

## Thank a Teacher Day celebrated on May 7

Join us on Tuesday, May 7 as we salute teachers and all staff in the School District of La Crosse. **Details on Page 5.**



# Random Acts of Kindness bring smiles to faces of schoolchildren



Self-portrait by student who received glasses from RAK.

When teachers and staff in La Crosse public schools see a student with a need, they have a place to turn for help.

For 20 years, schools have accessed Random Acts of Kindness funds provided by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF). Each school has an RAK account: when they see a need, they write a check.



A student who was sleeping on the floor after her family moved now has a bed - and sweet dreams - due to RAK.

The goal is to address student needs that create obstacles to attendance, self-esteem and academic success. RAK helps students overcome roadblocks by addressing needs in areas such as food, clothing, shoes, personal hygiene items, transportation, academic and co-curricular support. In short: RAK allows kids to just be kids.

RAK allows economically disadvantaged students to focus on school and stay in school. Completing school with basic skills makes it more likely for students to get jobs, and to break the cycle of poverty thereby enriching the quality of their lives, and life in the greater La Crosse area.

**Continued on Page 2**

## Help LPEF meet the challenge for RAK funding

To address the growing need for RAK funding, LPEF has received a \$5,000 challenge grant from the Bob and Jean Marck Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation. Give a gift by June 30 and you can help us meet that challenge and meet the growing need in our schools.

Find more information, or donate online now at:

[https://lacrosseeducationfoundation.org/random\\_acts\\_of\\_kindness/](https://lacrosseeducationfoundation.org/random_acts_of_kindness/)

# Schools share \$36,384 in Gold Star Grants

## Total grants reach \$80,000 for 2018-19

Funding for snowshoes, equipment for a field research camp and money to provide a full day of outdoor experiences for special education students were among 24 grants totaling more than \$36,000 announced March 28 by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

Among the latest Gold Star Grants are projects for virtual reality equipment for use at all three middle schools, and a trip for all third-grade students to attend a special compassion and kindness exhibit at the Children's Museum of La Crosse.

The 24 grants were chosen from among 29 applications requesting more than \$62,000. Grants are selected for funding based on creativity, ability to engage students and the total impact or reach of the project. This is the second round of LPEF grants for this school year, bringing the total to almost \$80,000. Five years ago, the total awarded was \$43,000.

"We're excited to see the amazing things teachers are doing to bring new experiences to students in our public schools," said Rochelle Nicks, LPEF Board President and development director for Catholic Charities of La Crosse.

**For details on grants, see Page 3.**

## Need for RAK funds growing

La Crosse schools are expected to spend nearly \$30,000 this year on Random Acts of Kindness as the need for funds has grown more than 40% in three years.

Each building principal has an RAK checking account. Any staff member can seek assistance for a student, on any day and at any time. In the 2017-18 school year:

- 40% went to personal needs of students, such as food, clothing, personal health care, glasses, hygiene products and special needs like graduation gowns.
- 47% went to individual transportation, such as taxis to parent meetings or school events, bus passes, and field trip expenses. Field trip expenses are especially important to fund so that no student is left in the classroom when the bus drives away to go to an outside learning experience. Many families cannot afford to pay for field trips after paying for basic family needs such as food and rent.
- The remaining 13% was spent on academic or co-curricular support, such as school supplies, pre-college testing and other academic experiences.

All the RAK funds go toward direct services to students. The teachers and staff know the kids the best, and understand the needs. They are empowered to write a check in the moment, without the family having to complete forms and interviews; allowing the student to focus on school.

Here are some examples of specific uses of RAK funds:

- Purchase alarm clocks so that the students are not late for school.
- Buy classroom snacks for those who can't afford to purchase them when it is their turn.
- Buy snow pants, boots, snow bibs and gloves for students who could not afford them.
- Pay for a student's school pictures because they could not afford them.
- Purchase graduation gowns for graduating students.
- Buy a dress for a student to wear for her senior pictures.
- Buy the shoes required for basketball team participation for a homeless student.
- Purchase public transportation bus passes for students to get to school.



**A donation from the Shelby Fire Department went to RAK at Southern Bluffs in order to buy winter gear for students.**



**A Logan Middle School 6th-grader tackles the ropes course at UW-L. RAK funds mean no student is denied the chance to go on a field trip.**

## Community steps up to support RAK

LPEF relies on private donations to meet the annual need to raise roughly \$30,000 for Random Acts of Kindness.

Last fall, LPEF received a major one-time grant from the Robert & Eleanor Franke Charitable Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation. Gundersen Health System has provided grant funding annually since 2016. This year, Wells Fargo also provided a generous grant.



In recent years, grant funding also has been provided by The Insurance Center, the La Crosse Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Works Foundation, Aldi, and many local faith groups. Other gifts have come from student or alumni fundraisers, as well as from many other individuals and businesses. The remaining need is met through general fundraising.

For our Spring Appeal fundraising this year, LPEF is asking donors to consider a gift to support RAK. To encourage gifts, the Bob and Jean Marck Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation has provided a \$5,000 challenge grant. Please make your donation by June 30 to help us maximize this challenge grant.



## Teachers, students celebrate latest Gold Star Grants

Here is a brief summary of 24 Gold Star Grants announced March 28:

- \$5,000 for a wireless microphone system to be used for theater productions at all district schools. **Recipient: Timothy Sprain.** *This grant is underwritten in part by Independent Cycle & ATV.*
- \$3,940 to purchase a Virtual Reality system for use by Lincoln, Longfellow and Logan middle schools. **Recipient: Timothy Sprain.** *This grant is underwritten in part by Modern Crane Service.*
- \$2,500 to buy books for teacher development at Northside/Coulee Montessori Elementary School. **Recipient: Shelly Long.** *This grant is underwritten by the Richard Swantz Endowment Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$2,039 to bus 3rd-grade students to experience "XOXO: An Exhibit about Love and Forgiveness." **Recipient: Tracy Taylor-Johnson.** *This grant is underwritten in part by Wells Fargo.*
- \$2,000 to host the Limanya African Drum and Dance Troupe to perform and provide training for teachers. **Recipient: Mary Stutesman.** *This grant is in memory of Madelynn Melby, a longtime area music teacher and mentor to educators.*
- \$2,000 to help purchase risers for music students at Longfellow Middle School. **Recipient: Marlina Zimmerman.** *This grant is underwritten in part by Gillette & Associates CPAs.*



**Tim Sprain, a teacher at Lincoln Middle School, received grants for wireless microphones and a virtual reality system. Grants were delivered by Cari Mathwig Ramseier of the LPEF Board.**



**Mary Stutesman, center, celebrates her Gold Star Grant with students at Longfellow Middle School. Stutesman received \$2,000 to host an African Drum and Dance Troupe to perform for students and lead music teachers in a training seminar.**

- \$1,967 to buy young adult level books about immigration and family for a summer training program for 110 teachers. **Recipient: Joshua Wolcott, SOTA II.**
- \$1,900 to create social-emotional learning kits to help increase student self-management and self-awareness. **Recipient: Resa Hawes.**
- \$1,594 to support a Spence Elementary School project to buy Flip Form risers. **Recipient: Amy Johnson-Pierce.**
- \$1,500 to partner with Ajamou Butler to guide Hamilton students in creating books illustrating their own future story. **Recipient: Carrie Wuensch-Harden.**
- \$1,500 for materials for Logan Middle students to use in creating self-reflection art. **Recipients: Dani Hartman, Heidi Jones and Scott Baker.** *This grant is underwritten by the LPEF Rachel Gundersen Endowment for the Arts & Humanities.*
- \$1,273 to purchase camping equipment, solar panels and a portable power supply for outdoor experiences for high school students. **Recipients: Andy Hartman and Keachen Abing.** *This grant is underwritten by the Dr. Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$1,200 to increase the number of teachers of color by helping teaching assistants earn education degrees. **Recipient: Mai Chao Duddeck, UW-La Crosse.**
- \$1,000 to help the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra share a symphony learning experience with 3rd- through 5th-grade students. *This grant is underwritten in part by the LPEF McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education.*
- \$1,000 to buy painting materials to create a sensory pathway on the playground at Summit Environmental School. **Recipients: Nicole Kuecker, Lisa Boyer, Lindsey Shay and Nick O'Keefe.**
- \$1,000 to purchase flexible seating options for students in a Hamilton Elementary School classroom with limited space. **Recipient: Carter Semb.**
- \$1,000 to provide a day of outdoor experiential learning for Logan High School special education students. **Recipients: Gregory Milligan and Phillip Klar.**
- \$844 to purchase 20 pairs of snowshoes to enable a Logan High School class to participate in winter activities for exercise. **Recipient: Jodi Mahlum.**
- \$700 to buy materials for a hands-on construction approach to teaching geometry at Lincoln Middle School. **Recipients: Ruth Beardseth, Scott Bagniefski and Mary Sue Pintz.**
- \$692 to purchase books for Summit Environmental students that help them understand and develop empathy and emotional intelligence skills. **Recipients: Tracy Taylor-Johnson and Darcy Maxwell.** *This grant is underwritten by a gift from the Tom & Judy Sleik Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation.*
- \$512 to help Logan Middle students with scotopic sensitivity syndrome see text more clearly. **Recipients: Diane Block and Nicole Kuecker.**
- \$500 to set up a course in the hallway at Hamilton to activate students' brains for learning; reducing time spent in the classroom trying to re-regulate. **Recipient: Jennifer Speckeen.**
- \$424 to purchase OSMO learning systems for special education students at Summit Environmental Elementary School. **Recipients: Megan Meyer, Caitlin Hanney and Kasey Pomeroy.**
- \$300 to buy vinyl adhesive signs with positive affirmations to display in restrooms at Southern Bluffs Elementary School. **Recipient: Casey Scheuerell.**

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### La Crosse Public Education Foundation

P.O. Box 1811  
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The following businesses provide at least \$1,000 annually to LPEF outside of event sponsorships. Support is used for general operations and greatest need. For information, please contact Executive Director David Stoeffler: [david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org](mailto:david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org)

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Carol Taebel, center, has provided major funding for Thank A Teacher Day. She celebrated in 2018 at North Woods International School with (from left): Becky Misch, Carol's daughter Heidi Morris, Carol, Tara Schuttenhelm and Kate Hooper.

## Join us May 7 for Thank a Teacher Day

Teachers, cooks, custodians, nurses and other staff deserve our thanks every day, but LPEF brings some extra attention -- and treats -- to school staff with our annual Thank a Teacher Day.

This year's event will be held before school on Tuesday, May 7 as volunteers organized by LPEF will deliver muffins, donuts and fresh fruit to all staff members in the School District of La Crosse.

This is the fifth year of our Thank a Teacher Day celebration and treats are provided through a generous gift from a new permanent designated fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation called the Carol Taebel "Thank a Teacher" Fund.

Carol, a former teacher and longtime community volunteer, set up the permanent fund last fall -- but has been providing funding for the treats every year since 2015.

"I think so much is expected out of teachers, more and more and more, and they get so little credit," Carol says. "They are with kids all day long and I just needed to do something" to show appreciation for all that the school staff do on behalf of children.



Teachers at Logan High were greeted with high fives by students for Thank a Teacher Day in 2018.

### Want to volunteer?

Parents, students and community volunteers will join us before school May 7, including members of the District Wide Parent Committee, as well as Rotary Interact Club members.

Adult and student volunteers are needed to assist with greeting teachers, creating "thank you" posters and other messages.

To volunteer, call (608) 787-0226 or email David Stoeffler at [david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org](mailto:david@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org)

## Bowtie golf outing Aug. 31 at Forest Hills

Registration is open for the seventh annual Charlie Miller Bowtie Classic Golf Outing and Knowledge Open.

The event, which is the largest annual fundraiser for the La Crosse Public Education Foundation, will be held on Saturday, Aug. 31 at Forest Hills Golf Course in La Crosse, with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

The presenting sponsor is Waste Management.

Registration is \$80 per person prior to July 31. Special rates are available to a limited number of teams organized by schools in the district. Contact LPEF or school principals for details.

The event honors the late Dr. Charles Miller III, who served 15 years on the Board of Education and was a co-founder of LPEF.



Dr. Charles Miller

Teams compete on golf skills and general knowledge questions asked by honor students. Each team plays to benefit a La Crosse school with prize money going to the school for classroom projects.

Last year's event raised \$31,500.

For information and registration forms, contact the LPEF office at (608) 787-0226 or go to:

[LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/charles-miller-bowtie-classic](http://LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/charles-miller-bowtie-classic)





North Woods students have year-round access to West African style drums purchased through a grant from LPEF. The grant helped complete a set of drums for every elementary school. Read about our latest Gold Star Grants inside.

## Support a school. Raise a community.

**La Crosse Public Education Foundation**  
PO Box 1811  
La Crosse, WI 54602-1811

### In the News

**First Quarberg Fund grant:** Mark Lakmann, left, director for Logan High School's Pride of the North Side Marching Band, was joined by Brad Quarberg, right, as Brad presented the first check from an endowment fund set up to permanently support the band. Brad and his wife, Gail, have established a family endowment with the La Crosse Public Education Foundation and distributions will be made annually to support the band. Money can be used to buy instruments, music or cover trip expenses. This year's grant was \$300.



**Student gets grant to study Earthships:** Faith Yang, an 8th-grader at the La Crosse Design Institute, received a \$3,149 grant from LPEF to study Earthships. LDI is a project-based school where students take responsibility for much of their learning -- and Faith is an example of how that motivates students. Earthships are passive solar houses that use renewable energy. Faith is creating an 8-foot-by-4-foot-by-3-foot working replica. The grant pays for materials, and allowed Faith to travel to New Mexico to stay in an Earthship. She took photos with a 360-degree camera to create a simulation with LDI's virtual reality set (purchased with an LPEF grant).



### About LPEF

The La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF) was created 31 years ago to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse. LPEF expects to provide more than \$350,000 in support to District programs in 2019.

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