this, Gov. Joe Lombardo named Incline Education Fund as Northern Nevada’s STEM Advocate of the Year 2024.



Incline Education Fund Co-Founders Mary Danahey and Sharon Schrage with Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo at the OSIT recognition event in Las Vegas. Provided

“Sharon and I raised our families in Incline and we are deeply passionate about our community,” said Danahey. “We believe that with the right resources, our schools have the potential to be the best in the state. We’re fortunate to have dedicated teachers and principals, we need to give them the right tools to help our students develop the skills they’ll need to thrive in tomorrow’s workforce.”

The Incline Education Fund provides financial support to students and teachers in Incline Village by funding academic and experiential resources for students, professional development opportunities for educators and information nights for parents.

It helps launch innovative programs for students, educators and parents that promote and support educational excellence and lifelong skill preparation. It also advocates for students, educators and parents by identifying areas of need, procuring grants, and leveraging existing private and public education programs.

Incline Education Fund’s key accomplishments include:

- raising more than \$500,000 for Incline schools through private donations (\$400,000) and grants (\$140,000).
- building an endowment of more than \$600,000 in the past three years.
- spearheading the kindergarten through 12th grade STEM designation from the Nevada Governor’s Office of Science and Technology.
- making Incline public schools the first and only K-12 STEM school system in Nevada.

IEF has funded, sourced or developed programs including:

- Incline Middle School Tech Drive, which resulted in \$100,000 to equip each student with a laptop
- Incline Elementary School Makerspace, which resulted in \$100,000 for robotics and coding equipment
- STEP Up for STEM initiative, which resulted in more than \$200,000 as of publishing this article ([another \\$100,000 is needed](#)) to support Incline's K-12 STEM Pathway schools and new programs (engineering, robotics, coding, environmental science, technology entrepreneurship and others)

The fund has raised more than \$100,000 for other programs including:

- Incline Middle School Exploratory, which supports innovative hands-on programs (culinary, podcasting, broadcast journalism, robotics, computer science, financial literacy, plus outdoor programs: cross country skiing, swimming, mountain biking, tennis, and others)
- Incline High School College and Career Preparatory Support, which encompasses mentoring and advising and the recent college fair consisting of 26 universities from top-tier universities. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Northwestern, NYU, Vanderbilt, and MIT participated. More than 350 people attended.
- Incline Elementary School's dedicated art program
- Academic support and enrichment programs

“As the holiday season approaches, we reflect on the many blessings we’ve shared throughout the year and the powerful impact that education has in shaping the future of our community,” Danahey and Schrage wrote in a news release. “The Incline Education Fund is committed to providing innovative programs, resources, and opportunities that empower students in Incline Village to thrive academically, creatively, and personally.”

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