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## Lake Washington Schools Foundation Raises Over \$250,000 at Annual Spring Benefit to Support Student Success



**REDMOND, WA – [April 20, 2026]** — More than 250 community members gathered at the Seattle Marriott Redmond on March 26 for the Lake Washington Schools Foundation (LWSF)'s Be the Bridge Spring Benefit—its largest fundraiser of the year—bringing together supporters in

a shared commitment to help students in the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) thrive.

Emceed by Joel Ryan, LWSD parent and Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP, the evening featured student performances and speeches, a Meet & Greet with LWSF program leaders and grant recipients, a lively dessert dash, and a community raffle.

Thanks to the generosity of donors and community partners, the Foundation raised over \$250,000 to support programs that remove barriers, support wellness, build connections, and enhance learning for more than 30,000 students in the Lake Washington School District. Individual giving during the event exceeded \$120,000, surpassing the in-room fundraising goal.

The Foundation was honored to welcome a wide range of civic and community leaders, including local elected officials, LWSD school board members, district leadership, business leaders, and longtime supporters—all united in their commitment to students.

## **Centering Student Voices and Impact**

The evening highlighted the real impact of community support through storytelling and firsthand perspectives.

Mark Twain Elementary Teacher-librarian Cathy Webb shared how the Foundation's Inclusive Libraries Grant is expanding school library collections across the district.

"Without the Inclusive Libraries grant, our schools wouldn't be able to provide the breadth of stories needed to reflect all students in our community," she said. "This work ensures every child can see themselves—and others—in the books they read."

Lake Washington High School student Maya Shimokura-Lee added:

"Representation in books helps us see ourselves—but it also helps us understand the lives of others in a deeper way."

A short video featuring two first-grade students sharing their favorite books—made possible through the grant—brought the impact to life, showing how seeing themselves in stories can spark joy, connection, and a sense of belonging.

The evening also featured a second short film which offered a powerful look at the impact of community support across the Foundation's four focus areas—removing barriers, supporting

wellness, building connections, and enhancing learning —through student voices and real moments from schools.

## **A Community Showing Up for Students**

Foundation leadership reflected on the collective impact of community support.

“We may not all know each other, but we share something important—we care deeply about the students, educators, and staff in our district,” said LWSF Trustee and Microsoft Executive Catherine Boeger. “With your support, we will continue to grow our work to ensure every student can thrive—now and in the future.”

Executive Director Katy Philips expressed gratitude for the community’s generosity:

“You really showed up for students tonight,” she said. “It’s a reflection of what a caring and committed community this is.”

LWSD Superintendent Jon Holmen closed the evening with a reflection on partnership:

“We are truly humbled to have a school foundation so deeply committed to supporting students in our district. This work is a partnership—and every person who shows up and gives is part of that partnership. It is making a meaningful difference for our students.”

## **Community Support in Action**

The Foundation extends heartfelt thanks to its trustees, table captains, volunteers, ambassadors, Meet & Greet hosts, raffle donors, and dessert dash contributors, along with its generous community partners, including its presenting partner Amazon.

Other major community partners include Microsoft, Overlake Medical Center & Clinics, Absher Construction, Cornerstone, Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association, Lease Crutcher Lewis, Lease Crutcher Lewis, Lydig Construction, McKinstry, Mithun, Peterson Russell Kelly Livengood PLLC, and Sodexo.

Funds raised will directly support programs that address ongoing and emerging student needs—from providing weekend food through Pantry Packs to expanding access to mental health services and enriching student learning and more.

To make a contribution or learn more, visit [www.lwsf.org](http://www.lwsf.org).

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The Lake Washington Schools Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all students in the Lake Washington School District have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive. Through community partnerships and donor support, LWSF invests in programs that help students succeed—now and in the future.

LWSF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax identification number 55-0891792.