powering up the future

LAWRENCE SCHOOLS FOUNDATION | LEAP
2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT
Greetings!

People often ask me about my “why” and my passion for the Lawrence Schools Foundation and the Lawrence Public Schools district. My answer is simple: I truly believe that there is no higher calling for a community than to educate its children. As a mother of three, I know public education worldwide is a critical gateway to ensuring that a bright future is available to all.

The Foundation’s fundraising philosophy has stewardship at its core. We recognize that you count on us to support a high-quality, visionary education for every child within the Lawrence Public Schools. We are committed to building a strong relationship with our community and demonstrating the efficacy of Foundation-funded programs and opportunities for our classrooms, students and educators.

As we look toward the 2017-2018 school year, the trustees and staff of the Foundation are committed to exploring new ways to expand our reach within the community to strengthen and grow our support for each child, each classroom, each educator.

On behalf of the Foundation, I thank the many volunteers who work community wide on behalf of early learning, our partners who share in our commitment to quality education, and the many who directly deliver the services that create the foundation for successful learning for our children and their families.

We hope that you will discover your “why” that will inspire you to help us grow the Foundation. Thank you for believing in what we do and for your continued generosity!

Dena Johnston
Executive Director, Lawrence Schools Foundation

Dear friends,

Nothing is as telling about a community as the quality of its public schools. In Lawrence we are blessed with schools of high quality that work hard every day to help prepare children of all ages and abilities for an ever-changing future.

While the real magic happens between a teacher and a student, there is much that goes on behind the scenes to build a support network to make that experience as rich, as equitable and as meaningful as possible. This is where your Lawrence Schools Foundation plays a vital role — connecting our community’s collective talent and treasure with the greatest unmet needs in our schools.

From early childhood to the arts, from technology to bus rides, your Foundation finds needs and then finds resources to help meet those needs.

In behalf of our entire board and staff, thank you to the many people that make all of this amazing work possible. Our donors have put their resources where their hearts are, and our kids are the ones who benefit. It is clear that Lawrence values its children and their education.

Scott Morgan
President, Lawrence Schools Foundation Board

Our work at the Lawrence Schools Foundation is to bolster student achievement and teaching excellence in Lawrence Public Schools. Your support is instrumental in changing young lives at a time when our schools need us now more than ever. Please include the Foundation in your charitable giving. It’s easy to give, and every amount is welcome!

Dena Johnston
Executive Director, LSF

Jamie Sinclair
Coordinator, LSF/LEAP

Mike Strauss
Development and Marketing Specialist, LSF/LEAP

Scott Morgan
President, Lawrence Schools Foundation Board

2017 Lawrence Schools Foundation Board

Front row, from left: Jennifer Berquist, Susan Henderson, Mark Buhler, Brandon Young, Tim Mock, Scott Morgan, Becca Koester, Dena Johnston, Lindsey Slater, Jill Fincher

Back row, from left: Jamie Sinclair, Becca Booth, Gail Vick, Becki Carl, Christopher Anderson, Sandra Gautt, Robin Ward, David Williams, Darcovy Soto, Anna Stubbefield, Martin Moore, Tom Hornbaker, Pam Zenger, Patrick Kelly, Mike Strauss

www.lawrenceschoolsfoundation.org
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“Strong public schools are essential to our democracy and we see that in so many ways.”

—Angela Filo

REMEMBERING TO GIVE: ANGELA (BUENNING) FILO AND SRINJA SRINIVASAN

Srinija Srinivasan and Angela (Buenning) Filo were the best of friends growing up in Lawrence where they attended Lawrence Public Schools and graduated from LHS in 1989. Their lives were intertwined at every stage. They attended each other’s birthday parties and had sleepovers in elementary school. They played volleyball and basketball together at West Middle School. At Lawrence High School, they were the best of friends growing up in Lawrence Public Schools.

“Both attended Stanford University where they were roommates as seniors. Today they both reside in Palo Alto, Calif, less than two miles apart, serve together on the Stanford Board of Trustees and remain ‘like sisters.’”

They share common interests including ethnic food, jazz and cultural events. And despite living 1,800 miles away from their childhood homes, they also share the same interest in making a difference in the lives of Lawrence Public Schools students, as both are donors to the Lawrence Schools Foundation.

“I was aware of the challenges of funding the public schools in the state (of Kansas),” Srinivasan says. “And yet, how lucky I was to have the breadth of experiences that were available to me in Lawrence Public Schools. It wasn’t just the great teachers, but also the extracurricular opportunities. For example, art programs were regular, recurring classes that could be part of my day. “I started wondering about how we as a broader community make choices about what we are supporting in public schools and arts in the public schools. I wanted to find out if there was a way I could be of use to the public schools.”

At that time the Lawrence Schools Foundation had completed a survey to get a sense of what needs were being met and were not met in the schools.

“The biggest need was discretionary funds for teachers,” Srinivasan says. “It occurred to me to do something to spur private giving to public education in Lawrence the way I was seeing it here (in Palo Alto).”

Srinivasan spoke at the Foundation’s first fundraising Community Education Breakfast in 2002 when she was the editor of Yahoo and was part of a campaign to encourage the community to support the Foundation.

Angela Filo was one who responded.

“Srinija put (donating) on my radar,” Filo says. “My husband Dave and I care very deeply about helping all students have access to a high-quality public school system.”

Filo established the Yellow Chair Foundation, which awards grants to organizations focused on education, civil liberties, gender equity and the environment. “Strong public schools are essential to our democracy and we see that in so many ways,” she says.

Srinivasan and Filo are proud to provide resources to teachers and hope others in the community feel the same way. “I applaud the Lawrence Schools Foundation’s grants to allow teachers to make their ideas a reality in their classroom. I believe we need to lift up teachers and give them the tools they need to help every student succeed,” Filo says. “It is important to engage community members to support public education however they can!”

Today, half a country away from where their friendship began, they continue to provide opportunities for today’s students, in hopes that they have the best possible education they can receive — right here in Lawrence.

“The Davidson Fund has been an invaluable partner,” Plinsky says. “Roughly 25 percent of the students LHS has qualified for the national tournament also qualify for free or reduced lunch. This means that they would have been significantly burdened by the task of fundraising, while finishing the semester and preparing for the competition.”

Davidson knows the value of what students receive from being on the debate team.

“Debate was the single-most important activity in which I participated in high school in terms of my future academic and career development,” says Davidson, now president and chief operating officer of The Options Clearing Corporation in Chicago. “The teamwork and intensity of the competition were amazing, but most important were learning to think on your feet, organize your thoughts into a persuasive message, and communicate cogently with your audience. Those are life-long skills.”

He says the extracurricular programs provided by the Lawrence Public Schools helped him become a better person, and the skills and lessons learned from these opportunities have carried over to adulthood.

“I was a pretty introverted, nerdy kid,” Davidson says. “Debate and Forensics and the instrumental music program got me out of my shell. Public speaking has been instrumental in my career and music has been a critical means to relieve the stress of a career on ‘Wall Street.’”

“My wife Shirley Shaeffer and I strongly feel that activities which promote life-long skills should be universally accessible, irrespective of the financial wherewithal of individual families or the constrained spending priorities of the school district.”

UP FOR DEBATE: JOHN DAVIDSON III

Many different special funds, with many different purposes, are managed by the Lawrence Schools Foundation. Donors have established and contributed to funds for that support music, AP testing, math and science, visual arts, computer science, school gardens, marathon clubs and more.

Because of the generosity of donors to the Foundation, our students get to do more — they can see live performances at the KU Lied Center, take music lessons, get help to pay for college admission tests, receive school supplies, be a part of the robotics team, etc.

The Davidson Debate Fund was started by Lawrence High School graduate John Davidson III in 2004. These monies have helped defray or cover any fees or travel expenses for high school students on the debate and forensic teams when they qualify for competitions.

Jeff Plinsky has been the debate team coach at Lawrence High School since 2005. In that time, 44 students from LHS have qualified for the national speech and debate tournaments. These trips cost money.

“The Davidson Fund has been an invaluable partner,” Plinsky says.

“Activities that promote life-long skills should be universally accessible.”

—John Davidson III
LEARNING SUCCESS: CHLOE O’DELL
In 1996, 4-year-old Chloe O’Dell was diagnosed with ADHD and OCD. According to her aunt, Becca Booth, Chloe was always incredibly bright, but had a very hard time fitting into a “standard” daycare and preschool. At that time, a Lawrence Public Schools preschool program was in the groundbreaking stage, with the goal of having “all children start kindergarten ready to learn.” The Lawrence Early Childhood Educational Readiness Program turned out to be a perfect fit for Chloe. She was enrolled in the very first class.

“Chloe thrived in the environment,” Booth says. “She learned that she really could be successful.”

Today Chloe is working on a double major in psychology and women’s studies with a minor in Spanish, on a nearly full-ride scholarship. "Receiving the Brian Shirk Memorial Scholarship showed me that serving your community is a personal commitment," Chestnut says. "It is not just a task for other people or institutions; it is our personal responsibility to support our neighbors."

PAYING IT FORWARD: SPENCER CHESTNUT
As a senior at Free State High School in 2010, Spencer Chestnut received the Brian Shirk Memorial Scholarship. The $500 gift did more than just help buy books and offset fees in college. It went much deeper.

Fast forward six years and the impact of the scholarship was confirmed when Chestnut, now a process scientist at Elanco Animal Health, decided to establish an annual scholarship for a Free State student interested in pursuing a degree in one of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields. "Receiving the Brian Shirk Memorial Scholarship showed me that serving your community is a personal commitment," Chestnut says. “It is not just a task for other people or institutions; it is our personal responsibility to support our neighbors. My scholarship is just my small contribution to a community that has made an enormous contribution to my life, and it is my small way to empower the next generation of students. A healthy community that supports and strengthens the next generation does not just appear from nowhere,” he says. “Healthy communities form only when hundreds of individuals are intentionally seeking to improve their schools and their neighbor’s lives.”

“It is our personal responsibility to support our neighbors.”

–Spencer Chestnut

STUDENT CHAMPIONS Each year seniors from both high schools are recognized at the annual Community Education Breakfast. Students are selected by their counselors on the basis of scholarship and leadership. The 2016 champions were Francisco Flores and Kahler Welbe of Free State High School, and Cole Brungardt and Canon Diako of Lawrence High School.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS In 2016, more than $51,000 in scholarships administered through the Lawrence Schools Foundation was awarded to seniors at Lawrence High School and Free State High School. These recognition scholarships range from $500 to $2,500 and go towards assisting seniors with their post-high school learning. They are made possible by individuals, families and organizations, often in honor or remembrance of someone special and/or to encourage young scholars to pursue a particular field of study. To see a complete list of scholarships provided and the year-by-year recipients, visit www.lawrenceschools.foundation.org and click on the programs link.

award-winning students
“It has been really exciting to see them so interested and eager.”

—Jennifer Williams

### Teaching Grants

The Foundation awards a number of teaching grants each year, courtesy of our generous donors. Teachers and educators are encouraged to apply.

**Innovative Teaching Grants** are awarded to teachers who implement innovative and unique programs or projects for their students that enliven learning, result in increased student achievement, and engage students in critical thinking and problem solving. Twelve grants totaling $23,175 were awarded this year.

**School Assistance Grants** fund defined areas of use for needs that are not being met with state or federal monies. Five grants totaling $8,050 were awarded.

**MusicWorks! Grants** provide music educators funds to enhance access to, enrich the quality of, and expand the educational experiences of their students. Two grants were awarded this year total $1,500.

**Carl Knox Staff Development Grant** (new in 2017) funds professional development experiences, such as summer institutes, action research, mentoring experience, or lesson study. Two grants were awarded this year to three educators, totaling $1,000.

### Donor Spotlight

**MusicWorks! Grants**

Dr. Bob and Katherine Dinsdale know the effect music education has on individuals. There is research which shows students who participate in music education typically produce better math and reading scores. When the funding of music programs started to become an afterthought in the schools, the community, with the Dinsdales’ leadership, became involved and established a music fund through the Lawrence Schools Foundation.

Each year music teachers can apply for a MusicWorks! Grant, which provides funds they need to enhance access to, enrich the quality of, and expand the educational experiences of their students.

“Music education must be available to everyone,” Dr. Dinsdale said. “It helps young brains learn. It fosters community and teamwork in our schools. It exposes students to different ways of expressing themselves, other cultures, and other languages. Lawrence has an incredible array of music educators and talented students and we need to treasure and support them. It will benefit all students.”

Kerstin Wondra, the district’s assistant director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, appreciates the community support.

“Music has transitioned in importance throughout the years, especially since it is so rarely tied to funding streams and standardized testing,” Wondra says. “However, Lawrence has embraced a proud tradition of support for music and the arts and it continues to hold a place in the overall educational program.”

### Hands-On Academy Teacher Grant

Thanks to a special Lawrence Schools Foundation grant that provides opportunities for hands-on experiences, fourth graders at Hillcrest Elementary were able to turn their classroom learning into active work.

After learning about renewable energy in school, students were transported by bus to the Lawrence College and Career Center three days in a row to design and build models that would harness renewable resources such as wind energy, water energy and solar energy, and convert those into electrical energy.

This opportunity was made possible by the generosity of Robert and Lois Handzik, who established an annual Handzik Hands On Academy Teacher Grant with the Lawrence Schools Foundation in the summer of 2016. The grants are made available to Hillcrest Elementary teachers.

“One thing they got out of this was that building and spending days working and not doing pencil and paper stuff is hard,” says Hillcrest teacher Tyler Gill. “They definitely learned some cooperative skills and team-building skills. They had to be creative and use the problem-solving and creative thinking parts of their brain. We definitely grew from day one to day three.”

### Coding Fun: Dash and Dot Robotics

Bringing robots to life through the creation of code is what students at Langston Hughes Elementary School were able to do after library media specialist Jennifer Williams received an Innovative Teaching Grant from the Lawrence Schools Foundation.

This interactive project was tied into topics the students covered in class and led to deeper learning in addition to the coding lessons. Fourth graders learned about the aidarian through reading and researching and then coded a robot to try to follow the trail.

Third graders studying about Quantrill’s Raid, slavery and the Underground Railroad were able to code a robot to see if it could follow a path, not unlike escaping slaves seeking freedom. “This led to a great conversation about how all slaves who tried to follow the Drinking Gourd might not have made it to freedom and allowed us to also talk about what may have happened to those who were caught,” Williams says.

It has been really exciting as a teacher to see them so interested and eager to take part in an activity that, while fun, is really preparing them for a great day of what their future may hold,” says Williams.
The Lawrence Education Achievement Partners (LEAP) have been active for more than 24 years, aiming to enhance opportunities for students in the Lawrence Public Schools through mentorship and training. The LEAP partners are businesses and community organizations that contribute to the schools in various ways, such as providing scholarships, funding academic programs, and participating in educational events.

The LEAP partners for the 2016-2017 school year include organizations like Breaken Arrow, Central National Bank, Checks & Pet World, Cordley Capital City Bank, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Deeringfield Hy-Vee, Hillcrest Body Boutique, Lied Center of Kansas and U.S. Bank, and The Merc Co-op. These partners have engaged in activities such as volunteering at schools, providing classroom supplies, and making monetary donations.

The LEAP TOTALS for the 2016-2017 school year include an overview of contributions from various partners, categorized by cash donations, in-kind gifts, volunteer value, and total contributions. The breakdown shows contributions from organizations like Capital Federal Savings, Hy-Vee-Clinton Parkway McDonald's of Lawrence, Prairie Park Capital Federal Savings, Hy-Vee-Clinton Parkway, and Peoples Bank-Harper Street.

For more information on the LEAP partners and their contributions, please refer to the document for the full list. The LEAP partners serve as role models for the students and emphasize the importance of giving back to the community.
on Friday, November 18, 2016. Donations totaled $700. More than $20,000 was raised.

talented teachers, staff and administrators put on another fabulous show and had a chance to unwind as the school year drew $45,000 was raised for Foundation programs through sponsorships and ticket sales.

Breakfast. Our keynote speaker Karen Hough, a 1985 graduate of Lawrence High School, is founder and CEO of ImprovEdge and an Amazon bestselling author. Hough used her improvisation know-how to get us thinking about creative problem solving. More than

People throughout Lawrence gave our schools a boost up when they dressed down and donated at work events in review

重大活动

COMMUNITY EDUCATION BREAKFAST More than 500 staff and administrators put on another fabulous show and had a chance to unwind as the school year drew to a close. More than $20,000 was raised.

LIDC CENTER / LSF EXPANDING ARTS ACCESS DINNER

新学年

Four seniors were recognized as student champions at the 2016 Community Ovation! Talent Show.

Masters

Middle school and high school students performed at the inaugural Ovation! Talent Show.

PLAY

谢谢您，捐赠者！

making a difference all year long

SHARE

ENGAGE

COMMITTEE

new this year

Ovation! Middle school and high school students are recognized on the mainland on the main stage of the Lid Center Auditorium. This new talent show, created and produced by Lawrence High School student Graham Edmonds and sponsored by Willerson, Saunders & Anderson, DDS, raised $4,000 for Foundation programs.

December dine and donate

Supporting our schools never tasted so good! Thank you to all of you for participating in this year’s activities.

Casual for kids

People throughout Lawrence gave our schools a boost up when they dressed down and donated at work on Friday, November 18, 2016. Donations totaled $700.