

THS Educators Lead a Wave of SEF-Funded Creativity

From welding to watershed science, SEF grants empower hands-on learning

Thurston High School is buzzing with innovation this year, thanks to eight SEF grants this school year. These projects span from business entrepreneurship and blacksmithing to career and technical education and arts. With 36 grants awarded districtwide, Thurston's strong showing reflects one standout fact: THS teachers have discovered the power of leaning into SEF as a resource.

Business Teacher Deborah Baker's project "Joint Venture Business Start-Up" brings Business, Culinary, and Life Skills students together to launch a student-led enterprise. "This program empowers a diverse group of students to learn, lead, and collaborate while operating a profitable business," she explains.

Ben Barrett will introduce CAD and 3D printing to engineering students, while Metals Instructor Polly Kohl will bring industry-standard equipment into the metals shop to ensure students graduate with workforce-ready experience. Blacksmithing will also take a leap forward with new specialized tools for both the classroom and the Blacksmithing Club.



Future medical professionals will benefit from upgraded tools in Kristen Rosenblum's Health Science program, enabling more students to earn vital CPR credentials. Forestry teacher Andy Petersen is integrating GPS technology into watershed and land management instruction with twenty SEF-funded handheld GPS units, with additional funding from the Gray Family Foundation.



Finally, Band Director Conor Egan's grant project will serve every middle and high school music program in Springfield. Along with an overhaul of the school's music library system, his project launches an in-house repair clinic where SPS music teachers can perform routine maintenance, speeding up repairs and helping students learn minor repairs. "I've already been working with a number of students to develop their repair skills, and the repairs we have done to instruments have saved ours and other SPS programs about \$800 of costs for minor repairs," says Egan.

These grants reflect the passion, creativity, and drive of Thurston educators, and we're proud to support their efforts to inspire Springfield students. District educators can now apply for funding for the 2026-27 school year at SEFLane.org.

From top: Egan interviews with KVAL; Lovdokken & Kohl; new GPS unit; students use new SEF-funded CPR tools; THS 2025-26 Grant Recipients during the Grant Giving Tour.





Springfield
Education Foundation

Gratitude Report 2024-25

EMPOWERING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

\$4,136,943

Invested in
Students
Since 1994



6,010+
Learning
Opportunities
Created



598
High School
Graduates



36
Grants
Awarded to
SPS Educators



\$8,000
Scholarships
for Graduating
Students



\$200,000
Raised at the
Night of 11,000
Stars Gala 2024



By the Numbers



Total Awarded in Grants
to Educators



A few of the programs we supported in 2024-25:

- \$3,046 Basic Needs of Springfield Students**
- \$8,603 Gift of Literacy**
- \$9,357 Chifin Native Student Program**
- \$11,500 BookFest Early Literacy**
- \$14,968 Health, Physical Fitness, & Outdoor Education**
- \$25,000 NEW Speech Language Pathology Endowment Fund**

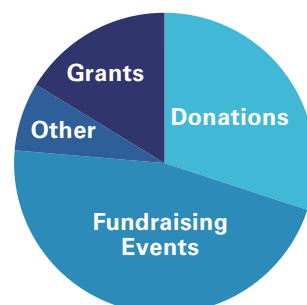
THANK YOU

With the support of generous donors like you who invest in the next generation, Springfield students gain meaningful opportunities to explore, discover, and reach their full potential. Your contributions spark creativity in classrooms, keep students excited about learning, and give educators the tools to bring engaging ideas to life. Thank you for believing in the power and urgency of equitable public education. With your help, we can continue uplifting Springfield students as they grow, thrive, and move confidently toward their bright futures.

IRS form 990 available upon request.

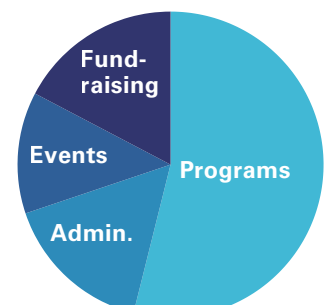
\$449,925

Total Revenue



\$465,621

Total Expenses



\$200,000 Raised for Springfield Students and Educators

The Night of 11,000 Stars Gala & Auction: A Shining Success

On Saturday, October 18, SEF hosted the 16th annual Night of 11,000 Stars Gala & Auction, a shining celebration of community, collaboration, and commitment to Springfield students. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, donors, and guests, the event raised an incredible \$200,000 to support innovative programs throughout Springfield Public Schools!

This year's event embodied the spirit of community partnership. Many volunteers were students and alumni, including those from the Academy of Arts & Academics (A3), Springfield High School (SHS), and Thurston High School (THS), who contributed time, talent, and energy throughout the evening. Guests were treated to musical performances by the SHS & THS jazz bands, highlighting the SEF-supported programs.

Student creativity also took center stage in the auction, with several remarkable contributions from school programs, including a handcrafted beekeeping box from the SHS Wood Shop, a "Day of Beauty" certificate from Gateways Cosmetology, and delicious dessert packages from the THS Culinary Program and the A3 Cake Club, among others. Each item reflected the skill, pride, and generosity of Springfield's students and educators. Guests



Thank you to our North Star Sponsors:



also enjoyed a brand new "Golden Apple" game, which included beautifully hand decorated cards created by Douglas Gardens Elementary students, reminding everyone that even small hands can make a big impact.



Clockwise from top left: THS students sell raffle tickets, A3 student volunteer, Mayor Van Gordon & other guests, Raffle winner celebrates.

Event recap and more photos at bit.ly/NOETS25



Thank you, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and friends for your generosity. Funds raised at this event will directly support innovation, enrichment programs, and opportunities that inspire students across Springfield schools. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this night a success. Together, we continue to empower student success one bright star at a time!

JAZZ, BUBBLES, & BOOKS

at Tavern on Main

FEATURING
INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED
JAZZ VOCALIST

Gina Saputo

January 18
2026
5 - 8 pm

TICKETS
AVAILABLE



Fundraiser bid/
JazzBubbles26

All proceeds benefit **BOOKFEST** at Springfield Public Schools!



2025-26 SEF Grant Award Winners Announced

36 class, school, and district-wide projects funded

This spring, dozens of SEF board members, donors, supporters and friends gathered to surprise educators at 15 schools with funded grant requests during the SEF Grant Giving Tour! **\$80,523** in funding will support 36 innovative programs for the 2025-26 school year.

Learn more about each grant project

SEFLane.org/Grants



Sponsored in part by:



INNOVATIVE EDUCATOR GRANTS

\$68,971 awarded creating 3,820 learning opportunities

These grants are given to encourage, facilitate and recognize innovative teaching programs at Springfield Schools to empower student success.

SCHOOL	RECIPIENT	GRANT TITLE	AMOUNT
District-wide SPS Programs	Garrett Davidson	Button Making Project	\$978
	Xavier Davis	Black Student Union Conference	\$3,000
	Conor Egan	Maintaining Excellence	\$3,832
	Ryan Elliott	Science Olympiad for Springfield Schools	\$2,920



Centennial Elementary	Franchesca Sandoval	Reading Room Conducive for Student Learning	\$3,305
Maple Elementary	Misty Acker	Sport Stacking and Mindful Movement for All	\$4,000
	Joni Wareham	Bilingual Book Bag Project	\$940
Ridgeview Elementary	Heather Dillon	Cursive Writing Without Tears	\$1,974
	Stephanie Lovdokken	Reading - The Cheapest Way To Travel	\$996
Two Rivers-Dos Rios Elem.	Lonnie Usrey	One School One Book	\$3,911
Yolanda Elementary	Jennifer Robinette	Adventures in Literature	\$634



Briggs Middle	Alicia Felton	Enhancing Math: Whiteboards & Active Engagement	\$3,782
Hamlin Middle	Kim Hanson	Speak Out Loud!	\$2,370
Thurston Middle	Valerie Graybill	Library and Outdoor Makerspace	\$2,000

INNOVATIVE EDUCATOR GRANTS CONTINUED

Academy of Arts and Academics	Andrew Hunt	Metal Arts and Blacksmithing Class	\$3,584
	Katie Ryan	Digestive System Aprons	\$343
	Constance Van Flandern	Enhancing Digital Design Education	\$4,000
	Ruxandra Westra	Cake Frosting Art	\$2,889
Gateways High School	Christy Plaunty	Safe and Comfortable Seating	\$963
Springfield High School	Samuel Pabst	U1 Visualization	\$748
Thurston High School	Deborah Baker	Joint Venture Business Start-Up	\$3,000
	Perry Joseph	Exhibition Time	\$500
	Dalynn Kenerson	3D Printing for Robotics Components	\$2,819
	Polly Kohl	Wonderful World of Welding	\$4,000
	John Lovdokken	Blacksmithing Tools	\$3,500
	Andy Petersen	GPS Applications in Forestry & Watershed Mgmt	\$3,995
	Kristen Rosenblum	Improved CPR Certification Tools	\$3,988



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING FUND (SELF) GRANTS

\$2,168 awarded creating 780 learning opportunities

These grants provide funding for educators who wish to implement sustainable social emotional learning opportunities for students attending SPS.

Academy of Arts & Acad.	Wendy Zacharias	Source of Strength	\$1,000
Hamlin Middle	Jennifer Mays	Embedding Kindness	\$393
Mt. Vernon Elementary	Emily Miller	Kelso Curriculum Updates	\$775



FRANK SHERMAN GRANTS

\$9,384.25 awarded creating 1,410 learning opportunities

The purpose of these grants is to promote and support health, physical fitness, and outdoor education activities and curriculum offered at SPS.

Elizabeth Page Elem.	Sarah Whisler	Healthy Moves	\$1,000
Maple Elementary	Misty Acker	Hoops & Nets	\$1,000
	Megan Knight	Healthy Moves	\$1,000
Ridgeview Elementary	Molliana Poliak	Yoga & Mindfulness	\$315
Springfield High School	Jon Bridges	Tapping into the Future	\$2,069
Two Rivers-Dos Rios	Sara Burgin	STEAM in the Spheres	\$4,000



Follow us on social media for photos, updates, and stories!
linktr.ee/seflane



Welcome, New SEF Board Members!

Brody Wasson, Affinity Property Management

Brody is a proud Springfield native who grew up in our community and is a graduate of Springfield Public Schools. His roots here run deep, and he's passionate about supporting the next generation of students. When he's not giving back to his community, Brody enjoys spending time with friends and family and exploring all the adventures Oregon has to offer.



Michael Alvarado, Servicemen Painting, LLP

Michael is a Navy veteran and proud Springfield parent of four in SPS. With a Communications background from LCC, he's passionate about helping others achieve meaningful goals and has led community workshops on turning ideas into action. His hobbies include ultramarathon training, skateboarding with his kids, braving cold plunges, and rewatching The Lord of the Rings trilogy each year.



Supporting Wellness, One Grant at a Time Frank Sherman Grants help students stay active

Springfield students have been on the receiving end of some seriously energizing support thanks to SEF's Frank Sherman Grants and Outdoor Education Fund! Together, these funding sources have invested nearly \$13,000 over the last two years into projects that boost physical activity, support mental well-being, and keep kids engaged in school.

The Frank Sherman Endowment was created in 2011 to honor a beloved advocate for student wellness. The annual earnings from the initial \$25,000 investment are used to support small projects that encourage movement, outdoor learning, and healthy habits. Paired with SEF's Outdoor Education Fund, these grants have strengthened PE programs across the district by supplying every elementary school in the district with brand new, upgraded equipment, health resources, and expanded opportunities for active play.

District-wide upgrades ensured every school had developmentally appropriate gear, while additional grants supported before-school fitness programs like Healthy Moves at Maple and Page Elementary Schools and outdoor skill-building programs like STEAM-focused field trips at Two Rivers-Dos Rios Elementary. Ridgeview's Yoga & Mindfulness program helps students regulate and focus on learning, while heart rate monitors at Agnes Stewart Middle School help students understand the changes their bodies experience while exercising.



Above: Yolanda Elementary students show off brand-new equipment purchased with SEF grant funds; Left: the UNO relay warm-up game motivates students to get competitive and moving during PE classes.

"A student favorite warm up activity is Fitness UNO. When I'm able to incorporate familiar games within PE units, it improves engagement and brings a new level of curiosity and excitement!"
- Meridien Howe,
SEF Grant Recipient,
Yolanda Elementary

These SEF-funded programs join a growing list of Outdoor Education and Frank Sherman Grant projects that keep kids engaged in school and thriving. The impact is simple and powerful. When students have joyful, movement-centered experiences at school, they're more focused, confident, and connected. Thanks to the generosity behind these funds, Springfield kids are stepping into each school day ready to learn. Contribute to this or any SEF program at SEFLane.org.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT SEF!

This holiday season, please consider making a year-end, tax-deductible gift to SEF to help us continue to meet the needs of students attending Springfield Public Schools!

Support any program, school, or initiative at SEFLane.org/give.

Please indicate how you'd like your gift used in the comment section.



Sponsor Spotlight

Peak Credit Union: Proud Supporters of SEF

As an institution serving the needs of our local area for decades, Peak Credit Union strives to give its members the tools they need to reach their financial goals. At Peak we understand that banking is just one aspect of how we contribute to the areas where our members reside and work. We are dedicated to returning to the community through various means, including supporting education, as such, it is exciting to be partnering with the Springfield Education Foundation.

Since 2013, Peak Credit Union has donated to SEF a total of over \$37,000 to assist in the provision of resources, scholarships and experiences that enrich the educational environment of all students in the Springfield School District. To us, this partnership is so much more than simply making a donation, it is a commitment to contributing to the future success of our community. Education empowers individuals, strengthens families, and builds stronger neighborhoods, and it aligns perfectly with our Mission: Invest in people, champion success.



We look forward to continuing our support and celebrating the accomplishments of both students and educators in Springfield. Together, we will make a lasting difference.



Springfield Education Foundation awards grants annually to provide enriching learning opportunities for students attending Springfield Public Schools. SPS educators are eligible to receive \$250 to \$3,000 in funding from SEF for classroom projects or programs that keep students engaged in school and excited about learning!

Three types of grants are available:

- Innovative Educator Grant Awards
- Social Emotional Learning Grant
- Frank Sherman Grant for Health, Outdoor, and Physical Education



Applications for projects and programs for the 2026-27 school year will be accepted until April 1, 2026 by midnight. Scan this QR code to learn more or visit SEFLane.org/Grants.

SEF Grant funding available for SPS staff

Up to \$3,000 grants available!

Joni Wareham at Maple Elementary received

\$940 in funding to expand the Bilingual Book library for K-2nd grade students!

**Grant applications open
December 1, 2025 and are
due April 1st by midnight.**

Create.
Innovate.
Inspire.

SEFLane.org/





Springfield Education Foundation
PO Box 663
Springfield, OR 97477

InspirED is published twice per year for donors, families, Springfield Public Schools employees, educators, alumni, volunteers, sponsors, and other supporters of Springfield Public Schools.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2024-25 Gratitude Report
- Frank Sherman & Outdoor Education grants get students moving
- 2025-26 SEF Grant Recipients
- Night of 11,000 Stars Gala raises \$200,000 for Springfield students

WHEN
STUDENTS
SUCCEED
we all do!

WAYS TO SUPPORT SEF

There are many ways to make a meaningful impact through SEF! Become a monthly donor, volunteer, join our Board of Directors, or even link your Fred Meyer account to SEF in support of our mission! Use the enclosed envelope to donate now, scan the QR code below, or visit SEFLane.org to learn about our mission.



Would you like to join our digital mailing list to receive this newsletter by email? Go to SEFLane.org/Unsub to change your mailing preferences.

STAY UPDATED

Follow us on social media for all the latest updates! We share stories about how your impact is making a difference in our community, info about upcoming events, and so much more. Find an easy list of our socials by scanning the QR code below with your camera or visit

Linktr.ee/SEFLane.



SEF BOARD OF DIRECTORS and STAFF

Micah Adams
Columbia Bank

Michael Alvarado
Servicemen Painting LLP

Nate Bill
Peak Credit Union

Adam Anderson
Lewis & Clark Law School

Nicole De Graff
SPS Board Liaison

Todd Hamilton
SPS Superintendent

Evy Hernandez
Plaza De Nuestra Comunidad

David Hersch
David Hersch State Farm

Timothy Leahy
Peak Credit Union

Stephanie Lovdokken
Pleasant Hill Public Schools

Justin Martin
Columbia Bank

Malia Martin
Springfield Public Schools

Crystal McPheeters
Springfield Public Schools

Adriel Pickar
Peak Credit Union

Patty Schulz
Banner Bank

Kelli Warner
Turell Group

Brody Wasson
Affinity Property Management

John Wheeler
Nextres, LLC

Christina San Filippo
SEF Executive Director

Ashley Mahlum
SEF Program Coordinator

EMPOWERING STUDENT SUCCESS

Springfield Education Foundation
541-726-3243 | PO Box 663, Springfield, OR 97477



THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For more information:
SpringfieldEducationFoundation.org