

Empowering Students, Enriching Communities by Malia Martin

SEF grant helps empower students through Black Student Union Conference

The Springfield Education Foundation (SEF) continues to make a meaningful impact on the lives of students in Springfield Public Schools, most recently through its support of the second annual Black Student Union (BSU) Conference. The event, held at Hamlin Middle School, was funded by an SEF Innovative Educator Grant for \$4,000, spearheaded by Xavier Davis, a dedicated SPS educator committed to student voice and equity.

Thanks to the grant, students from across the district came together in a vibrant, affirming space to celebrate Black culture, build community, and explore leadership. The conference featured inspiring keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and cultural performances, all designed to uplift and empower Black youth attending Springfield middle schools. It provided a platform for students to connect over shared experiences, engage in discussions about identity and equity, and envision themselves as future change-makers.

Events like the BSU Conference are an example of the positive strides Springfield Public Schools are making toward equity and inclusion. With support from SEF, the district is actively investing in culturally responsive education and student empowerment. These efforts not only celebrate diversity but also help foster a stronger, more connected community where every student feels seen, heard, and supported.

This event exemplifies SEF's mission to enrich student learning and promote inclusivity. By funding innovative, student-centered initiatives like this one, SEF ensures that education goes beyond the classroom, nurturing belonging, pride, and purpose.

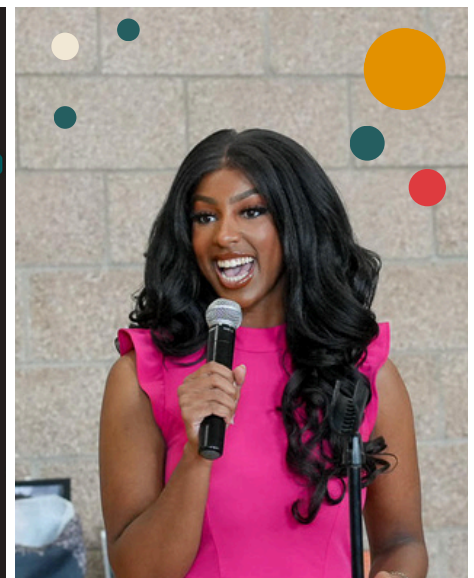


"I really enjoyed the community building and connection. I loved being educated on history and culture."
- BSU Student Attendee

Watch a recap video, compiled by the team at SPS Communications:
bit.ly/BSUC25



Clockwise from top: students attending the BSU Conference; keynote speaker Maliya Morgan, Miss Oregon Volunteer 2024; BSU 2025 artwork; West African Cultural Arts Institute drummer.



New Speech Language Pathology Endowment

SEF donor funds sustain student communication programs

Springfield Education Foundation is proud to announce the establishment of a new Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Endowment to support Springfield Public Schools. Launched in December 2024 with a generous \$25,000 investment from Eugene Speech & Hearing Center, distributions from this endowment will provide approximately \$1,000 annually to enrich SLP services districtwide.

Speech-Language Pathologists are vital in helping students build communication skills across a wide spectrum, from articulation and language development to fluency, voice, hearing support, and more. With this new funding, SLPs can count on annual, sustainable support to

enhance their services. According to Sarah Knudsen, Elementary SLP, this year's funds will go toward a subscription to Ultimate SLP, an engaging, game-based therapy platform. "It supports a broad range of speech and language goals and increases student engagement," she shared. "It can also be used to facilitate supported team and group interaction, helping students get more out of each session." Students have already expressed enthusiasm, saying the program "makes learning fun", and frequently request to use the program.

The SLP Endowment ensures consistent access to innovative tools that adapt to students' evolving needs. Every student deserves to be heard and understood!



Above: SHS Auto students with Les Schwab and SEF; Mark Simmons gives Mr. Taylor a look under the hood

Springfield High School Students Support Veterans Through Hands-On Learning

SHS CTE Automotive Technology students recently made a meaningful impact by refurbishing and donating a 2002 Toyota Highlander to U.S. Army veteran and wildfire survivor Loran Taylor. Made possible by a \$7,500 grant from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, the project provided Mr. Taylor with reliable transportation after losing his home in the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire.

The initiative, called "Operation Rolling Thunder: Students Supporting Veterans," was a collaboration between the Springfield Education Foundation, SHS, and the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group. Under the guidance of teacher Mark Simmons, students applied their skills to give back to the community. Les Schwab Tire Center on Main Street in Springfield also contributed, making this project a community collaboration.

Simmons shared that the program plans to repair and donate at least two more vehicles to veterans, depending on funding and repair needs. Most vehicles are donated by local community members. To donate a vehicle or learn more, contact Mark Simmons at (541) 744-4700.

SEF was proud to help steward this grant and support such a meaningful project. It's a shining example of how education, service, and community can come together to create real impact.

Sponsored by



Live music
Yard games
Dinner & drinks

SEF Summer Celebration 2025:

Margaritaville

Saturday,
June 28, 2025
5 - 8 pm

Tickets \$25,
\$10 for kids



Fundraiser.bid/
SEFSummer25

THS Culinary Gets Competitive *by Nicole De Graff* Innovative Educator Grant gives students unique challenges

Thurston High School Culinary Arts students are improving their talents thanks to a \$4,000 Innovative Educator Grant awarded to CTE Culinary Teacher Crystal Martorano. This grant funds a recipe development project designed to spark creativity and encourage experimentation with diverse cuisines, ingredients, and techniques. The grant funds will purchase supplies for four unique, student-focused competitions: salsa competition, ramen challenge, cultural cuisine challenge, and a real customer profile.



THS students in the Salsa Competition, with judges Nicole De Graff and Jake Bonnett.

Through these challenges, students have been learning how to develop recipes catering to different dietary restrictions such as food allergies, as well as cultural cuisines and culinary trends. These projects have been a success and have increased student engagement of culinary development activities, according to Mrs. Martorano. "I teach the basics but I want to hand some of the creative process over to the students. Already this year, our students showcased their talents in an exciting Cupcake War, a Salsa Competition, and will participate in more challenges by year's end," she shared. "This project fosters collaboration and mentorship between students and instructors, as well as hands-on learning experience through cooking competitions in class."

Students have also tested recipes at Springfield Education Association dinners and have explored an Allergen-Friendly Foods unit in introductory classes, broadening their culinary expertise. This project is only possible through the generosity of SEF's incredible donors. Thank you for supporting student innovation!

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Danny Rollins

From forging metal to winning medals, Danny Rollins is turning up the heat on his future. After enrolling at Academy of Arts & Academics (A3) during his sophomore year, Danny quickly began making a mark at the school. He earned Visual/Media Arts Honors and has been featured on the school's prestigious Arts Honors Wall. He is passionate about blacksmithing, earning an A+ in the Blacksmithing program, a class which has been supported by SEF funding. This year, Danny participated in SkillsUSA, a workforce development organization aimed at preparing students for careers in the trades. He earned a silver medal at the 2025 SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference for his blacksmithing demonstration. This summer, he will intern at a local steel company and join the competitive Connected Lane County Elevate program. Danny plans to attend Lane Community College in the fall to study welding and manufacturing. With creativity, skill, and drive, Danny is forging a strong future.



2024 Honor Roll Society Members

This special distinction recognizes individuals and businesses who make a significant financial investment to SEF through an annual gift of \$1,000 or more, a bequest, or a lifetime gift of \$10,000 or more.

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Cumulative gifts of \$100,000+

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Willamalane Park & Recreation District



Above: Guy Lee's OBOB team at the 2025 regional tournaments; Springfield High graduation 2024

Those listed in **bold print** were added to these lists during 2024

Thank You

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Given in recognition of donors who have included the SEF in their estate plans

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Above: THS Student uses SEF-funded Printmaking tools;
Maple Elementary students play with new PE equipment

Champions Circle

Monthly Donors during 2024

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Organizations in **bold print** are 2024 Night of 11,000 Stars Sponsors

Member giving levels are accumulated January 2024 to December 2024.

Note: Every attempt has been made to ensure the information on this list is complete and accurate. If you made a gift and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please excuse this oversight. Please contact Christina San Filippo so proper acknowledgement can be made of your future support.

Thank You

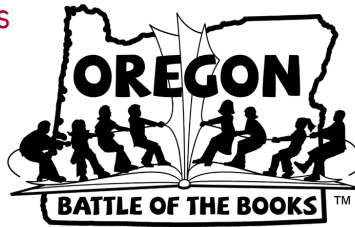
Another Great OBOB in the "Books"

Two Springfield teams move on to finals

Thanks to over 70 volunteers, the 2025 Oregon Battle of the Books Region 3 North A regional tournament was a huge success! Hundreds of supporters gathered at Thurston High School to cheer on the 27 elementary teams who competed for a chance to go to state. These students experienced first hand the power of literacy and the rousing spirit of competition. Congratulations to every student who participated, many of which were from Springfield's 12 elementary schools. Mt. Vernon and Guy Lee will move on to compete in the state-wide competition on April 12 in Salem.

SEF helped coordinate dozens of volunteers for this event, including friends from Children's Legacy Foundation Network, SELCO, OCCU, the SEF Board, Springfield & Bethel School Districts, and others.

OBOB is more than just a competition; it's a pivotal program that fosters a love for reading among elementary students. When our community unites around students, amazing things can happen!



Pictured are the top two teams from the Regional Tournaments: second place, Guy Lee (left) and first place, Mt. Vernon (right) with Superintendent Todd Hamilton.

Raven Dental: Longtime Friends to SEF

Dr. Peter Raven has been involved with SEF for 15 years. He and his wife Naomi, former SPS Board Chair, have four children who all went to Springfield schools. "We are proud to have many cherished experiences in our children's academics and athletics here in Springfield," says Dr. Raven. His dental practice, Raven Dental, has been a sponsor of SEF's Night of 11,000 Stars Gala for years. "We are pleased to help our generous SEF donors show off their PEARLY WHITES every year in the Raven Dental Photo Booth!"

Raven Dental has been serving Lane County since 1928, becoming one of the most respected practices in the area. Their primary focus is caring for patients over 50, offering state of the art care in a friendly environment. "We are blessed to build amazing relationships with our patients over many years. Exceptional service has earned us

over 350 five star Google reviews." says Peter. "I am so fortunate to work with the BEST dental team around, hands down. We love what we do and always have a bit of fun along the way."

"Thank You, SEF donors for the amazing generosity you have been able to foster here in Springfield, and for the positive impact you have had on my children and so many others!"



JAZZ & BUBBLES 2025

SEF's Jazz & Bubbles event this January was the bee's knees! Guests dazzled in 1920s attire while enjoying an unforgettable night of live jazz by the effervescent Gina Saputo, alongside musicians Joe Bagg, Joe Manis, and Michael Raynor. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special celebration and cheers to a roaring good time! Check out Gina Saputo's new album, *Daydream*, out now on all streaming platforms.



Carolyn Batsch: A Memorial

by Barbara Roberts



Former Springfield School District teacher, Carolyn Batsch, 82, died January 30, 2025 after an illness. She was a well-loved teacher at Centennial and Ridgeview Elementary Schools. A memorial service was held in Roseburg in February.

Carolyn was a member of education sorority, Alpha Delta Kappa, for more than 35 years, and was known for organizing Springfield teacher recognition events for outstanding teachers who had been chosen by their principals or staff. She was an accomplished watercolor artist who designed greeting cards from her original artwork. These cards were sold to raise hundreds of dollars of scholarship money for future teachers.

Carolyn is survived by her husband of 61 years, Dennis, son Scott and his wife Bridget, and grandchildren Katie, Dawson, and Kevin. Memorial contributions may be made to Springfield Education Foundation, with her name on the memo line.



Thank you to those who have contributed to SEF in memory of Carolyn Batsch:

Cinda & Wade Holaday
Deanna Jacobson
Janet Jacobsen
Joanne Walters
Ken and Linda Johnston
Martha Pavlat
Mary Becherer
Pamela & Tracey Windom
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Naomi Fellows

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In Honor of...

Academy of Arts & Academics Staff 2020-22 - Gift
from Erin Jennings

Judy Sheppard - Gift from Susan Sheppard

SPS Retirees - Gift from Springfield Education
Association

Travis Joseph - Gift from Lauren Lucht



For more information on upcoming events,
visit SEFLane.org.

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