

Southwest High School has recently launched the Turn on the Lights Project. This project calls for the installation of permanent lighting to the Southwest High School stadium to allow for nighttime track meets and soccer and football games. The stadium will be renamed after two of Southwest's legendary coaches, Art Frederickson and Dave Peterson.

Studies show that lighted fields help in multiple ways to build and support local neighborhoods and communities. The stadium is shared with Pershing Park, so community events such as Special Olympics, SWAC and Armatage track will also benefit.

The Turn on the Lights Project was the idea of Harvey Feldman, a 1961 alumni of Southwest High School. Mr. Feldman was inspired after attending the homecoming game in 2011 with rented lights. The project is being managed by the Southwest Foundation with the full support of Southwest High School and in coordination with the Minneapolis Public Schools. Anderson-Johnson Associates, Inc., a local firm with experience in other city stadium projects, has been hired to install the lights. They have recently completed the necessary soil borings and are just at the very beginning of the design process. The design process will include neighborhood input to address concerns about light "spill" and glare. The Turn on the Lights Committee is dedicated to addressing neighbor issues including waste, noise, parking, crowd control, neighborhood use and other issues that may arise.

Installation of the lights will cost \$300,000. This includes all the design, permitting, and installation. There is no funding for the project from the district budget; private fundraising is underway. Mr. Feldman has offered to match the first \$300,000 raised, dollar-for-dollar, for long-range enhancements such as an updated concession stand, a new scoreboard, an improved entrance and artificial turf. The budget for the long-range enhancements has not yet been determined and will depend, in part, on how much money is raised. Mr. Feldman remembers playing at Parade Stadium and says "I want those kids to have that same feeling I had – playing under the lights with the community there to support them." He knows the power of athletics to motivate some students. He says: "I was in class at 8:30 so I could play at 3:30."

A kick-off fundraiser is being held March 16 at the Atlas Grill in downtown. Tickets can be purchased at the school or by calling 612 668-3035. Representatives of the Turn on the Lights Project will be attending the Fulton Neighborhood Association meetings to provide updates, get feedback and address issues. For more information, see the Facebook Page at SWHSTurnontheLights.