INSPIRING POSSIBILITIES.

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Foundation
LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Spring Newsletter 2017

Fund a Need

Fund a Need was created with the specific purpose of helping donors find ways to engage with teachers to help them meet their classroom needs. When Fund a Need came out, it was unlike anything else in the country.

According to Gary Reber, Development Officer for School Communities, and the Foundation staff person who works with teachers for Fund a Need (FAN), the platform is versatile, "I like that it's a really great vehicle for giving directly to classrooms and students. It's so specific." Reber points out that "Students aren't always doing fun things. Sometimes they are working hard to meet the academic expectations the community has for them. FAN is a little more fun—a piece of technology that is new or isn't in the classroom budget."

A Fund a Need could also be a field trip or an activity that teaches students something like community service and giving back. For instance, Jens Lehman, the music teacher at Everett Elementary, hopes to purchase ukuleles students can keep if they come to practice and complete a community service project. Reber states, "It's more than teaching kids music. It's throwing together music, discipline, and philanthropy all in one. I love that.Teachers are always teaching more than just the subject matter."

It's hard to predict when a Fund a Need will be really successful, but it's usually when a teacher or parent shares it and connects with their community. Social media is a great way to do that. There are several donors who give to FANs every year—one such donor is Travis Berry. Sometimes he fully funds several proposals at the end of the year. He gives to encourage others to donate, too. "My intent is to have a positive impact on all involved—the teacher, the students, and donors," said Berry.



Field trip to SAC Museum



Mickle Middle School's Quiz Bowl equipment

There are always a handful of FANs each year that are a little different and have a personal tone. A great example is teacher Jim Glenn-Hash who does an annual YMCA soccer team Fund a Need. He identifies students who are new to the United States and creates an opportunity for them to be on teams where they can be successful. It helps them feel like a part of the community, and that can translate into positive results with their school work. He started by paying out of pocket for students to play, but so many students wanted to join, he decided to ask for financial support through Fund a Need to help other students have the opportunity.

Fund a Need gives teachers' ideas a public platform—it's a way to find support on any level from interested parties. Reber points out, "A $25 gift might not fully fund a proposal, but it is leveraged with other gifts to provide something for students. Every gift counts. How often does a $25 gift have the opportunity to have that kind of effect on students?"

Want to learn more about Fund a Need? Go to http://www.foundationforlps.org/projects/fund-a-need.html

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Science Enhancement Funds



Rob McEntarffer, LPS Assessment Specialist

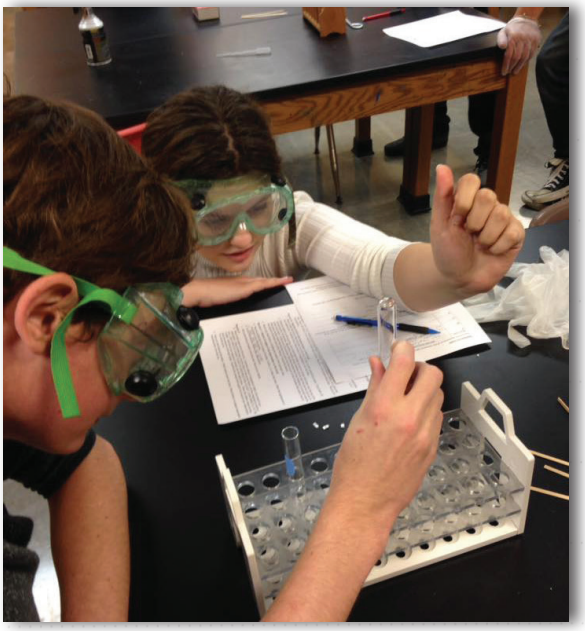
In the 16 years Rob McEntarffer worked with Science Enhancement Funds at the Foundation for LPS, he has seen a lot of students' science projects come to fruition—and he has seen their growth as scientists. "When students undertake independent research projects, they can follow a personal question and may realize science is accessible to them." says McEntarffer. "Sticking with a project over time also can cement their commitment to science."

There are many funds dedicated specifically to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) at the Foundation. For instance, each year the Todd Francis Creative Research Fund and the Sue and Roger Kirby Science Enhancement Fund give students who want to experiment with science an opportunity to learn first-hand how to do just that.

The Sue and Roger Kirby Science Fund, is designed to provide opportunities for students in 6th through 11th grade who are enthusiastic and have a high interest in science. This fund allows participation in significant and extended learning activities in the sciences. Preference is given to students who would not be able to participate in the activity without financial support.

The Todd Francis Creative Research Fund started in 1991 as a memorial to sustain Todd's passions in science, languages, and humanities. More than 80 projects have been funded involving more than 200 students and at least 27 faculty members.

Students are encouraged to do preliminary research and develop a budget before approaching a faculty advisor for approval—it is then sent on to the committee for final selection. This year three students—all at the science focus program—will receive funding to pursue their projects.



Students at the Zoo School performing an experiment

"When students undertake independent research projects, they can follow a personal question and may realize science is accessible to them."

- Rob McEntarffer

To apply for the Sue and Roger Kirby Science Fund, students submit an outline with a brief description of the project, one to three goals, and a research method—all of which need to be approved by a teacher.

The sciences are alive and well in Lincoln Public Schools, and the Foundation is thrilled to inspire students by supporting scientific exploration in the classroom. We have nearly 50 funds dedicated to STEM—check them out on our website at www.foundationforlps.org/projects/current projects and browse through STEM funds.

Emergency Funds for Students



Southeast High School Counselors

Kelcy Sass has been at Southeast High School for 14 of the 16 years she has been a counselor, and in that time she has helped a lot of students. One of the highlights of the job for Sass is when she is able to support students who need guidance. “More and more students present to our counselors with significant needs. Our counselors work very hard at developing a rapport and relationship with students to find out more about the needs [they] are experiencing.” Sass loves the way our community embraces students and finds ways to support them.

One way students find support is through The Cara Hornung Estate Fund, which is designated to a senior student at Lincoln Southeast High School who needs financial assistance. Funds are earmarked to help a student remain in school to finish his/her senior year. Selected by the principal and counselors, this fund has made a difference in the lives of many students. “Students cover and cope very well, and so sometimes the need is not apparent,” said Sass. She remembers one student in particular who was couch surfing, meaning that she was homeless and living between several friends’ homes. “We were able to provide clothing and groceries through the fund. She went on to graduate that year and then on to Peru State College.”

“Our counselors work very hard at developing a rapport and relationship with students to find out more about the needs [they] are experiencing.” -Kelcy Sass

This fund makes it possible for a student each year to be able to stay focused on finishing school.

Recently, another student was working at a fast food restaurant. When a robbery happened during his shift, the student and his mother decided he needed to find a safer place to work. He was a major breadwinner for his family, so this was quite a blow to them. He received funds to help his family until he could find another job where he felt safe. He was able to focus on staying in school instead of dropping out. The impact was great. Helping students achieve their goals through gifts from generous donors gives struggling young adults hope about their future.

There are many opportunities for donors to make a difference for students in our community, and more funding is essential to meeting all their needs. Call Scott Larson to learn more about how you can contribute to these critical funds. Scott: at 402-436-1859, scott.larson@lps.org. Visit www.foundationforlps.org and click on stories, or search for a list of Emergency Funds under www.foundationforlps.org/give/funds/students-in-need.html.

Since our fiscal year began in September, the Foundation’s General Emergency Funds have helped more than 90 families with more than $11,447.00.

Pay It Forward



Southeast High School's Community Service Recognition Wall

If you attended Lincoln Southeast High School today, chances are you would graduate with a deep understanding of and appreciation for community service.

Starting this year, Lincoln Southeast juniors are encouraged to find something in their community they want to improve and actually do something about it. Through the Pay It Forward Fund, students can work with a faculty advisor to develop a proposal for a project, and complete it the following year.

LSE principal Brent Toalson established the fund, as well as the Community Service Recognition Wall to honor those students who acted on their ideas and have improved the community. "I didn't want these good things to be forgotten,", said Toalson. "I wanted a reminder that the mission statement at Southeast is learning, leadership, and service."

Juniors in U.S. history classes are told about the application process. They have until the end of February to submit ideas. One project will be chosen in March as the winner, and students will have until April of their senior year to complete it. A faculty advisor and a community mentor will assist students as they progress.

The inspiration for the Pay It Forward Fund, and the first project featured on the Community Service Recognition Wall, was the playground renovation at Antelope Park in 2000. Students renovated the deteriorating playground at Antelope Park and made it accessible to all children, including ones with physical, developmental, or sensory disabilities. It was quite an undertaking.

The second project recognized on the Community Service Recognition Wall is a Habitat for Humanity house. Southeast was one of the first high schools in the nation to raise money for and build a Habitat for Humanity house.

Current students look at the past projects as inspiration. "Right now the fund has $7–$8,000," Toalson points out. "We want to endow the fund so it will continue forever, so we need to get to $30,000. This is our trial run and we are really excited to start now. We wanted to get started before we were endowed."

Members of the community are ready to pitch in. A Southeast distinguished alumni, Topher Hansen, helped to come up with the idea of getting the community to raise seed money for a fund that supports students as they learn to impact others positively. "It ties into the traditions of service at Southeast and we are really proud of those traditions," states Toalson.

Looking at his school's mission, Toalson reflects, "At Southeast we have a wall recognizing student achievement, a wall for distinguished alumni and athletes, and now we have a wall for service." An excellent example of Foundation funds supporting education beyond the classroom, this is great public education at work.

If you are interested in learning more, or want to donate, contact Gary Reber at gary.reber@lps.org, 402-436-1855.

The Excellence Project

The Excellence Project is an inclusive and collaborative program exploring personal strengths through the arts. It is about self-representation through photography and writing. It challenges biases students encounter every day by giving voice to underrepresented communities through students' artistic narratives.



Photo shoot for The Excellence Project

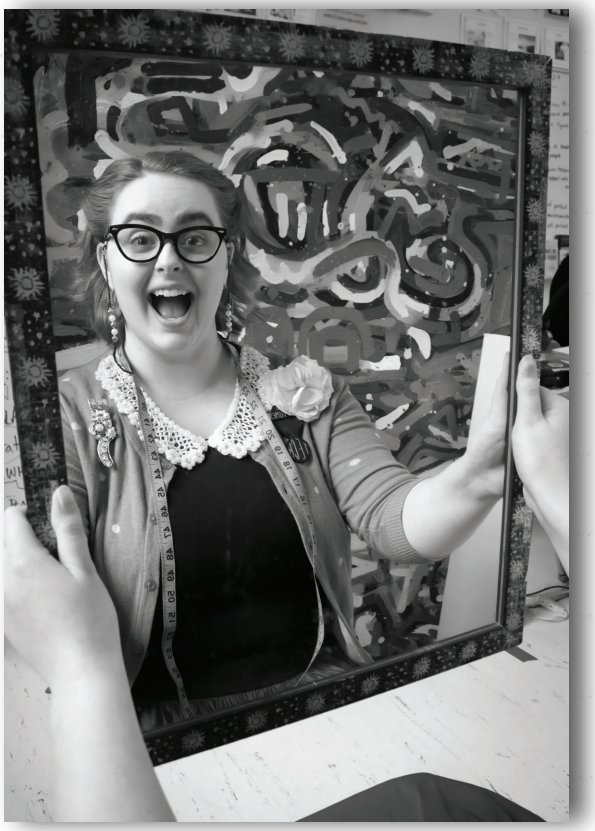
"What we do in the classroom should push students to think about themselves beyond school and what they hope to accomplish with their lives," states Yvonne Meyer, art teacher at Lincoln High School. "I want them to find their unique point of view; to struggle with hard questions, push themselves, take risks, solve problems, and find their best selves."

The Foundation has been awarded grants from Humanities Nebraska and The Nebraska Arts Council to create this project which touches a wide variety of students at LHS. As a teacher, Meyer was inspired by students' stories of endurance, courage, compassion, and optimism. "When students are given meaningful tasks and authentic challenges, they will rise to the occasion," she says.

Photographic portraits made into sculptures on 4 ft. interconnected boards will be paired with stories by creative writing students and biographies of the artists written by journalism students. This work will be displayed in Nonprofit Hub's exhibition space at 211 N. 14th St., in Lincoln for a First Friday art reception on April 7th. It will also be exhibited to a vast audience by the "Inside Out" Project in Paris, an international participatory art program. Although participation is limited to approximately 50 designers, more than 160 students applied to be part of the project.

"What we do in the classroom should push students to think about themselves beyond school and what they hope to accomplish with their lives." - Yvonne Meyer

"It's a great problem to have, but we have more than doubled the number of participants," said Meyer. Thanks to many generous donors, this project has been fully funded. To find more projects like this, go to www.foundationforlps.org and look under stories.



Student Carolyn Kerns, part of The Excellence Project

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

APR 20 2017

The Inspire Awards (Invitation Only)

A celebration honoring educators and students who make a positive difference in their school communities. The winners (one educator and one student per school) are nominated by their school principal and honored in this district-wide celebration.

MAY – JUNE 31-3 2017

Matilda at the Lied Center

Through special ticket sales, LPS and the Lied Center are partnering to create opportunities for students to attend this must-see musical. It is a universal, uplifting story about the anarchy of childhood, the limits of imagination, and the power of love. Stay tuned for more information!

JUNE 8 2017

Donor Coffee

Our donor coffee will be June 8th at the new Wysong Elementary building at 7901 Blanchard Boulevard. From 9:30 am – 11:00 am. Gather with other donors to mingle, enjoy coffee and pastries, and learn more about LPS's newest school. Find out how LPS decides to build a new school and the process it uses to make it a reality. Meet the principal, Randy Oltman, and go on a tour of the building. We look forward to seeing you there! RSVP online by going to www.foundationforlps.org/our-community/events and click on June 8th.



Spark Summer Learning is a high-energy, fun and immersive experience for your K-5 student. This STEAM-based curriculum focuses on fun and exploration. Your child will dive into new discoveries (and new pools), get their hands dirty, and see how fun learning can be with hands-on projects at Adams elementary, and at partner locations like the Maker Space at Nebraska Innovation Campus.

SparkSummer.org

402-436-1612 • foundation@lps.

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