



Longfellow students, from left, Moxie Brown, Lilli Bye, Sophie Zielke and Ella Madsen had the winning pitch at a Middle School SOUP event funded in part through a Rapid Response grant.

## New grant program gives teachers Rapid Response

Oftentimes, teachers come up with a great idea to engage students or offer a unique experience to their class, but finding the money to implement the idea can be a problem.

Since its inception, the La Crosse Public Education Foundation has offered grants to fund innovative projects. But applications have been limited to once or twice a year.

Now, LPEF has introduced a Rapid Response Grants program, providing an option to apply for grants of \$1,000 or less on a monthly basis. Applications received by the 10th of the month are reviewed and funding decisions made by the end of the month.

Through February, three projects were funded through the program. The Board provided \$12,000 for Rapid Response grants, on top of \$80,000 for twice-annual Gold Star Grants.

One grant went to middle school principals who challenged students to propose ideas to make a positive impact in their schools. The principals wanted to fund one project at each middle school, in addition to funds the top project would earn at a special La Crosse SOUP event on Feb. 14.

After receiving \$750 from the La Crosse Community Foundation, the principals obtained a Rapid Response Grant with matching funds. Student projects include: providing free feminine hygiene products in Longfellow Middle girls' bathrooms; establishing a Black Student Union at Lincoln Middle; and turning bathrooms at Logan Middle into more welcoming places through fresh paint and adding inspirational quotes to the walls.

More details and application forms: [LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/rapidresponse](https://LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/rapidresponse)

## LPEF continues to help despite coronavirus

While the coronavirus outbreak has resulted in uncertainty for students, parents, staff and the broader La Crosse community, the La Crosse Public Education Foundation is continuing to support schools. As schools began their shutdown March 18, LPEF announced the latest round of Gold Star Grants to support innovative programs in our schools. **See details on Page 2.**

In addition, LPEF is encouraging schools to use available Random Acts of Kindness funds to support special needs of students even while they are out of school. In particular, funds may be used to help with supplies for students to continue academic progress, as well as other personal needs for hygiene and clothing.

Follow us on Facebook for ongoing details.

## Help LPEF meet challenge to match RAK donation

To address the growing need for Random Acts of Kindness 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: [LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/random\\_acts\\_of\\_kindness/](https://LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/random_acts_of_kindness/)

# Schools share \$40,880 in Gold Star Grants

Start-up funding for a sound studio, support for “Kindness Week” activities at two elementary schools, and a grant to create paintings with Hmong culture imagery to be displayed at schools, are among 22 grants totaling nearly \$41,000 announced March 17 by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF).

The 22 grants were chosen from among 28 applications requesting more than \$74,000. 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 Gold Star Grants this school year, bringing the total awarded to just short of \$82,000.

“Even during difficult times, teachers in La Crosse schools are looking for ways to bring innovative new ideas into their classrooms,” said Rochelle Nicks, LPEF Board President and Director of Mission Advancement for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. “We’re glad to partner with these educators on projects to enhance the education of students.”

Here are brief summaries of the 22 grants announced March 17:

- \$5,097 to purchase a state-of-the-art touchscreen mixing monitor and two microphone packages, for a sound studio at the new home of La Crosse Polytechnic (the combined La Crosse Design Institute and 7 Rivers High School). Recipient: Katy Weber.
- \$5,035 to buy dispensers and an initial set of supplies to provide free feminine hygiene products in every girls’ bathroom in District middle schools and high schools. The District intends to budget money to resupply dispensers. This project completes student-led efforts. Recipient: Anna Goldbeck, on behalf of all middle schools and high schools.
- \$4,000 to support a partnership with the La Crosse Public Library to bring award-winning author Meg Medina to La

- Crosse, including speaking to all middle school and high school students. Recipients: Kristi Moulton, Linda Jerome, Cindy Halter, Denise Kuethe-Strudthoff, Linda Watson, Lila Planavsky
- \$3,900 to bring youth speaker Brian Williams to North Woods International and State Road Elementary as part of Kindness Week activities. Recipients: Kelsie Bolstad and Lucas Ackerson
- \$2,632 to provide training to teachers and literacy specialists in the principles of Universal Design for Learning, which are research-based approaches providing tools to help students to become expert learners. Recipients: Katie Kusilek, Katherine Keeney, Ruth Baardseth
- \$2,500 to support purchase of a new sound system for the gym at Longfellow Middle School, which is the only middle school without an auditorium. Recipients: Charles Schreder, Matt Kitzerow
- \$2,500 to support a photographer-in-residence at Northside/Coulee Montessori, teaching photo skills to students and providing some families with professional portraits they otherwise could not afford. Recipients: Beth Hartung, Amoreena Rathke, Laura Huber
- \$2,325 to support a 6-day folk dance residency at North Woods International, culminating in a Family Folk Dance in conjunction with the school’s Global Arts Night in Spring 2021. Recipients: Amanda Wolfgram, Joshua Hein, Elizabeth Becker, Jill Schams, Amy Johnson-Pierce
- \$2,250 to purchase materials to be used as part of the grand opening of La Crosse Polytechnic in its new downtown location. Students will develop exhibits, unique games and other experiences in partnership with Downtown Mainstreet businesses to showcase student creativity. Recipient: Joshua Wilke
- \$1,556 to buy backpacks and a set of outdoor exploration materials, such as binoculars, magnifiers and nature guides for students at State Road Elementary School. Recipients: Jeanie Ruprecht, Carrie Quick, Charlie Alexander
- \$1,500 to support purchase of sensory playground panels and materials to improve the State Road Elementary playground. Recipients: Jac Lyga, Chris Kjos, Julie Van Dunk
- \$1,000 to engage students and families in creating paintings with Hmong culture imagery to be displayed at schools throughout the District in support of cultural understanding for all staff and students. Recipient: NaoHoua Tony Yang
- \$1,000 to buy leveled reading materials with multicultural characters to better engage a diverse student body at Hintgen

- during small group literacy instruction. Recipients: Kris Markworth, Kim Thornton, Karissa Gilbertson, Jenny Thill
- \$950 to send Logan High special education students for a full day of training at the Eagle Bluff Learning Center, including access to the high ropes challenge course. Recipients: Philip Klar, Gregory Milligan
- \$895 to purchase Kindhearted Kids curriculum and stuffed dogs and cats that State Road second-graders would adopt as part of a character education program. Recipients: Carrie Quick, Jeanie Ruprecht, Charlie Alexander
- \$890 to purchase a large board for the playground at Hintgen Elementary with symbols and signs to allow non-verbal communication between students and adults. Recipients: Courtney Kirker, Emily Juneau, Kali O’Neill, Jill Utz Lebakken
- \$825 to buy materials for students in grades 3-5 throughout the District to participate in the Academic Biathlon, a creative problem-solving adventure. Recipient: Archie Barribeau
- \$522 to buy copies of a murder mystery novel with a contemporary and teen-relevant plot, engaging reluctant readers in the Logan High LaCrossroads program, and concluding with a murder mystery dinner where students will practice social skills. Recipients: Dorothy Hart and Hayley Rice McMullen
- \$500 to support a visit to SOTA I by a Latinx artist who specializes in anime. He will teach students how to create their own anime characters and provide materials for this art form that is widely used in graphic novels popular with young students. Recipient: Maria Henry
- \$397 to provide training for Hintgen Elementary’s behavior support teacher, and buy Bal-a-Vis-X materials used in helping students with behavior issues learn to self-regulate and increase time on task in regular classrooms. Recipient: Krista Kaminski
- \$391 to buy whiteboards and dry erase markers for installation in the Summit Environmental School gymnasium, allowing students to answer questions and assess learning, rather than using awkward paper and pencil exercises. Recipients: Nick O’Keefe, Lisa Boyer
- \$215 to buy three trail cameras to capture pictures and video of animals crossing school grounds around Summit Environmental School. Students will be able to study wild game tracks and the animals that made them. Recipients: Nick O’Keefe, Lisa Boyer, Tracy Taylor-Johnson, Bree Lawrence, Erica Rasmussen



Above, 5th-grader SengPao Xiong, checks a tip-up line to free it from the ice. At right, Summit Environmental School Teacher Nick O'Keefe holds a northern pike caught during a physical education class. O'Keefe received a \$1,543 grant from LPEF to buy equipment so that all Summit students can enjoy an ice fishing adventure each year.



## LPEF grants bring smiles to students

Right: Pa Chia Thao sings confidently as part of the Logan Middle School performance of "High School Musical Jr." A \$5,000 LPEF grant supplemented a major grant from the La Crosse Community Foundation to purchase wireless microphones for use in district musical performances.

Below: Zoey Nelson participates in the La Crosse Stars flag-dance team at Lincoln Middle School. A \$1,750 LPEF grant bought flags and uniforms for the new team.

Below right: Marques Simmons-Jackson, a 5th-grade student at North Woods International, slowly empties an egg as he and classmates create a breakfast dish. A \$375 LPEF grant purchased food and supplies for students to learn basic cooking skills and to apply math skills in following recipes.



# Remembering Richard Swantz

Annual Leadership Award renamed to honor former superintendent and co-founder of LPEF

The LPEF Board has renamed its annual Leadership Award in honor of Richard Swantz, the longest serving superintendent of schools in La Crosse history and a co-founder of LPEF, who died Oct. 15, 2019 at the age of 84.



Tony Swantz, left, son of Richard Swantz, joined Kathie Tyser, right, LPEF Board Secretary, at the grants luncheon in presenting the initial Richard Swantz Leadership Award to Mark White, Human Resources Director for the School District of La Crosse and a former principal who worked for Dick Swantz.

Initial awards were made Jan. 21 at the annual Grants Award Luncheon.

Dick retired as superintendent in 1998 after serving 21 years. His tenure was a time of remarkable change in the School District of La Crosse, and included building a new Logan High School, which opened in 1979. Dick worked with Board of Education members, most notably Dr. Charles Miller III, to create LPEF in 1988.

Upon his retirement, Dick and his wife, Judy, helped establish the Swantz Endowment Fund at the La Crosse Community Foundation to benefit LPEF.



Dick Swantz

Following his retirement from the public schools, Dick went on to play an active role in the community, including being elected to the La Crosse Common Council, the last four as president.

One of Dick's last major projects was to lead an effort to increase the endowment fund. Distributions from the fund are used to support grants for teacher training in the La Crosse public schools.



Superintendent of Schools Randy Nelson, left, was surprised with a Richard Swantz Leadership Award that was presented by Festival Foods Chairman Dave Skogen, who praised Nelson as a servant leader.

At the January luncheon, LPEF Board Secretary Kathie Tyser explained the decision to name the award for Swantz. "I truly can think of no better person to name a public education leadership award for than this man."

Swantz's son, Tony, a teacher in Fort Atkinson, represented the family at the luncheon and said he and his mother were grateful for the recognition. "No greater honor could be bestowed. It's bittersweet, but it's awesome. It's the most important work you can do — to teach. It's that simple."

## Swantz endowment fund grows to more than \$60,000

Friends and admirers of Richard Swantz donated about \$33,000 in the past 18 months to the LPEF endowment fund that bears his name. Following is a list of donors who made gifts in 2018-19 in response to fundraising by Dick, or who made gifts in his memory in 2019.

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## Four new members join LPEF Board

Three parents and a school staff member have been elected to three-year terms on the Board of the La Crosse Public Education Foundation.

Mark Brumm is a family physician at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse. His parents were both public school teachers. Mark is married to Jennifer Brumm, a Mayo pediatrician. They have two sons, both currently at UW-Madison, who attended Spence Elementary then went to Longfellow Middle and Central High School.

Angela Erdenberger is the Credit Analyst Supervisor at Coulee Bank, where she has worked for 18 years. She has lived in the La Crosse area her entire life. Angela and her husband have three children - one at

7 Rivers High School, another at State Road Elementary and one at Coulee Children's Center.

Byron Holz has been a teaching assistant for the LaCrossroads program at Logan High for the last five years. Before returning to the area to care for elderly parents, he taught seventh grade in southwestern Wisconsin.

Heidi Odegaard is a Community Engagement professional at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse, where she has worked for seven years. She and her husband, Jay, have three children in La Crosse schools -- a 7th-grader at Longfellow Middle and a 2nd-grader and kindergartner at Southern Bluffs Elementary.

## LPEF Foundation for Learning Sponsors

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)



FIRST SUPPLY



MAYO CLINIC  
HEALTH SYSTEM





Mayor Tim Kabat left front, joined North Woods Principal Sandy Brauer, Jamie Schloegel and Katie Berkedal from the La Crosse Community Foundation and teachers for the 2019 event.

# Join us May 5 for Thank a Teacher Day

Were you inspired to pursue a career based on an experience in school? Do you understand the inner workings of an atom, know how to sight read music or play an instrument, or look at the stars and wonder what's out there?

For most of us, the inspiration and driving forces in our lives can be traced to a handful of people. And many of those people were teachers.

To celebrate teachers, and all staff in La Crosse public schools, please join the La Crosse Public Education Foundation on Tuesday, May 5 for Thank a Teacher Day. On that day, 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 sixth year of our Thank a Teacher Day celebration and treats are provided through a generous gift from a 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, has been providing funding for the treats every year since 2015.

"We can all think of a teacher who left a lasting impact on our lives," said David Stoeffler, executive director of



Kennedy Eastman and Terry Aakre were greeted in 2019 by a student poster at State Road Elementary School.

## Want to volunteer?

Parents, students and community volunteers are encouraged to join us before school May 5 to assist with greeting teachers and creating "thank you" posters.

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

the La Crosse Public Education Foundation. "It seems the least we can do is thank them – and all the teaching assistants, food service staff, custodians, administrative assistants, nurses, principals and other staff who make a difference every day."

# Bowtie golf outing Sept. 5 at Forest Hills

Registration is open for the eighth 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, Sept. 5 at Forest Hills Golf Course in La Crosse, with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

The presenting sponsor is Coulee Region Mechanical.

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 \$36,000.

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 International students are learning basic cooking skills due to a grant from the La Crosse Public Education Foundation. See more photos inside of student engaged in new experiences due to LPEF grants.

## Support a school. Raise a community.

### La Crosse Public Education Foundation

PO Box 1811

La Crosse, WI 54602-1811

## In the News

**Trust Point named LPEF's 2020 Corporate Partner in Education:** For its deep commitment to public education and children's charities, LPEF presented its 2020 Corporate Partner in Education Award to Trust Point. Recognition was given due to Trust Point's work at North Woods and Hamilton schools. Assistant Vice President Regina Siegel (see photo) accepted the award from LPEF Board President Rochelle Nicks. Siegel said the company's commitment starts at the top with Trust Point President and CEO Kent Handel: "We believe in the importance of giving back to the community in which we live, work and serve. We're confident that one of the best investments we can make is within our schools."



**Tammy Larson receives Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer Distinguished Service Award:** Former LPEF Board President Tammy Larson of Coulee Bank was honored at LPEF's annual Grants Award Luncheon for her passionate support for La Crosse public schools and her service to LPEF.

## About LPEF

The La Crosse Public Education Foundation (LPEF) was created in 1988 to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse. LPEF expects to provide nearly \$350,000 in support to District programs in 2020.

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