



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Local Teen Fights Injustice with Children's Books**

Lake Washington Schools Foundation (LWSF) is honored to provide a \$2,000 grant to Kai Vanderlip, a junior student at Tesla STEM High School, for his work in educating young students about the civil rights violations against American citizens of Japanese descent in during World War II. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Day of Remembrance.

A board member of his high school's Equity Team, Kai used LWSF's grant to purchase a collection of children's literature about the Japanese American incarceration, to be made available to over 14,000 students in 33 elementary schools in the Lake Washington School District.

The book titles have been carefully curated with the support of librarians in the school district. Written by authors of Japanese descent, these children's books aim to teach American history, build empathy, and encourage children to speak out against intolerance.

Kai says, "The reason this [project] is important in today's climate and in making equitable culture all ties into the phrase 'Nidoto Nai Yoni', which roughly translates to 'Let it Not Happen Again', a phrase speaking out against intolerance everywhere."

Why choose elementary schools? Kai believes it is imperative to establish a bulwark against intolerance in young children. He notes, "It is important to become aware of this piece of American history at a young age."

With the help of high school student volunteers, Kai has been conducting remote story time sessions and providing prerecorded video lessons to elementary school classrooms throughout the district. In recognition of his leadership on this project, Kai has also been nominated for the "30 Changemakers Under 30" list at The Japanese American National Museum (JANM). Additional funding to this project was also provided by the City of Kirkland.

### **ABOUT LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOLS FOUNDATION:**

Lake Washington Schools Foundation was launched in 2005 after a dedicated group of community members joined together and committed to working with Redmond, Kirkland, and Sammamish parents, businesses, and community leaders in support of our future—the students in the Lake Washington School District. The State funds basic education, but our District sets a higher bar for its students and the Foundation supports those higher standards. It is the Foundation’s vision that each student in the Lake Washington School District will receive an education that ensures future success. In doing so, we sustain economic vitality and enrich our community’s quality of life.

Since 2010, the Foundation has raised over \$4.0 million funding district-wide programs that nurture, connect, and empower each of our district’s students, preparing them for school and for life. These programs would not exist without the generosity and support of our community. For more information, visit [www.lwsf.org](http://www.lwsf.org).