

Research ILD helps in Watertown school

The Verizon Foundation and local children's media company FableVision have made a significant donation to expand the "Drive to Thrive" initiative at James Russell Lowell Elementary School in Watertown. An innovative, research-based program to help learning-challenged students succeed in school, "Drive to Thrive" was designed and implemented by the internationally-acclaimed Lexington-based Research Institute for Learning & Development (Research ILD) under the leadership of Dr. Lynn Meltzer and Dr. Bethany Roditi, and launched as a pilot program this past spring at the James Russell Lowell Elementary School.

Verizon Foundation has donated \$10,000 and FableVision outfitted the school's computer lab with 40 copies of its award-winning BrainCogs: Test-Taking Survival software valued at \$1,200.

The project, "Drive to Thrive: Fostering Persistence, Effort, and Resilience," is a field research initiative designed to identify predictors of life success in students, especially those with learning and attention difficulties. As Research ILD's executive director and director of research, Dr. Lynn Meltzer explained, "The program develops learning strategies that foster effort and persistence, processes that are more important predictors of life success than IQ or skill level. Our goal is to bring this work to as many students as we can."

Both Assistant Superintendent Stephen Gould, and Principal Marilyn Hollisian have been instrumental in bringing the student performance program to the Lowell School.

Hollisian said, "The donations by Verizon and

FableVision will make a real life-long impact on the performance of all our students - we couldn't be happier." Gould agreed, "We're taking advantage of cutting-edge research and putting it where it matters," adding, "The Drive to Thrive program doesn't offer a one-size fits all solution - it respects our kids' learning differences and helps them excel, based on the strategies that work for them."

Verizon's regional director of public affairs, Peter Bowman, concurred.

"It is Verizon's hope that financial support for "Drive to Thrive" here in Watertown will help spark a national model that can be scaled to help children across the nation."

The Verizon Foundation, which has invested more than \$3 million in a variety of education and cultural programs in Massachusetts in 2003, has gained national attention for its support of innovative eSolutions, helping bridge the digital divide, fostering basic and computer literacy, and creating a skilled workforce. For more information on the Foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

Paul Reynolds, president of Watertown-based FableVision, remarked, "When we heard that Verizon was helping bring Research ILD's programs to a school right in our own backyard, we didn't hesitate to donate to the cause as well."

The BrainCogs software, which already has won several major educational awards, including Media & Methods Awards Portfolio and District Administrator's District's Choice Award - Top 100 Products of 2002, is generating a great deal of attention across the nation.

For more information, visit fablevision.com/braincogs.