

# Annual Report

2019-2020



**60**

SCHOOLS SERVED



**6,604**

STAFF MEMBERS



**39,890**

STUDENTS

**79.5%**

GRADUATION RATE



**\$4,166,920\***

AMOUNT RAISED



**\$1,503,291**

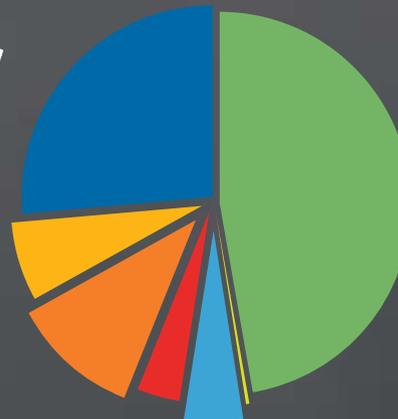
AMOUNT DISBURSED



**2,597**

DONORS

## DIVERSITY



- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

Number of students, schools, staff members, and diversity reflect the most recent numbers available. October 2020.

Amount raised, funds disbursed and number of donors are from the Foundation for LPS 2019/2020 Fiscal Year (September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020).

\*Includes endowed contributions.





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools exists solely to support the work happening at Lincoln Public Schools. We like to say that we make the lightbulb brighter.

We know we have an amazing public school system in Lincoln. But when it comes down to it, there are needs and opportunities that come up, that don't fall within the district's budget. That's where the Foundation comes in.



**We provide funds to students.**  
**We provide funds to teachers.**  
**We provide funds to schools.**

**And through that we build a stronger community.**

The Foundation for LPS is made up of a small but mighty team of eight professionals who raise funds to ensure that when a teacher has an idea for how to better explain a concept, such as reducing fractions to its lowest form, we can say yes and help provide access to materials they need to pull it off.

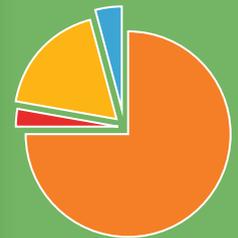
We work so that when a student has an interest in science and wants to know whether or not dogs can communicate with us, we can supply the additional equipment necessary to conduct that experiment.

Our goal is to lift up all students so that they have access to what they need to reach their full potential in life. Our support covers a wide spectrum. We help provide the extras to challenge students above and beyond the curriculum. Conversely, we provide support to students and families that have challenges that stand in the way of kids excelling in the classroom. Funding needs like money for a bus pass when a family's car needs repair they can't afford until payday, allows us to minimize distractions, so students come to school ready and able to learn.

As we look back at the 2019/2020 school year we are incredibly grateful for you. The challenges faced by our students and their families, teachers and schools were met with overwhelming support. The kind of tight-knit support that comes from a community that believes in the power of education and helps explain why our public schools are so good.

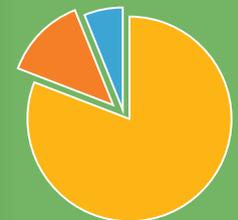
Wendy Van DeLaCastro  
President

 **Foundation**  
LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## Income

Contributions	\$3,801,951
Grants	\$141,570
Invested Income	\$892,516
Other Revenue	\$223,399



## Expenses

Programs, Scholarships, Grants and Awards	\$1,503,29
General Admin	\$251,535
Fundraising	\$105,026

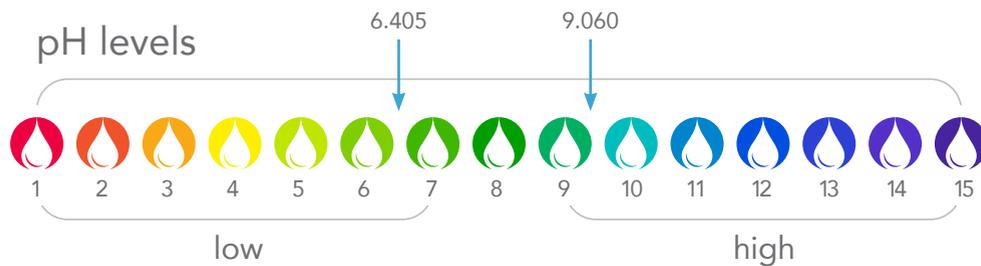
# We Support Students

The Foundation for LPS supports students in the pursuit of knowledge. Science Focus Program student, Jenna Levich, received funds to research the impact of stressors on *Daphnia magna*, a small planktonic crustacean that belongs to the subclass Phyllopoda.

An avid swimmer, Jenna belongs in the water. A fan of Shark Week she was influenced by Dr. Tristan Guttridge, a scientist who studies group living and cognition and movement ecology in sharks, to learn more about marine biology and to become a certified scuba diver.

As a senior in the Science Focus Program, Jenna was curious about how levels of pH impacted *Daphnia magna* populations. Jenna's research project required materials above and beyond what was available so she worked with her teacher, Emily Seifferlein, to apply for funds through the Foundation. In the spring of 2020 she was awarded funds from the Todd Francis Creative Research Grant to complete her project.

"I found that *Daphnia magna* are able to adapt to high pH levels, but are highly sensitive to low pH levels," according to Jenna's research. "The upper pH limit for *Daphnia magna* is 9.060 units and the lower pH limit is 6.405 units."



Today Jenna is furthering her passion for science as a biology major. We invest in students like Jenna who have a desire to learn more, to explore a passion or solve a problem so that they have an opportunity to realize their full potential.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- ✓ *Daphnia magna* cultures
- ✓ 3 aquariums
- ✓ Vernier pH probe
- ✓ Microscope-Swift M3500D
- ✓ pH adjuster solutions
- ✓ Deep-well slides
- ✓ 5 gallon aquarium pumps
- ✓ Chemical testing kit



## THE FINDINGS



“

A series of t-Tests indicate low pH values affect *Daphnia magna* more than high pH values. When comparing the total population in Aquarium 1 with increasing pH to control Aquarium 2, I got a P value of 0.2422. The alpha value is 0.05 and therefore there is no correlation with the data in the high pH aquarium. However, when I compared the total population in Aquarium 3 with decreasing pH to control Aquarium 2 I got a P value of 0.00000378. Because this P value is less than the alpha value there is a significant correlation with the data in the low pH aquarium.



”



-JENNA LEVICH

Science Focus Program and 2020 LPS Graduate

# We Support Educators

The Foundation for LPS supports educators as they work to shape young people into the individuals they are meant to become. We award grants so that they can further their professional development; provide access to Fund a Need, a crowdsourcing platform that teachers can use to raise funds for additional field trips or classroom supplies; and help recognize the most inspiring through our annual Inspire Awards.

Dani White is one of the educators we supported with a grant last year. From the enthusiasm and creativity she displays as a 6th grade counselor at Irving Middle School to each email she ends with a J.K. Rowling quote, you can tell Dani has found her calling.

As a single parent, Dani called the Nancy Muehlhausen Award from the Foundation for \$1,000, "The Ultimate Gift." With the funds she was able to complete her master's degree in counseling. "I'm doing it for them," said White. "I want to build up these kids. I see the goodness in each and every one of them."



## OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

Florence J. Clark Award for Excellence in Middle School Teaching  
Jessica Holloway, Irving Middle School  
Shelly Speidell, Goodrich Elementary School

Marian Battey Andersen & Charles Wheaton Battey Outstanding Teacher Award  
Susan Dinsdale, Pyrtle Elementary School

Jill Oestmann Reading Educator Award  
Hailey McGruder, Lincoln High School

R.L. Fredstrom Leadership Award  
Melissa Cochrane, Zeman Elementary School

Leola Bullock Multicultural Educator Award  
David Smith, Lincoln Public School District Office

John Prash Health and Physical Fitness Award  
Tracy Timmons-Focht, Rousseau Elementary School

Sawin 'Soul Work' Award  
Patrick Hunter-Pirtle, Lincoln Public School District Office

Helen Krieger Outstanding Healthcare Provider Award  
Ashley DeBrie, Lux Middle School

Union Bank & Trust Award for Excellence in Financial Literacy Education  
Rachael Balleweg, Pershing Elementary School

Marie Bourke Leadership Award  
Ann Jablonski, Kooser Elementary School

Myrtle Clark Outstanding Math Educator Award  
Amber Savidge, Lefler Middle School

Nancy Muehlhausen Counseling Award  
Danielle White, Irving Middle School

“  
We do not need magic to change the world; we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: We have the power to imagine better.  
”

-J.K. ROWLING

Ruth Eickman Outstanding Early Childhood Educator Award  
Julie Erickson, Prescott Elementary School

Mike Troester Outstanding LSE Educator Award  
Isaac Jefferson, Lincoln Southeast High School



Dani White (center) Recipient of the Nancy Muehlhausen Award

# We Support Schools

The Foundation for LPS supports schools with additional funds to help them reach their goals. Within our district, each school does a performance plan that lays out a strategy for the next five years. Every year we look at how schools have overcome obstacles and made a difference for students and teachers and award the Inspire School of the Year. With that honor, comes a monetary gift from the Foundation to the school to further the goals laid out in that plan.

"The teachers at our school are just so deserving of this honor," according to Jessie Fries, principal at Lefler Middle School, our 2018/19 Inspire School of the Year.

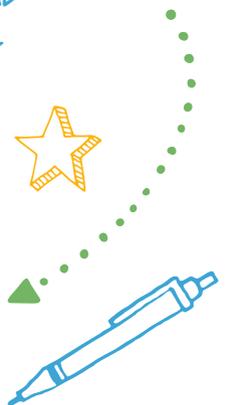
In 2014 due to an increase in the free and reduced student population, Lefler was designated a Title One School. In order to address the needs of a changing student population a five-year strategic vision was designed to improve achievement through instruction, engagement and student support.

As part of their plan the staff has read, discussed, and implemented elements from two books: *Engaging Students With Poverty in Mind* and *Fostering Resilient Learners*. "Understanding our students better and the 'why' behind student behaviors has helped us implement effective teaching and classroom management strategies," adds Fries.

As Inspire School of the Year, Lefler chose to utilize the funds from the Foundation to further reinforce behaviors that reflect students being Respectful, taking Ownership, Accepting, and being Responsible. Staff award Lefler Lions that "ROAR" with "Pawsitive Tickets." Students are able to purchase items in the Lion's Den, a school store stocked with everything from mini figurines to LPS high school branded t-shirts; a nod toward the next step in these middle school schoolers' journeys.



-JESSIE FRIES, PRINCIPAL  
LEFLER MIDDLE SCHOOL



# We Build Community

The Foundation for LPS helps build a stronger Lincoln. We only have to look back to last March to understand how central public schools are to our community. Our schools provide breakfast and lunch for students that have little in their homes, they provide care and supervision during the day, they provide access to technology and a caring adult working side by side to support our students' educational journeys. All of those safety nets were tested as our community began to shelter in place last spring.

For Amanda, a single mom of two boys that attend North Star High School, the reality of how COVID-19 challenged our community was felt deeply. As a driver for Lyft the need diminished overnight. "It was rough," Amanda recounted. "There was just no work. No one was taking taxis to go to doctors appointments. People weren't going anywhere."

The boys helped out where they could. Both had jobs and they took turns paying for the internet and getting groceries, but Amanda worried how she was going to continue to pay the bills especially when both boys lost their fast food jobs.

"COVID-19 affected the boys emotionally. My youngest son was diagnosed with anxiety. All I wanted to do is keep my boys in the same place for consistency. I was trying to find job after job. I felt like surely after 20 applications I would get something."

In April and May the Foundation began disbursing funds, nearly \$100,000 to student families in need. "From my point of view, I was very grateful for the rent help from the Foundation," said Amanda. "We have been able to be stable. Stability is a big thing and you helped me maintain that. Thank you."



STRONG STUDENTS  
AND FAMILIES MEAN A  
STRONGER COMMUNITY  
FOR ALL OF US.

In a normal year the Foundation provides emergency assistance to students and their families in need. This includes helping with the purchase of glasses for students who can't see the whiteboard; student lunch bills; bus fare for families whose car has broken down, medicine and more. Our goal is to eliminate some of the obstacles students face outside of school and so they can focus on learning.

“

Last spring we saw our students and families struggle in ways they have never had to before. The Foundation's support means that we were able to help families keep roofs over their heads and stay warm, well-fed, and healthy. On behalf of all the LPS social workers, counselors, and case managers, thank you for how you give and how you enable us to serve those students most in need.

”

-JOHN-PAUL WITT, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER,  
LINCOLN NORTH STAR HIGH SCHOOL

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Lincoln Area Retired School Personnel  
Lincoln Berean Church  
Lincoln Community Foundation  
Lincoln Lions Club  
LPSDO Federal Programs  
Mark T. & Margaret L. Seacrest Family Charitable Foundation  
MidwayUSA Foundation Inc.  
Nebraska Academy of Sciences, Inc.  
Nebraska Community Foundatio  
Rogers Foundation  
Rotary Club #14 Foundation  
Schmieding Foundation Inc.  
Scott Middle School PTO  
The South Street Temple  
United Way of Lincoln & Lancaster County  
Woodmen of the World Lodge #264