All in the Purdue Family

‘Proud’ Parents Campaign supports student life beyond the classroom

Last September, on a radiant Boilermaker football Saturday, Purdue University launched an initiative that hit close to home—and close to the heart.

The Parents Campaign: “Purdue Parents. Purdue Proud,” was born on Family Day 2004. Chaired by Cindy and Rod Ehrlich of Monticello, Indiana, it has already raised $4.3 million.

A new Parents Fund is supporting a dozen new initiatives to develop student leadership programs, corecreational facilities and activities, awareness, and student wellness. A Web site and newsletter keep parents involved in and up-to-date with Purdue life.

“Parents are very interested in supporting a well-rounded education for their students and the schools and programs they attend,” said Kyle Bymaster, associate director of annual giving—young alumni and parents.

Purdue alumni Tom and Anne Schowe of West Lafayette, Indiana, are charter members of the Parents Campaign.

“As Purdue alumni and Purdue parents, we were delighted to have the opportunity to help other parents and students,” they said. “We were active in our daughter’s schools, from preschool through high school. It seemed only natural to help her University any way we can. Especially since Purdue is in our blood.”

Purdue is indeed a family affair for the Schowes. Tom followed in his father Robert’s footsteps in coming to Purdue and graduated in 1971 with a degree in industrial education. He built a career in custom woodworking and is currently overseeing construction on a family home in Santa Barbara, California.

Anne graduated from Purdue in 1972 with a computer science degree. She also has a master’s degree in computer science from Northwestern University and an MBA from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. She enjoyed a career in the computer business and retired from Sun Microsystems in 2000. Anne also serves on the Women of Science Steering Committee, and Tom has been active in the Purdue Chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

Daughter Christina will graduate from the College of Liberal Arts in 2006. Currently, she is preparing for law school, majoring in political science and history. She has been a member of the Purdue Student Union Board since her freshman year.

The Schowes have targeted their giving to support much-needed funds for student activities, student classroom experiences, and scholarships.

“Although it is a large school, Purdue is also a community,” Anne said. “As parents working together, we can strengthen the community by helping to create and fund programs to enrich the experiences of our students.”

To date, approximately 594 President’s Council members have contributed to the Parents Campaign.