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## What a Night! Lake Washington Schools Foundation Celebrates 20 Years at its *Be the Bridge* Spring Benefit



**Redmond, WA – [April 14, 2025]**, More than 300 community members gathered at the Seattle Marriott Redmond on March 27 for Lake Washington Schools Foundation’s ***Be the Bridge Spring Benefit***, a celebration of 20 years of impact and the Foundation’s largest fundraiser of the year.

Emceed by longtime KING 5 anchor and dedicated LINKS Lunch Buddy Mentor, **Dennis Bounds**, the event was a full-circle moment—Dennis also emceed the Foundation’s very first benefit in 2006. Guests enjoyed a warm and festive evening with an inspiring program, silent auction, photo booth, signature cocktails, and live music by a local high school student.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Foundation has already raised **over \$280,000**, with \$35,500 in matching contributions unlocked by gifts of \$250 or more. The campaign is now **less than \$20,000 from its \$300,000 goal**, and supporters are encouraged to help LWSF reach the finish line.

The Foundation was honored to welcome a wide range of civic and community leaders, including **State Representative Osman Salahuddin, local city councilmembers, LWSD school board members, district leadership, local business leaders, and longtime donors**—all united in their commitment to student success.

## **Reflecting on Two Decades of Impact**

Executive Director **Katy Philips** and Board President **Irene Neumann** opened the evening with messages of gratitude and reflection.

“As we reflect on 20 years of service,” said Philips, “we can see that the success of this organization is directly related to the care this community has for each of its members—especially its children. Our success is a reflection of your generosity and trust.”

“Corporate and community partnerships fuel our ability to meet student needs,” added Neumann.

Trustee and Microsoft Executive, **Catherine Boeger** shared how her experiences—as a student, parent, and now board member—inspired her to give back.

“Whether it’s Pantry Packs, Inclusive Libraries, or mental health support, these programs make a tangible difference in the lives of students and families,” she said.

A video segment during the event shared reflections from the Foundation’s founding trustees, underscoring how its original values of enhancing opportunity, enriching education, and engaging the community continue to guide its work today.

The program also spotlighted how LWSF has advanced student wellness in recent years.

“Since 2020, more than 400 staff across the district have been trained in suicide prevention and mental health literacy thanks to LWSF funding,” said Morgan Lipe, LWSD Student Services Specialist. “Students are whole people. Their mental wellbeing is essential to their academic success.”

Another powerful segment shared the impact of LWSF’s Pantry Packs program, which will provide over 30,000 weekend meals this school year to students facing food insecurity.

“Thanks to this program, students can come to school ready to learn,” said school counselor Megan Melby. “It truly makes a difference.”

## **Community Support in Action**

The Foundation extends heartfelt thanks to its trustees, table captains, volunteers, ambassadors, Meet & Greet hosts, and Matching Pool donors, along with its generous community partners, including Microsoft, Amazon, and Overlake Medical Center & Clinics, as well as BNBuilders, Lease Crutcher Lewis, Lydig, McKinstry, Mithun, Peterson Russell Kelly Livengood, Sodexo, and Waste Management (WM).

## **A Call to Action**

LWSD Superintendent Dr. Jon Holmen closed the evening with a stirring reminder of the collective responsibility to invest in students. He praised the Foundation as a model of fiscal stewardship and a powerful partner in realizing the district’s mission to help every student feel seen, supported, and ready to thrive.

“This is a defining moment for our district, and our students deserve more than our admiration—they deserve our action,” he said. “Together, we’re not just preparing children for the future—we are co-creating a future that is just, inclusive, and filled with possibility.”

## **The Work Continues**

As the Foundation looks ahead, its mission remains the same: to remove barriers, build connections, support wellness, and enhance learning for more than 30,000 students across 54 schools in Redmond, Kirkland, and Sammamish.

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

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The Lake Washington Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all students in the Lake Washington School District have access to high-quality educational opportunities. Through fundraising and community support, the foundation aims to remove barriers, build connections, enhance learning, and build connections to enable all students to succeed academically and personally.

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