



## Communities in Schools of Lakewood

### Champions for Youth Breakfast Generates Messages of Hope & Perseverance

On March 21, 250 people gathered at Old Country Buffet for the 13th annual Champions for Youth breakfast. Guests were treated to a delicious breakfast, inspirational stories and opportunities to learn more about the work of Communities In Schools of Lakewood (CISL).

Danny Rodriguez set the tone by sharing his amazing life story from drug addiction to managing a successful auto body shop. He credits his progress to mentors and people who offered him an opportunity to prove himself. Danny encouraged guests to make time to mentor young people in our community so they too would have a better chance at breaking through barriers to success.

Clover Park High School (CPHS) senior, Auston Hehman, talked to guests about his struggle with poverty-related challenges that were making it hard to stay in school. CPHS site coordinator, Leah Livingston, worked closely with

Auston to help him in a variety of ways, including getting a job working with Danny Rodriguez. Auston admitted that had it not been for Leah's support, he would have dropped out of school. He now has newfound hope.

Seattle Seahawk Jermaine Kearsse talked about being part of a military family, graduating from Lakes High School and attaining a sociology degree at the University of Washington. He told the crowd how happy he was to resign with the Seahawks so he could stay in the northwest and continue supporting youth in military families through the 15 to 1: Jermaine Kearsse Foundation. The foundation has helped many youth who have lost a parent to persevere and regain hope. Jermaine said, "It only takes one to start a chain reaction." He urged



MC & Board member Dan Livingston with speakers, Jermaine Kearsse, Auston Hehman & Danny Rodriguez

guests to be the "one" who helps a young person overcome adversity and reach their potential.

We greatly appreciate the generous donations of 150 individuals and 19 sponsors. Together, you helped raise \$33,000 which will help CISL to strengthen and expand wraparound academic and support services at Tyee Park, Tillicum and Four Heroes Elementary Schools, Lochburn Middle School and Clover Park High School.

## A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!

If you see one of the sponsors listed below, please thank them for supporting children and families in

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# The Spring Newsletter Focuses on Community Partnerships



## Four Heroes Elementary: Bricks-4-Kidz

-Daniel Nego

Bricks-4-Kidz is one of many partners at Four Heroes Elementary School. When principal John Mitchell heard about Bricks-4-Kidz, he was very excited to forge a partnership that would bring their staff to Four Heroes on Fridays after school.

Bricks-4-Kidz enhances Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning. Students show a high level of engagement when they are building things that can be manipulated, such as lawn mowers, Ferris wheels and catapults. Each day, students ask "Is today Lego day?" When I tell them Bricks-4-Kidz is Fridays only, they are bummed! That's how much they love Bricks-4-Kidz. Their staff has made a positive, educational impact on students at Four Heroes Elementary School.

## Lochburn Middle School: Lakewood YMCA -Hanna Dominquez

Lakewood Family YMCA provides staff and materials for an after-school Art Club, Sports Club and Dance Club through their outreach program. Students are learning the value of teamwork by playing team sports and working together on a dance routine. They also make new friends, gain confidence and "de-stress." Most importantly, the clubs help students academically. In order to participate, students must first participate in one hour of after-school tutoring or homework help, three days a week.



*Pierce County Public Works teaches Tifficum Elementary students about worms and composting.*

## Tyee Park Elementary: University of Puget Sound Partnership

The CISL staff, including Tyee Park site coordinator Ruth Rosas, are University of Puget Sound (UPS) alumni and have helped establish a dynamic partnership with the university. They have arranged for UPS Slater Museum staff to visit schools and show students a variety of animal specimens. They have also led Tyee Park students on campus tours and helped recruit college students to mentor students in our partner schools.

On Feb. 24, the UPS Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement (CICE) transported 11 mentees to tour the campus with their UPS mentor. The students enjoyed group activities such as disc golf with the university's club team and a scavenger hunt at the Slater Museum.

One of the fourth-grade mentees told her mentor, "This trip was so much fun. I think this is the college I want to go to. If I'm really committed, I might get a scholarship."

CISL appreciates all that UPS has done to help younger students stay engaged at school and visualize their pathway to college.



## Clover Park High School: St. Leo's Food Connection

The Food Connection has helped CISL to provide weekend food for up to 20 students each week since November. They have also provided Break Bags for extended breaks, supplementing the Break Bags provided by Clover Park School District through Emergency Food Network. Because of our partnership with Food Connection, we have been able to work with the school counselors to provide additional students with food each extended break.



## CISL and Caring for Kids

CISL's Readiness to Learn Coordinator, Diane Formoso, also directs the work of Caring for Kids. She recently provided site coordinators with several boxes of interactive books. These colorful books provide hours of fun activities that build reading and comprehension skills. Children are thrilled when they receive one of these books.



## Tillicum Elementary: Boy Scouts of America

-Mariana Molina

The Boy Scouts of America Council has partnered with CISL to bring the Scout Reach after-school program to Tillicum Elementary. Twenty boys are involved with fun, hands-on activities that focus on the values of respect, responsibility and citizenship. The boys really

## A Match Made In Lakewood

My mentee, Maria (not her real name), has shown amazing progress since we started meeting five years ago. When I met Maria, she had very little confidence in herself or her abilities. When she entered Lochburn Middle School, she was adamant about not participating in PE and sports.

CARING  
HELPFUL  
ADULTS  
MENTORING  
PROUDLY  
IN  
OUR  
NEIGHBORHOODS  
AND  
SCHOOLS

This year, she has truly blossomed. She ventured out of her comfort zone to play on the Lochburn Middle School Unified Basketball team. They are featured on the school and district's websites for winning gold at the Special Olympics Winter Games. Special Olympics Unified Sports is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of special education students called "athletes" and additional students called "partners" who support the games and assist athletes. Maria loved being part of the team and was proud to show me her medallion.

Maria's basketball coach shared that when Maria joined the team, she was very shy and could not dribble or shoot. By the end of the season, she had scored eight baskets. She was also willing to spend her first weekend away from home to travel to Wenatchee for the Winter Games.

Maria has made the B Honor Roll almost every quarter over the past two years and is now striving to get on the A Honor Roll. She would love to have her mom pin on the Lochburn 4.0 pin!

It has been an honor and pleasure watching, helping and witnessing the growth of this wonderful young lady. She just told me she is planning to play soccer which certainly excites me because that is my sport. Maybe I can teach her a thing or two!

My hope is that Maria realizes what a great future she has ahead of her. I always try to remind her that she can do anything she set sets her mind to.

Diana Halar  
Compliance Inspector, City of Lakewood

# FUNDER IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

## Cindy Thompson- Staunch CISL Supporter

Cindy Thompson is a strong believer in education; that a good education is key to success in one's life. Cindy was an avid reader growing up and that has translated to tutoring students in reading at Clover Park School District elementary schools. Cindy is the daughter of Brewer (Buck) and Helen Thompson, long-time residents of Pierce County. She received her MBA from Pacific Lutheran University and is the former owner of Mountain View Funeral Home in Lakewood, a company which was started by her great-grandfather James Richard Thompson in 1915.

Cindy is now retired and continues to support our community in a variety of ways. She has been a staunch supporter of CISL and was of the major sponsors for Champions for Youth Breakfast. We at CISL are most appreciative of Cindy's generous contributions to our youth. Thank you, Cindy.



## Invest in Our Future Graduates

### Donate Today!

[www.lakewood.ciswa.org](http://www.lakewood.ciswa.org)

or send a check to:

CISL

6402 100th St. SW  
Lakewood, WA 98499



A few CISL board and staff pictured with Jermaine Kearse, founder of the 15:1 Jermaine Kearse Foundation

From left to right: Top row: Melvin Smith, Daniel Davis, Dan Livingston, Jan Cox, Jermaine Kearse, Leah Livingston, Breakfast Committee Chair, Ellie Wilson, Katelyn Billingsley, Daniel Nego. Bottom row: Dave O'Keefe, Margaret Kraft, Krista Silva, Hanna Dominguez, Mariana Molina, Ruth Rosas, Elvia Fernandez, Lua Pritchard, and Curt Warmington

