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# Karam honored at fundraiser for Utica school programs

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NEW HARTFORD – Years of budget cuts translates into no hockey program, skimping on after-school activities and fewer musical instruments than needed.

“Because of years of budget constraints, there’s been a continued reduction of programs,” said Richard Cohen, president of the Utica Schools of Excellence Foundation.

But now, there may be a way to bring those programs back.

Last month, the Utica

Schools of Excellence Foundation was formed – its goal to support and augment extracurricular activities including athletics, music and the arts.

Cohen said the idea for such a self-sustaining foundation has existed for years, but finally they were able to get it on its feet.

Its big debut was the Outstanding Educator of the Year banquet Thursday night at Daniele’s Banquet Hall. The foundation honored Superintendent of Utica Schools Bruce Karam.

“I’m very happy we’re able to get to this level, and

I truly support (the foundation),” Karam said. “I’m humbled and thankful to have such a great career. I feel that in my heart.”

Karam said the honor was just “frosting on the cake.”

He wants his students to be able to have all the opportunities possible.

“We want to promote athletics and other extra curricular activities,” Karam said. “We want our students to be well-rounded.”

Cohen said the founda-

tion wanted to honor Karam for his more than 25 years of dedication to the district.

“We wanted to highlight someone who has committed a number of years to the district,” Cohen said. “Someone who has risen up through the ranks.”

The banquet drew more than 200 people, with tickets at \$40 each. Cohen said he hopes to host more fundraisers soon.

He said they’ll be soliciting alumni of the district, as well as individuals and local businesses.

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Karam