

# INSPIRING POSSIBILITIES.

Help us give new opportunities  
to Lincoln students.

## Forging a Path to Success

When Kamryn Sannicks walked into the room at North Star High School and saw three adults she didn't know waiting at the table, her stomach did a backflip. She was there to interview for the Carstens scholarship as a final candidate. "I knew this scholarship would be important for me to be able to go to school, because my mom isn't able to provide for my college expenses."



*Kamryn Sannicks, Carstens Scholarship recipient* Wendy Van, the President of the Foundation was there, along with Board members Karla Cooper and Laurie Boyd Petty – and they

knew something Kamryn didn't: she had already been selected and they were there to tell her she was going to receive one of the four \$40,000 scholarships. Students who are hard working, have faced and overcome challenges, and are majoring in business or agriculture are qualified to apply. "The donors hope this scholarship will be a life changing experience for the students, enabling them to achieve something that may have been out of reach," says Wendy.

"It was an amazing moment – and one of my favorite things to do at the Foundation" Wendy continues, "These scholarships are so life-changing for students. We are grateful to Mr. Robert Carstens for having the foresight to establish a fund, through his estate, for students like Kamryn. His generosity and the vision his foundation directors have for his ideas is humbling." Kelly Jo Hinrichs is the administrator of the Carstens Foundation. She believes it is important to support our community's future parents and leaders.

To Kamryn, it has made a world of difference, "My

mom knows I'm taken care of - now I can focus on being a student. This scholarship has taken all of the weight off my shoulders."

Kamryn plans on double majoring in Political Science and Economics and minoring in Software Programming. "After I graduate, I will go to basic training for the army and then serve in the army reserves. I hope to run for office someday and make a difference for people like my family and other families that need a fighting voice in the legislature, and in any elected office."

Another recipient of the Carstens Scholarship, Matthew Baldwin, graduated in May from Lincoln Southeast High School. "My school counselor thought I'd be a good fit for the Carstens Scholarship because I have struggled my whole life with visual impairment, but I never allowed that to get in my way. I was a high achieving student because I always pushed myself, even though schoolwork was really hard for me."



*Matthew Baldwin, Carstens Scholarship recipient* today."

According to Matthew, "The biggest thing I think for determining future success is hope. If you don't have hope for a better tomorrow, you're not going to be inspired to work hard

Baldwin plans on majoring in Accounting, and he is considering career paths such as Tax Law, or becoming a CPA (Certified Public Accountant). He is interested in being involved in the financial side of professional sports. "We have a really good school system, and there are a ton of resources that can help students find opportunities like this scholarship from the Foundation for LPS – it is like a dream come true."

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## Skyward Bound - An Unexpected Opportunity

Megan Wackel is learning to fly, thanks to an opportunity through the Foundation for LPS. Scott and Jane Stuart recently established the "Learn to Fly" fund because they hoped to see more girls become pilots.

Megan was the perfect fit, since she has wanted to fly ever since she saw a Blue Angels airshow in 8th grade. "It is one thing in my life I know that I want to do for sure," she said. A recent Pius High School graduate, Megan has signed up for the ROTC program, and will join the Air Force after college graduation. Ideally, she wants to pilot a jet or fighter plane.



*Megan Wackel, Learn to Fly recipient*

Megan first heard about "Learn to Fly" from her high school guidance counselor. "I'm so thankful I applied, and I'm grateful to the Foundation for making this possible! I never knew something like this was a possibility."

Megan has spent a lot of her summer at Silverhawk Aviation in Lincoln. She's flying 2-4 hours every day, and has 15 hours logged already. She's been flying a propeller plane over the summer for her lessons. She's also been taking online lessons, which she describes as "a lot like drivers-ed, but so much more fun."

**"It is a crazy opportunity. I would never have been able to do this without the help of the Foundation."**

**- Megan Wackel, Learn to Fly recipient**

So far, Megan loves flying. "It's amazing," she said. "It is a crazy opportunity. I love the communication I've had with Scott, the donor. He has been so supportive - it was great meeting him." Her favorite thing about flying is the challenge. She compared the first time she flew to going to a different country without knowing the language. "It is hard, but really invigorating. I really like challenging myself and doing things I have never done before."

Her advice for anybody that wants to apply to the "Learn to Fly" fund is "Just go for it. Don't be afraid to do what you want to do, even if you've never done it before."

Megan started college at UNL this fall as a freshman, where she'll study engineering with the goal of working with water treatment systems and other environmentally impactful areas. And of course, she'll be working toward fulfilling her dream of flying fighter jets.

"I would never have pictured myself here," she said. "I would have just have had a normal summer before starting college, and now I'm flying planes. It changed my summer and really, my whole life will be on a different trajectory"

# STRONG, STABLE FAMILIES

## Nurturing Very Young Minds: Music and Celebration

Due to increased efforts to provide more early childhood opportunities in recent years, the number of children who are kindergarten ready increased 10-16% between 1998-2010 and ethnic/racial achievement gaps also declined. Improvements occurred among both low and high-income children, although the largest gains occurred in low-income households. That is heartening news for those working to level the playing field for all children.

Last year alone, Lincoln Public Schools provided early childhood care for over 1,800 kids in programs like infant toddler care, pre-school and home-based early intervention - and there is a waiting list of over 600. With 43% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch in our schools today, the

**43% of LPS students live in or near poverty**

need is great. The good news is that it is making a big difference.

Working together, our community can make even greater strides toward these goals – and that is exactly what we are committed to at the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools. With your help, we can enrich our community for years to come. “Sometimes it takes the smallest action to make a world of difference; something clicks for a child that allows them to be successful, creating a path to success in the future” says Cara Lucas-Richt, Director of Early Childhood Education for LPS.

**The LPS Early Childhood Education Fund** at the Foundation provides support for a wide diversity of needs – from classroom supplies to diapers, formula, clothing and even birth certificates for families who can’t afford them. It started with gifts to honor the life of Ann Irvine, the founder of the Student/Parent Program at LPS. This program helps students who are parents find success and parenting skills so they do not drop out of school.

Ann Irvine



Lincoln’s own celebrity early childhood educator, Hannah Huston, also believes in the power of early childhood education. She knows the challenges kids have first hand. Before her journey to “The Voice” began, she worked in the early childhood classroom at Arnold Elementary School. Her performance

with the Lincoln Symphony on September 18th at the Lied Center, is a benefit concert for the **LPS Early Childhood Education Fund for Excellence**.

Thank you to Hannah Huston and Ann Irvine’s family for choosing to make a difference in the lives of students for years to come. Interested in supporting early childhood education? You can donate online by choosing the LPS early Childhood Education Fund for Excellence when giving at [www.foundationforlps.org/](http://www.foundationforlps.org/)

Hannah Huston



[give/funds/students-in-need.html](http://www.foundationforlps.org/give/funds/students-in-need.html) or call Scott Larson – our Director of Philanthropy at 402-436-1859.

## A Part of the Team

Did you know that 32% of students who participate in high school athletics qualify for free and reduced lunch? We know that participation in athletics or other extra-curricular activities increases a student’s likelihood to succeed in school, because being part of a team can be a powerful motivator.

For most families, parents can support the equipment and supplies needed to be a part of the team. But for some, this can become a barrier to participate. The



*Lincoln High Soccer Team*

**Activities Assistance Fund** levels the playing field. Each student who qualifies, receives a voucher to purchase the shoes and equipment and a physical provided by a community partner.

According to Kathi Weiskamp, Director of Activities and Athletics at LPS, “Providing resources to students so they can participate in sporting activities can make the difference between a student being successful and confident or struggling to find a place to fit in. Being involved as part of a team can help students stay motivated.”

Last year alone over \$9,000 was distributed to 109 promising athletes. The need is great - help us ensure that ALL students are ready to play. Interested in providing shoes for students? Go to <http://www.foundationforlps.org/give/funds/> then click on Sportsmanship & Athletics: Donate to a Sportsmanship & Athletics Fund or contact Scott Larson at [scott.larson@lps.org](mailto:scott.larson@lps.org).

# BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



## One Book, One Family

Jennifer Cejda redefines the librarian role every day of her life. For her, the library contains more than black text, creased spines and barcodes.

The **One Book, One Family** program was already established at Irving through a grant to the Foundation for LPS from Wells Fargo. This creative and popular program is a great example of “Beyond the Classroom” – one of the pillars of the Foundations work.

The One Book, One Family Program originated at Irving as an extracurricular activity for parents and students to strengthen their relationship and find common interests. This program gives parents a chance to see their kids interacting with other children during discussions that challenge the way they think and reason. One Book, One Family encourages families to enjoy reading together and creates opportunities to facilitate daily conversation about things other than school work.

It has also created a community of parents that Jenn can go to with ideas and communication. The program has been so successful, it has doubled the number of participants in the past five years (up to 53!) with the help of Language Arts teacher Betsy Miller. The Foundation grant provides funding which covers the cost of attendance, meals and other improvements. Building community connections with businesses that donate to the program has been another positive outcome of the program.

**“As a parent of a teen boy, it is always a treat to have something to enjoy together” – Irving Parent**

One particular student started out as a shy sixth grader when she first joined One Book, One Family. By the time she was in 8th grade, she led

discussion and encouraged interaction between all of the other students.

One parent expressed her support for the program saying, “As a parent of a teen boy, it is always a treat to have something to enjoy together. I am certain that this takes a lot of time to organize, and we are so grateful that Mrs. Cejda continues to do it.”



*Families participating in One Book, One Family at Irving*

Students from sixth, seventh and eighth grade are encouraged to join and participate. Determining which books might provoke discussion and exploring various genres helps appeal to all kinds of readers, according to Jenn. “It’s fun to see both kids and adults ‘testing the waters’ with different genres and exploring how literature speaks to them.” A wonderful part of group interaction is that it leads to friendships that expand across grade levels and helps bring the Irving community together. “It really is a great way to engage families, encourage reading and bring our school community together, and we are so grateful for the support that allows us to do that.”

# NEXT-LEVEL LEARNING

## Creating Leaders Through Economics

When Gau stepped off the plane he could barely contain himself. He couldn't wait to see his teacher, Carol Mathias - and he could not stop smiling. Gau started talking a mile a minute as Mrs. Mathias, The Career Academy's embedded Econ/Psych instructor met him at the gate. "Thank you, thank you! It was such an amazing experience. I learned so much - and it has changed me. I can't thank you enough."

At the Foundation, we love making experiences like this a reality for kids - and our generous donors are the ones who do the heavy lifting. Without The Career Academy's **Experiences Fund**, Gau and his classmate Kessa, who also attended an Economics for Leaders (EFL) Conference, would not have been able to have this key experience in their lives. It is something they both will look at as a turning point.

It all began with a caring teacher who saw an opportunity, and a homework assignment blossomed into a life-changing experience for Gau Ayaj and Kessa Rogers. Mrs. Mathias, wanted to challenge her students, so she had them complete the application for the conference. She knew the application process



*Kessa Rogers, Carol Mathias and Gau Ayaj at The Career Academy*

alone would force them to truly reflect on themselves and their goals in life, and she knew what an amazing experience it could be if they were chosen to attend.

Economics For Leaders is a summer program for high school students that changes the way they look at the world. It is supported by leading universities all across the nation, and admission is highly competitive. Once Gau and Kessa were accepted, Carol did every-

thing she could to help them attend, including reaching out to the Foundation for LPS for support. Jumping on board right away, the Foundation was able to sponsor Gau and Kessa's EFL experience. This example of "Next-Level Learning" enables students to participate in enriching activities that are outside the school system.

*"These kids have come back so excited, ready to make a difference in their school and wider communities. Without this help, they simply wouldn't have been able to go." - Carol*

They learned about concepts like compromise and the vital role it plays within economics and leadership, "Vulnerability is a big piece of it" Kessa expressed, "that's what creates trust." Bringing people with different backgrounds and viewpoints together is important to learn how to work as a team, which has wider implications for society. "I can't say enough how much this has made an impression on me. I came back a completely different person. I was brighter, more positive."

Kessa attends Northeast High School and TCA in the Health Sciences pathway. She plans to finish at TCA and transfer credits to UNL where she will study Dentistry. Her ultimate goal is to become an orthodontist.

Gau attends Northeast High School and TCA in the Engineering pathway. He and his family moved to Lincoln from Sudan and Egypt in 2004 when he was five years old. He is interested in possibly attending school at UCLA or Denver.

Supporting experiences for students like Kessa and Gau is important, and something we love to work towards with our donors - matching their philanthropic passions to student need. When our community comes together, great opportunities can happen for students - and that's pretty special.

**Together, we can continue to lift students higher.**  
[www.foundationforlps.org/give](http://www.foundationforlps.org/give) ➔ Inspiring Dreams

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Public education is the foundation of a great community. At the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools, we support the entire student experience because issues facing children affect them well beyond the school day.

Your support creates and enhances educational opportunities for thousands of students in Lincoln. Thank you for helping the Foundation transform and inspire possibilities for students — because all students should have what they need to reach their full potential.

#### DONATIONS AT WORK

We distributed over \$840,000 to nearly 500 student opportunities in 2015. Your gifts provide classroom grants for new learning experiences, innovative programs, student emergency needs, college scholarships, educator awards, and opportunities for low income students.

#### WAYS TO GIVE

Donate online: [www.foundationforlps.org/give](http://www.foundationforlps.org/give)  
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# OUR FOUR PILLARS

At the Foundation we focus on the whole child. We know learning doesn't stop when a student leaves the classroom. Our pillars address physical, emotional, academic and enrichment needs of all students.



## STRONG, STABLE FAMILIES

Addressing basic and emergency needs

**\$15,989**

Provided for emergency needs

**120** Families helped through Family Literacy program

**133** Families supported in times of crisis

"We are so thankful for the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools AND the amazing donors who support our students throughout the year. Thank you!"

— Mike Robb  
Irving Middle School, Music Teacher

## NEXT-LEVEL LEARNING

Partnering with the community to enrich student learning

**\$23,285**

Given for overseas experience and language immersion

**139** 5<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in Saturday Science

"Without the help of our community, we wouldn't be able to offer this experience to our students. We are very grateful for their generosity!"

— Curtis Mann  
Meadow Lane Elementary, 5th Grade Teacher

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Wrapping resources around extra-curricular activities

**\$10,000**

Distributed to arts and music programs

**\$22,460** Given to athletic funds

## FUND-A-NEED

**127** Classroom needs met

**39** Schools served

**\$61,000+** Raised to support classroom needs

# OUR MISSION

We believe all students should have what they need to reach their full potential. We engage our community to inspire students and educators, and create educational opportunities that enhance academic and personal success.

## COLLEGE AND CAREER

Helping students get ready to thrive

**90** Scholarships

**121** Students

**\$208,185** Total Awarded

## THE CAREER ACADEMY

**186** Tuition reimbursements awarded

**\$235,004** Raised to support: Student Experiences, Scholarships and Equipment

### CELEBRATIONS AND AWARDS

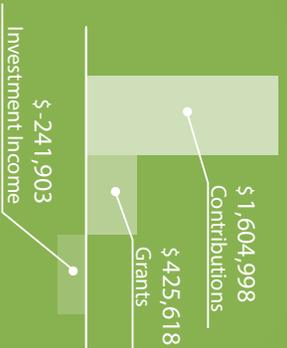
2015 Inspire Awards: 56 students and 57 staff members were celebrated and recognized / Hill Elementary named Inspire School of the Year | 2015 Educator Awards: 13 total awards, 16 teachers awarded \$18,500

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2014-2015

**Total Assets**  
**\$9,248,579**



**Total Receipts**  
**\$1,788,713**



**Total Expenses**  
**\$1,709,609**



# MARK YOUR CALENDARS



## Nominations Open for 2016-17 Educator Awards

Nominate an outstanding educator for a 2016-17 Educator Award!  
Opens September 12th until October 25th. Please go to:  
[foundationforlps.org/educatorawards](http://foundationforlps.org/educatorawards)



## Scholarship Applications

Scholarship applications open on December 15th.  
Learn more at: [foundationforlps.org/scholarships](http://foundationforlps.org/scholarships)



## Donor Coffee

Our Donor Coffee was on September 16th at the Zoo School from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. We had some great coffee, conversation and delicious pastries were supplied by Le Quartier Bakery. Attendees learned about how the Zoo School engages students, and took a tour of the facilities. Find out more about the great work being done in our school district and the community - attend one of our next Donor Coffees. We'll keep you in the loop!

## Your weekly grocery store run could support your favorite LPS school

Supporting your favorite school has never been easier. Sign up for the Propelr card today to make a difference for students – at no cost to you. Your every day errands like groceries, gas and fast food stops will make a difference. We all need an excuse to go shopping!

The “Propelr” card, is pre-paid visa card. You can have multiple cards per family and preload the cards for great lessons in financial management or ease in supporting that kid away at college. There are no fees associated with loading your card, which is a great benefit and different than many other pre-paid cards. Each time you make a purchase, the vendor donates a portion to up to 5 LPS schools or programs of your choice including the Foundation for LPS. Your card can even boast your school logo – isn't that fun? The funds will go directly into the Fund for Excellence, to be used at each school.



To sign up and to see the list of participating merchants (more are being added all the time!) and their donation percentages, go to [www.propelrcard.com](http://www.propelrcard.com). Support Education and sign up today!

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