



Thank-A-Teacher Day!
 LPEF will deliver fruit and pastries to all school buildings on **Tuesday, May 7th.**
 Call 608-787-0226 if you want to join!
 Made possible by the Carol Taebel "Thank A Teacher" Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation.

Spring 2024

\$53,614 for Gold Star Grants!

Made possible through generous community support, La Crosse Public Education Foundation is proud to announce the largest round of Gold Star Grants funding ever with \$53,614 awarded for 20 projects. Funded grants provide students and teachers a chance to expand their skills, be exposed to novel experiences, and to engage with unique ideas. Spring grants include:

\$5000 - Funds the purchase of a hydroponics tower, seeds, and other supplies for the Agriculture department at both Central and Logan High School. The hydroponics tower will help to teach students year round about growing plants and *continued on page 2*



A Gold Star grant will purchase a trailer to store and transport canoes purchased after the Summit Elementary community raised \$10K through a Jump-A-Thon.

Central Students Study Bioethics



Dr. Jamie Bakkum-Gamez of Mayo Clinic Health System (second from right), spoke with Central Biology students about the impact of Henrietta Lacks on modern medicine. Also pictured: Central Bio teachers Sophia Green, Kay Soper, and Joanne Morgan.

Las year, a group of Central High biology teachers received a Gold Star grant to buy copies of the book "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot. Using the book, biology students are now engaging in discussions about bioethics, moral dilemmas, and social justice while they learn the biology of cells.

The grant was partially sponsored by US Bank, and

Andy Bakkum from the US Bank team was especially excited to be matched with this grant because his sister, Dr. Jamie Bakkum-Gamez, is a Mayo Clinic Gynecologic Oncologist who has conducted research using Henrietta's cell line.

This March, biology students got a chance to learn directly from Dr. Bakkum-Gamez who presented about the complex impact of Henrietta Lacks' story

Match Challenge!
 LPEF has received a \$5,000 challenge grant from the Bob and Jean Marck Family Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation to encourage community investment in the growing needs for public schools. Give by June 30, to join the challenge! Donate online here:

on bioethics, human subject research, and medicine.

The grant and connections that resulted are a great example of the power of community support for Gold Star Grants. Keep reading to learn about the newest grants that will provide enhanced educational experiences for students throughout the district.

Who's Your Shining Star?

Tell us about the current educators, administrators, or other school staff members who make your day brighter!

Nominated Shining Stars are eligible for a random prize drawing and other awards!

Scan this QR code to nominate your Shining Star by Monday, April 8.



Shining Star, Garrett Carlson, received a classroom grant from the Tom and Jean Heyt Thompson Fund in 2023.

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the benefits. Recipient: Brooks Lueck.

\$5000 - To bring artist Julia Crozier to Summit Elementary to paint a mural (with students' help) on the new outdoor classroom, which will be built with funding by Solar on La Crosse Schools (SOLS). Recipients: Oscar Uribe and Johnnyray Wildt. *Supported in part by the Rachel Gundersen Endowment for the Arts & Humanities and Dr. Gunnar and Mary Baldwin Gundersen Memorial Fund of La Crosse Community Foundation.*

\$5000 - To bring award-winning author and poet Candice Iloh to speak to all La Crosse high school students and staff during a two-day author visit in Spring 2025. Iloh writes coming-of-age novels and poetry that "captures the nuance of young Black life." Recipients: Kristi Moulton, Abby Von Arx, and Linda Jerome. *Supported in*

part by the Heather & Stephen Ross and Maureen & Robert Freedland LPEF Fund for Diversity Education of the La Crosse Community Foundation.

\$4800 - Establishes a summer enrichment course that will culminate in the publication of a magazine produced entirely by students. Students gain the experience of publishing from start to finish and the broader community will benefit from hearing the voices of young people in our area. Recipient: Lissa Carlson. *Supported in part by the Randy and Lynn Nelson Fund.*

\$4795 - To purchase a trailer for 10-12 canoes at Summit Environmental School to take students canoeing in the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge in front of the school. Recipients: Oscar Uribe and Nick O'Keefe.

\$4510 - To enhance or expand pollinator patches at North Woods, Hamilton, and Hintgen



Longfellow Middle Outdoor Adventure Club received funds for backpacking gear.

elementary school garden sites. The project will engage students with hands-on seed-to-table nutrition and environmental stewardship education. Recipients: Bonnie Martin and Kari Bersagel Braley of GROW La Crosse.

\$3760 - To purchase an electric guitar and bass guitar package for use in Logan High School's new Modern Music Ensemble - Rock Band course. The goal of this class is to provide a performing music course for

students that love music, but never fit neatly into the typical performing courses. Recipients: Brian Renkas and Zach Mayer.

\$3000 - Provides funding for 14 teachers to attend a 2-day training for Bal-A-Vis-X hosted by the school district. These teachers would be eligible to pursue the process to become a Bal-A-Vis-A school trainer for the district. Bal-A-Vis-X stands for Balance, Auditory, Vision, Exercises. Teachers who are using Bal-A-Vis-X are noticing improved attention, self control, and engagement in their classrooms. Recipient: Barbara Oettel. *Supported by the Richard Swantz Fund.*

\$2878 - To purchase outdoor gear for Longfellow Middle School's Outdoor Adventure Club to hold a summer "Backpacking 101" course. This course will teach students basic skills and knowledge necessary to safely participate in overnight adventures in the outdoors. Recipients: Clinton Grabhorn and Lila Planavsky. *Supported in part by the Tyser Power of Nature Fund.*

\$2700 - To purchase personal books for K-2 students at Northside and Hamilton Elementary participating in the collaborative UW-La Crosse and Boys and Girls Club Reading Buddies collaborative after-school program. Recipients: Caryn Peterson (UWL), Teigen Meiners (Boys & Girls Club), and Denise Rueter (UWL).

\$2443 - Establishes an adapted book library within the Hintgen Elementary school library, providing tailored reading materials to meet the

diverse needs of students. The adapted library can enhance the educational experiences of students, promote literacy development, and foster a more inclusive learning environment. Recipients: Emily Juneau, Jill Utz Lebakken, and Hannah Gaska.

\$2386 - To purchase a floor loom and two tapestry looms for Logan High School's new Fiber Arts Exploration course, which will provide students with hands-on experience in weaving traditions from diverse cultures. Recipients: Allecia Kruser.



Learning partner, GROW La Crosse, received a grant to support their Pollinator Project creating pollinator patches at North Woods, Hamilton, and Hintgen Elementary Schools.

\$1300 - To purchase styluses for art students at Logan and Central High Schools for use with their iPads. Recipients: Bethany Nugent and Allecia Kruser.

\$1200 - Provides funding for all Hamilton Elementary students to visit Hixon Forest 2 times during the school year. These field trips will help expand the students' view of the community, increase vocabulary in relation to the surrounding nature, and show

students how nature can help them feel better physically and mentally. Recipient: Jenn Speckeen. *Supported in part by the Duane and Carol Taebel Fund of La Crosse Community Foundation.*

\$1000 - To purchase materials needed for a new Outdoor Literature class at Logan High School. The goal of this class is to improve students' relationship with reading while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and immersion. Recipient: Logan Fulton.

\$1000 - Provides funding for students in the Sports &

Entertainment Marketing classes at Central and Logan High schools to attend a field trip to Milwaukee where they will tour Fiserv Forum, attend a Brewers Game, and possibly tour the Business School at UW-Milwaukee. Recipients: Joanna Carman and Jamee Houchins. *Supported in part by the Judy and Randy Eddy Sr. Fund.*

\$925 - To purchase vertical rolling whiteboards that will allow Logan Middle teachers to create *continued on page 5*

Thank you! 2023 Year in Review

Thank you for supporting LPEF in supporting the School District of La Crosse through Gold Star grants, Random Acts of Kindness needs, and special projects! In 2023, you helped ensure funding for our core programs - Gold Star Grants and Random Acts of Kindness - continued to grow steadily. Your generosity supports the professional creativity of teachers and staff, gives students exciting educational experiences, and removes barriers to learning caused by financial stressors. Here's what you made possible in 2023:



\$89,173 in Grants and Distributions to Schools

\$47,437 for student needs through Random Acts of Kindness



415 times RAK Funds were accessed



726 community supporters



LPEF has received GuideStar's Platinum Seal of Transparency. Visit our GuidStar profile for more info.



A grant will fund bass and electric guitars for new Modern Music Ensemble and Rock Band class at Logan High School

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thinking spaces for students to stand and collaboratively problem-solve and work together during designated times in their classes. Recipients: Megan Burke, Ashley Burke, and Karla

Lawrence. *Supported in part by the Judy and Dave Bouffleur Fund of La Crosse Community Foundation.*

\$866 - Provides funding for La Crosse Promise to take juniors and seniors on a field trip to tour UW-Eau Claire and the University of Minnesota. Recipient: La Crosse Promise.

\$688 - To purchase high-visibility vests, raincoats, umbrellas, gloves, and hats for 4th and 5th grade Safety Patrol students at Spence Elementary. The Safety Patrol job allows students to build their leadership skills. Recipient: Jocelyn Buxton.

\$363 - To purchase sustainable materials needed for students in the Central High School

Special Education Program to learn how to make, package, and distribute basic food products. These practices create learning opportunities to foster independence within their home and to master job skills. Recipient: Stephanie Mick. *Supported in part by the Tom and Judy Sleik Family Fund of La Crosse Community Foundation*

\$3,299 - made possible by the Maureen and Robert Freedland-LPEF Fund for Studies of the Shoah of La Crosse Community Foundation, this grant will support 7th grade teachers and students to attend the Viterbo Holocaust workshop with keynote speaker, Ida Paluch Kersz.

RAK Forever Starts Now!

Starting in 2019, community organizations and individuals said, "Yes!" to supporting immediate needs of students and their families forever by funding the creation of the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Forever Fund.

The campaign to establish the fund concluded with over \$500,000 raised after an initial goal of \$300,000. Not only did pledges far surpass the goal, but 100% of pledges have been fulfilled!

This overwhelming support shows how deeply our community cares about making sure students can get to school, be ready to learn, and be able to participate fully in school activities.

This year the RAK Forever Fund will make its first distribution, which will support about half of the \$40,000 that meets student and family needs through RAK each school year. With strong community support and distributions from the RAK Forever Fund, schools are able to address even more barriers that students face in school.

Because you give, students can have bikes repaired and buy bus passes. They can get winter coats and period supplies. They can get shoes for basketball season and have field trip fees covered. Thank you for supporting RAK through outright donations and the RAK Forever Fund to help kids just be kids!





Follow QR Code for more details about Raffle Tickets, becoming a sponsor and how to golf with us!

Sat, Sept 7, 2024

Forest Hills Golf Course
Check-in 8am
Shotgun Start 9am

Early Bird registration opens soon!



Thank you, 2024 Grants Award Luncheon Sponsors and Education Investors!

Presenting Sponsor



Salute to Educators Sponsor



MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM



Table Sponsors: La Crosse Tribune, La Crosse Education Association, Association of La Crosse School Administrators, School District of La Crosse Board of Education, Western Technical College, Viterbo University, Western Technical College Foundation, CCFBank, UWL Alumni & Friends Foundation

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La Crosse Public Education Foundation

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LPEF Welcomes New Board Members Blake Barnes and Dustin Hundt

The La Crosse Public Education Foundation is pleased to welcome Blake Barnes and Dustin Hundt to our Board of Directors.



Blake currently works as a Family Office Trust and Tax Specialist at Trust Point. Prior to working at Trust Point, he worked in public accounting. Blake lives in La Crosse and is the proud parent to three young children. He is an avid tea drinker and enjoys running in his free time - either after his kids or on the marsh trail.

Dustin currently works at CCFBank as a Regional

President. Dustin lives in La Crosse with his wife and three children, two of which attend Emerson Elementary School. Dustin is a graduate of Central High School.

If interested in serving on the LPEF board or one of our committees, contact Nell to learn more.



LPEF Legacy Society



The La Crosse Public Education Foundation's Legacy Society is made up of individuals who have made significant contributions to public education through LPEF in one of several ways.

Legacy Society members have given \$10,000 (either as a one-time donation or cumulatively over 10 years), have established an endowed fund with LPEF, or have included LPEF in their estate plans.

Adding LPEF as a beneficiary on an asset such as a retirement account or in a will can be a simple way to include support for public education in your own legacy planning. There are many ways to make plans to invest in public education later. Visit <https://lacrosseeducationfoundation.org/giving/ways-to-give-later/> for more information.

If you have questions about the LPEF Legacy Society or if you've already included LPEF in your estate plans, reach out to nell@lacrosseeducationfoundation.org to share your intentions.

Support a school. Raise a community.



Members of the La Crosse Confluence perform at LPEF's Grants Award Luncheon. Confluence is a rock band made up of Logan and Central High Schoolers, and was started in Spring 2023, partially funded by a Gold Star Grant.

La Crosse Public Education Foundation
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Bikes at Summit



With funding from a Gold Star Grant, Summit Elementary Preschool teacher Cathy Leon purchased bikes, shovels, and sleds to promote gross motor development at recess.

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 and to promote community understanding and support for public education.

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