

Special thanks to:



# BOUNCING BACK



2022

## Grants Award Luncheon

presented by Festival Foods

LA CROSSE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# Grants Award Luncheon

January 14, 2022

Presented by



## Music

Central High School Trombone Quartet

Directed by Jacob Klingbeil

Sofia Stutesman

Taryn Winga

Nolan Heath

Evalynn Russell-Miller

## Welcome

Dr. Tom Thompson, President, Board of Directors  
La Crosse Public Education Foundation

## Mistress of Ceremonies

Jennifer Livingston, News 8 WKBT

## Recognition of Grant Recipients

## Speakers

Sarah Johnson, The Joy Labs

Travis Pernsteiner, YMCA

“Strategies for Building Resilience”

## Special Recognition

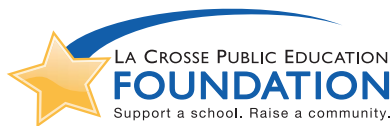
Altra Federal Credit Union – Corporate Partner in Education

Rochelle Nicks – Distinguished Service Award

Lisa Schreiner – Richard Swantz Leadership Award

## Closing

Jennifer Livingston, News 8 WKBT



# LPEF: Supporting educators, and strengthening the community one student at a time

Welcome to the annual Grants Award Luncheon of the La Crosse Public Education Foundation! Thank you for joining us for this celebration of innovation in the School District of La Crosse.

Today, we're honoring over 60 recipients of Gold Star Grants awarded in 2021, plus recognizing others who have made a difference in the La Crosse public schools. All told, LPEF provided about \$350,000 in support to the District in 2021, including almost \$91,000 in Gold Star Grants, plus \$30,000 for Random Acts of Kindness.

LPEF also raised over \$500,000 through generous community gifts and pledges to fund Random Acts of Kindness - forever. The RAK Forever Fund will continue to provide basic needs of clothing, school supplies, eyeglasses, hygiene supplies or help affording fees for field trips, for students in need.



More details can be found on our website at: [LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org](http://LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org). If you're inspired by today's event, please help support classroom innovation through a donation to LPEF.



## Today's Speakers



**Sarah Johnson** is a community-engaged multimedia artist and trained mental health professional who brings many years of passion and experience in prevention, youth development, health promotion, clinical care, and art. A strength of Sarah's is engaging others in collective, values-driven action to create connected, healthy and resilient communities that know how to care for ourselves and each other. Most

recently as Mental Health Director at La Crosse YMCA, Sarah led change within the organization, community, state & in the national YMCA Movement. She calls this the Mental Health Revolution, taking mental health out of the clinic and into the community to build health equity for all. As Winona Minnesota's first-ever Creative Laureate, Sarah is focused on creative place-making that amplifies the voices of community members who have been historically marginalized. Sarah is also an adjunct professor at Winona State University in the Counselor Education Program. Sarah can be found at [thejoylabs.com](http://thejoylabs.com).

**Travis Pernsteiner** is the Director of Marketing at the YMCA. He has been with the Y for 9 years and in the La Crosse community for nearly 15 years. What he loves most about his job is having the opportunity to share the Y's story and help our community know the Y is a place for all. Through his job he has had the opportunity to meet many wonderful individuals, both Y members and community members. During the summer months, you can find him cycling through the bluffs, hiking in Hixon or at the Farmers Market.



## Corporate Partner in Education



For its deep commitment to public education and support of the La Crosse Public Education Foundation and many organizations throughout the region, Altra is being honored as LPEF's 2022 Corporate Partner in Education.

As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, Altra believes in the positive impact of investing in the community, with a focus on three key areas: financial literacy, community development and cultural enrichment. They support this commitment through financial education, volunteering, and corporate funding. Altra and the Altra Foundation provide direct financial support and other in-kind contributions to many organizations throughout the communities it serves.

Altra has supported the La Crosse Public Education Foundation for many years as a corporate investor, sponsor of the grants award luncheon and in the Adopt-a-School program for Northside Elementary.



## Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer Distinguished Service Award

**Rochelle Nicks** has served with distinction for six years as a member of the Board of the La Crosse Public Education Foundation. For her service to LPEF and for passionate support of La Crosse public schools, Rochelle is this year's winner of the Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer Distinguished Service Award. As a past president, vice president and secretary for LPEF, Rochelle has been a leader and tireless volunteer during a time of growth for the organization.



Rochelle has always gone above and beyond for LPEF in every possible way. She is a tireless leader and volunteer, being the first to step in and help when needed. Rochelle is truly a passionate supporter of the La Crosse public schools and LPEF.

- Anna Prinsen, LPEF Past Board President

Rochelle serves as the Director of Mission Advancement for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. She is a graduate of UW-La Crosse with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Public Administration. She earned her master's degree in Public Policy from the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Rochelle and her husband, Aaron, own Independent Cycle and ATV and support LPEF through a Foundation of Learning corporate sponsorship. Aaron and Rochelle both graduated from Central High School ('91 and '98). They have two children in the District, Oliver, an eighth grader at Lincoln Middle School, and Edison, a fourth grader at Emerson Elementary.

## Richard Swantz Leadership Award

**Lisa Schreiner** is being honored with the Richard Swantz Leadership award in recognition of strong leadership in La Crosse schools as a teacher, administrator, mentor and leader.

Lisa is the Principal at Southern Bluffs Elementary School, and prior to that she was the Associate Principal at Logan Middle School. She also served as the teacher of students with cognitive disabilities for fourteen years at Spence Elementary and Logan High School. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in special education/elementary education from UW – Eau Claire, and a master's in special education from the University of Nevada – Las Vegas. She received her principal licensure at Viterbo University.



Lisa and her husband, Kevin, also a teacher, have two children. Ryan is a technology education teacher at Logan High School. Mitchell is a Process Engineer for Neenah, Inc.

Lisa sets out every day to make a difference in the lives of children and the world of public education. Through her leadership as a school principal, Lisa supports school staff by encouraging personal and professional growth. She is also an advocate for children and families through LPEF's Random Acts of Kindness fund. She understands the barriers and needs that exist for many, and through her equity lense, works hard to help people understand barriers and then help remove them.

- Becky Lueck, Southern Bluffs School Counselor

## Sponsored Grant Recipients



**GeoPhoto** - Promote the learning of geometry, geology, and geography through the use of photography at La Crosse Polytechnic. Recipients: Katy Weber and Maggie McHugh.



**Accessible Percussion for Anyone** - Provide stands and carriers for Lincoln Middle School students playing marching drumline equipment, to reduce back stress and increase accessibility. Recipient: Jason Harden.

**Reaching for the Stars with Cosmo** - buys an inclusive technology program for use by students at Southern Bluffs, helping them with engagement, executive function, communication, social interaction, motor coordination and visual skills. Recipients: Nicole Kuecker and Halla Ortery



**GROW Urban & Rural Year-Round** - Provide materials and transportation for students to experience the GROW greenhouse, a community garden and a farm. Recipient: GROW-Kari Bersagel Braley.



### Salute to Educators Sponsor

**Grant in honor of retiree Tracy Taylor-Johnson** who retired after 32 years of service to the School District of La Crosse, most recently teaching at Summit Environmental.



**Social Express** - Provides access to interactive videos that teach positive social and emotional skills at Logan Middle School. Recipients: Meghan Adams and Katie Nachtigal.

**Grant in honor of retiree Dirk Hunter** who retired after 38 years of service to the School District of La Crosse, most recently as the Principal at Summit Environmental and an Instructional Supervisor.



**Fruit for All** - Promotes science and nutrition through the planting of fruit trees and shrubs at Summit Environmental School. Recipient: Bree Moore-Lawrence.

**Grant in honor of retiree Mark White** who retired after 35 years of service, most recently as the Director of Human Resources. Prior to that he was the Principal at Hintgen Elementary and an Instructional Supervisor.



**5th Grade Leadership Camp** - Provide activities and materials for the Spence Elementary 5th Grade Leadership Camp to develop respectful role models for the younger students. Recipients: Jocelyn Buxton, Peter Schmitz and Elizabeth Roberts.



**Every Child Deserves to be a Reader** - Provides Leveled Literacy Intervention materials to assist struggling State Road Elementary School readers with basic reading and comprehension skills. Recipients: Jac Lyga and Jeanie Ruprecht.



**Adaptive Seating Beyond the Wheelchair** - Provides adaptive seating that allows Logan High School students confined to a wheelchair to participate in class more fully, and with peers, by being able to raise, lower or tilt the chair. Recipient: Jessa Ellenbecker. This grant is match to a grant funded with support from the Mary Grace Sieber, Alice Gordon & Viola Forshler, and Robert & Eleanor Franke Charitable Funds of La Crosse Community Foundation.



**Size Matters** - Provides the Hintgen Elementary School teachers with the tools to improve student handwriting skills by implementing the Size Matters Handwriting Program. It helps students focus on letter size, letter spacing and word spacing for the purpose of improving legibility. Recipient: Katie Zavondy-Olson.



**Celebrating Hmong Heritage** – Brings speaker Neng Now, a Hmong storyteller and musician, to share Hmong culture with North Woods International School students and staff and speak about the challenges the Hmong students face as they grow up in America. Recipients: Amanda Wolfgram and Alyson Glenz.



**Voice Amplification Sound Systems** – Provides amplification systems for seven classrooms at Hintgen Elementary, making it possible for students in all classes to hear the teachers better. This will help as teachers continue to wear masks in classrooms. Recipient: Amy Oliver.



**Central Planetarium to the SDLAXDS Exploratorium** – Provides matching funds with a grant from the La Crosse Community Foundation toward a major upgrade and purchase of a full dome projection system for the Central High School planetarium. The new learning environment will allow students to explore, wonder, reach and celebrate – not just in astronomy but in many subjects. Recipient: Chad Wilkinson.



**Light the Way: 4K STEM** – Buys Science, Technology, Engineering and Math materials for all District 4K classrooms to help young students explore, play and build curiosity about the natural world and the way things work. Recipients: PaHoua Vang, Penelope O’Reilly, Jane Erickson, Cathy Leon, and Cathy Fuchs.



**M.O.V.E.** – Provides physical therapy and occupational therapy staff with Mobility Opportunities Via Education/Experience training to help students with significant physical needs to maintain their independence. Recipients: Lindsey Shay and Katie Bakkee.



**LevelUP Bystander Intervention Presentation** – Supports bringing speaker Kyle Richard to the high schools to provide sexual assault, harassment, racism, and bullying bystander training. Recipient: LevelUp Tom Berkedal.



**Change the Story** – Provides matching funds to help replace outdated and culturally insensitive materials for students at Hintgen Elementary School. The leveled reading materials provide progressively challenging materials to help students move from one level to the next. Recipient: Lisa Gunnarson. Additional support was provided by the Community Giving Fund and The Elizabeth Fund for Literacy and Well-Being of La Crosse Community Foundation.

**Gross Motor Activities** – Provides materials for meaningful outside play experiences at Spence Elementary School that encourage literacy, creativity, gross motor development, cooperative play, and social skills. Recipients: Michelle L. Powell, Julie Wilson, Ashley Schultz, Tricia George and Hali Fischer.



**Adapted Physical Education Equipment** – Provides a visual exercise communication system for students with disabilities at Spence Elementary School, Lincoln and Longfellow Middle Schools. Recipient: Hali Fischer

### **LPEF Tyser Power of Nature Endowment**

**North Woods Eco Park** – Provides materials to create a walking path loop in the large green space behind the school as a first step in a student designed outdoor classroom, prairie garden and loose parts play area. Recipients: Joshua Hein and Oliver Strassman.

### **LPEF Randy and Lynn Nelson Endowment Fund**

**Balance Bikes** – Provides strider bikes for kindergarten students to teach the principles of balance and control while learning how to ride a bike. Recipients: Deb Ofte, Nick O’Keefe and Lisa Boyer.

### **Richard Swantz Endowment Fund La Crosse Community Foundation**

**Cris Tovani Workshop** – Funds a workshop for all high school teachers featuring author Cris Tovani, a literacy expert and author of the books, “I Read It, But I Don’t Get It” and “Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?” Following the workshop, all teachers will incorporate added reading assignments into content area lessons, along with other strategies. Recipients: Kim Butterfield, Kate Kenney, Ruth Baardseth, Alysha Feldkamp, Cindy Halter, Kristi Moulton and Kevin Colburn.

### **Duane and Carol Taebel Fund La Crosse Community Foundation**

**Music in Motion: Dance and Choreography** – Expands on a Winter Guard flag and Dance Corps at middle schools (funded by a previous LPEF grant) and offers an opportunity for students at the high schools to engage in theatrical performances with flags and other props. Recipient: Jason Harden.

### **LPEF Rachel Gundersen Endowment for Arts & Humanities**

**Summer Reading Challenge** – Buys books that will be used as rewards for high school students who complete summer reading assignments in Advanced Placement English Language classes. Recipients: Kim Butterfield and Alysha Feldkamp.

### **Dr Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Fund La Crosse Community Foundation**

**Fly Fishing Introduction** – Purchase fly fishing equipment to introduce Logan Middle School students to the outdoor sport that they can enjoy for a lifetime. The class will be taught by the school’s physical education teacher and building engineer, an experienced fly fisherman. Recipients: Greg Heilman and Chester Janke.

### **LPEF Judy and Randy Eddy Sr. Fund**

**Community Cookbook** – Pays for printing cookbooks featuring recipes and drawings submitted by Southern Bluffs students featuring foods that mean something special to them. Each student gets a page in the book, which also will feature recipes from school staff. Recipient: Casey Scheuerell.

### **LPEF McGavock Family Endowment for Music Education**

**Hmong Traditional Music** – Buys traditional Hmong musical instruments to be housed at North Woods International School and provides training for district music staff on how to teach the use of these instruments and incorporate Hmong music into classes. Recipient: Amanda Wolfgram.



**Tom and Judy Sleik Family Fund  
La Crosse Community Foundation**

Playground Communication: Buys a free-standing board, along with an easily changeable sign, to improve communication and facilitate interactions related to outdoor playground play for Summit Environmental School students with limited ability to communicate verbally. Recipient: Laura Kish.

**Judy and Dave Bouffleur Fund  
La Crosse Community Foundation**

The Virtual Orchestra – Buys a high-quality USB microphone, and additional equipment, to help Logan Middle and North Woods students to improve the sound quality of recordings made in a virtual setting with school-provided iPads. Recipient: Elizabeth Becker.

**And Even More Gold Star Grants**

**Tools to Learn at Lincoln Middle School** - Provide a lending library of self-regulation tools and support materials for Lincoln Middle School teachers to access. Recipients: Nicole Kuecker and Bethany Peterson.

**REAL Girls** – Supports a comprehensive 8-week character building and physical activity program for Northside/Coulee Montessori Elementary School girls modeling healthy eating, cross-training, and discussing relevant topics. Recipients: Sara Jorgensen and Regan Mueller

**Equitable STEM on Wheels** – Brings STEM Club participation to North Woods International School students who are unable to participate in after-school activities. Recipient: Gary Boisvert

**Interpersonal Skills with Science Content Knowledge** – Provides curriculum aligned science games to foster interpersonal and science skill development among Lincoln Middle School students. Recipient: Mandi Hundt.

**Forever Felt Friends** – Provides materials to turn Hamilton/SOTA I Elementary student drawings into plush felt friends created by middle school students. Recipient: Carrie Wuensch-Harden.



**2022 Officers**

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 Heidi Odegaard - Vice President  
 Adam Kendle – Treasurer  
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Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer

**Grants Committee Volunteer**

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 Dawn Hemker – Administrative Assistant  
 Denise Vujnovich – Grants Coordinator

**Acknowledgements**

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 Luncheon Committee: Tracie Bosch, Anna Prinsen, Tom Thompson, and Kathie Tyser  
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**Table Sponsors**

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Proceeds from today’s event provide support for Gold Star Grants, which are expected to total about \$90,000 this year. For information, go to: [LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/GoldStar](http://LaCrosseEducationFoundation.org/GoldStar)