



ANNUAL
REPORT
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Leander ISD Educational
Excellence Foundation



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we celebrate the end of another remarkable year in Leander ISD it is with great honor that the board and I share some of the amazing things that happened with the Leander ISD Educational Excellence Foundation (LEEF) thanks to your help and support. It has been seven short years since our inception in 2007, and each year the Foundation has been able to grow and expand its impact in our community. Thanks to the tireless work of our amazing board members whose passion and excitement for every single student in LISD is without equal and to the generosity of our donors, 2013-2014 was our best year ever as a Foundation!

All Things NEW

With our amazing relationship with the administration of LISD we were able to identify two new areas in which LEEF could help this year. We launched College Coaches at two of the high school campuses. LEEF made an \$8,000 investment to hire two counselors providing over 40 LISD students direct help in navigating the ever changing and difficult world of college admissions. The second need became known when LISD was forced to eliminate financial assistance for students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams. We were able to assist with a \$10,000 donor investment to provide students at each of the high schools with need-based scholarships, helping to fully or partially cover the cost of 330 AP Exams.



Leander Independent School District

- ☆ 36,000 students
- ☆ 2,511 teachers
- ☆ 39 schools

One of the fastest growing school districts in Texas

Give a Book. Close the Gap. Ignite a Dream.

Our focus on early childhood literacy continued to grow this year by collecting and distributing children's books into our community. After giving away 1,700 books in 2011-2012, and 6,300 books last year, we needed someone to lead this program. LEEF is fortunate for our new board member and Literacy Coordinator, Dionn Schaffner. Under her guidance and direction, LEEF placed over 10,000 free books into the homes of LISD Families.

Support, Recognize & Honor Great Teaching

Teaching is a hard profession. Thankfully, we are blessed with numerous amazing and talented teachers in LISD and LEEF wants to make sure we are recognizing, supporting and honoring them.

The year-end Teacher Recognition campaign soared again this year with 433 outstanding teachers being recognized by their students and parents. That is an increase of 202 teachers from last year and for the first time ever; every single LISD Campus was represented. Thanks again to the numerous local businesses that helped us put together a great goodie bag for our wonderful teachers.

Additionally, LEEF hosted the fourth annual Student Teacher Academic Recognition (STAR) Banquet to celebrate 27 exceptional seniors from each of LISD's high schools, and give each the opportunity to recognize their most influential teacher. It was a memorable event honoring LISD teachers that go above and beyond.

The LEEF grant patrol was out again this year, this time awarding over \$33,000 in Innovative Teaching Grants. This is \$16,000 more than last year and brings the total LEEF has donated in teaching and classroom grants since 2007 to over \$150,000.

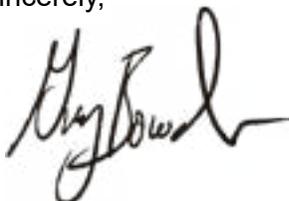
Next Steps

LEEF has grown tremendously since its inception in 2007, but to continue to grow and meet the ever increasing needs that come with serving one of the fastest growing districts in the state, the board felt it was the right time to hire an executive director. I am extremely excited to announce that in June, LEEF chose Dr. Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia, Ph.D. to fill that extremely important role. She brings with her more than 20 years' experience in the education and non-profit sectors. Dr. Bret Champion, LISD Superintendent summed it up perfectly when asked about Dr. Gonzales-Dholakia and LEEF.

"LEEF has not only come along side LISD to help improve opportunities for students, but they have also created a foundation that believes in the vision of growing young minds and ensuring that all students have every option. The addition of Dr. Gonzales-Dholakia is just the next step in seeing that vision fulfilled," said Bret Champion, LISD Superintendent. "Her belief that every child has the potential to succeed feeds the energy that will grow LEEF and I look forward to their continued success."

These are just a few of the many highlights from this past year; I hope you enjoy the annual report and seeing how you helped us make a difference this year. Thanks again for all you do to support our outstanding LISD Teachers and Students!

Sincerely,



Greg Bowden
President of the Board

FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING

A Library in Every Home

Studies have shown that having books in the home may be the greatest indicator--beyond race, economic status or parents' education level--in determining that child's educational achievement. But the sad reality is that too many of our students don't have access to any books outside the walls of their schools. LEEF is committed to ensuring that every home in Leander ISD has a selection of age-appropriate children's books available to our families. By focusing on our youngest learners, we hope to help children foster a love of reading and learning they can use throughout their lives.

Thanks to the generous support from a number of community groups, PTA's, parents and local businesses, LEEF is able to collect thousands of new and gently used children's books throughout the year. The volunteer effort continues as our team of teacher volunteers sorts through the donations and divides them by grade-level in our LEEF Book Library. We then work with district reading specialists, as well as local charities, to get these books into the hands of our highest need students and their families through school literacy nights, summer reading initiatives, the weekend food backpack program, holiday gifting projects and more.

Seeing the look on every single child's face, as they get to pick out their very own free book to take home, is truly priceless.

"We heard squeals of delight and saw faces light up with excitement when our students were told they could choose 8-10 books to keep. We were thanked over and over again for these books."

-LISD Reading Specialist



Books distributed in 2012-13:
6,300 children's books



Goal for 2013-14:
8,000 children's books



Actual books distributed in 2013-14:
10,000 books



Thanks to the book donations by our community partners and hours spent by volunteers packing those books(center), thousands of LISD students have had the chance to pick out and take home their very own book at events like the Backpack Attack(left) and school literacy events (right).

Literacy Outreach

During the 2011-2012 school year LEEF distributed 1,700 books. We increased that number by 4,600 books to distribute over 6,300 books in 2012-2013. We are very proud to have put over 10,000 books in the hands of LISD students during the 2013-2014 school year. This significant increase in book giving was achieved by LEEF volunteers gathering and packaging books, the countless hours of teachers volunteers sorting these books, and our community partners for helping gather all these books.

“Because of your generous donation, our campus was able to give a minimum of five books to each of our economically disadvantaged and SRP students in PreK through fifth grade. Your donation will help ensure that our students will continue to read over the summer and will not experience the “summer slide” so many students experience when school resumes in August. It was so much fun to watch the children select books they would be able to read over the summer!”

- LISD Reading Specialist

Looking Forward

We continue to be inspired and energized by the efforts of our community to make our Foundations for Learning program a success. We're equally inspired by the climbing reading scores by students throughout the entire Leander Independent School District.

Our goal for 2014-15 is to distribute over **12,000 children's books** in our community, and to increase our efforts to support reading over the winter, spring and summer breaks. Additionally, we aim to meet requests for Spanish language books. To achieve our goals we will need the help of community partners.



ENRICHING GREAT TEACHING

Innovative Classroom Learning Grants

Step into any classroom in Leander ISD school and you will see innovative & challenging classroom instruction. Our great teachers have great ideas –however, some of these ideas may not be covered by a typical school budget.

LEEF provides Innovative Classroom Learning grants to all educators in LISD in the fall, spring and summer to fund professional development trainings, innovative programs, resources and tools for increasing student achievement.

This year LEEF was able to fund 25 grants, totaling \$33,000 and benefiting more than 30,000 LISD students. LEEF grants funded projects like: Austin Symphony Orchestra for Young People at Faubion Elementary; pedometers for smart steps at Pleasant Hill Elementary; graphing calculators for special education at Leander High School; and Leader in Me initiative at Steiner Ranch, Block House Creek, Deer Creek, Giddens, Westside, and River Place Elementary Schools.



Since its inception LEEF has awarded
\$151,680 in classroom grants



Looking Forward

The amount of funding requested through our grant program increased by 60% this year! We are extremely grateful for the generous donations that allow us to fund as many of these as possible, as well as the businesses and individuals who have stepped up to fund additional grants, but we recognize the need to help close this gap. With our first major fundraising event in the 2014-15 school year, and several new fundraising opportunities, we're excited to make more innovative teaching ideas a reality for our teachers.

The Leader in Me

The Leader in Me is a whole-school transformation model that acts like the operating system of a computer—it improves the performance of all other programs. Based on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, The Leader in Me equips students with the self-confidence and skills they need to thrive in the 21st-century economy.

Many of the 2013-2014 LEEF grants helped numerous LISD elementary campuses kick-off their Leader in Me initiative. In 2014-2015 LEEF aims to help more LISD campuses bring the Leader in Me model to their school.

Student Teacher Academic Recognition (STAR) Banquet

On April 8, 2014 LEEF hosted the fourth annual STAR Banquet at Hill County Baptist Church. The banquet honored 27 outstanding seniors from our LISD high schools and gave them the opportunity to recognize the teacher who had been most influential in their academic careers.

More than 200 family members, principals and business partners joined us as each senior took the stage to honor and celebrate their extraordinary teacher. The students spoke of the many ways they have been inspired and challenged by these teachers, counselors and coaches.

What an amazing experience to see the difference just one teacher can make in inspiring their students to do great things!



Teacher Recognition Campaign

Our Teacher Recognition Campaign reached an all time high this year as we received a total of **561 teacher recognitions** - 200 more than last year! Teachers from all of our campuses were represented for recognition by the families of their students.



The Campaign gives families the opportunity, at the end of the school year, to thank their outstanding teachers by making a donation to LEEF in their name. In return, the Foundation works with their principal to award each of those teachers with a certificate of achievement, note from the donor family and goody bag.

Most rewarding for LEEF is the opportunity to hear from families throughout LISD about the amazing work our teachers are doing!

“Mrs. Scott is always prepared and ready for her busy classroom! She has a special way of engaging the children and makes them excited about learning. My son comes home every day eager to share what he learned from her.”

*-Parent submission to
Teacher Recognition
Campaign*

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

Dual Credit Textbook Scholarships

LEEF and LISD are committed to creating and building a college- and career-ready culture among all students. LEEF has partnered with Austin Community College and LISD high school counselors to offer need-based textbook scholarships to LISD students enrolled in dual credit courses.

“This is one less expense my family will have to worry about finding money for. I cannot thank you enough for taking this off my mind so I can focus on my grades and getting into a good university.”

“I will proudly be the first one in my entire family to graduate high school. Thanks to LEEF I will start my college career at ACC and am looking forward to later transferring to UT.”

-Textbook scholarship recipients

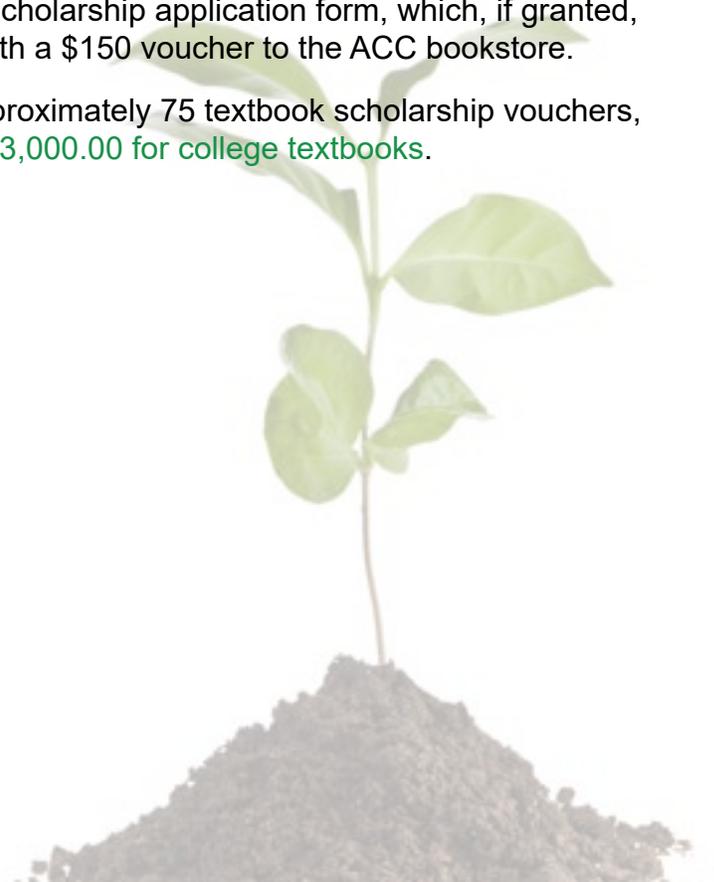


While the dual credit program provides an amazing opportunity for high school students to take free, college-level courses through ACC, simultaneously earning both college and high school credit for that course, the program does not provide funding to cover the

cost of expensive college textbooks.

Just before the start of the fall, spring and summer semesters, students who qualify for free/reduced lunch can contact their high school counselor to fill out a short scholarship application form, which, if granted, provides the student with a \$150 voucher to the ACC bookstore.

LEEF has awarded approximately 75 textbook scholarship vouchers, valued at more than **\$13,000.00 for college textbooks.**



LEEF College Coaches



During the fall of 2013, Leander ISD and LEEF began piloting the College Coaches initiative to provide support to LISD's College and Career Department. The first year pilot placed a college coach at both Vista Ridge High School and Rouse High School. The college coaches work with school counselors to support the entire college admission program: advising, completing the FAFSA, applying for scholarships, testing, housing, and the necessary orientations.

LEEF is very excited and impressed with the first year results. We look forward to expanding the LEEF College Coach program in the upcoming years.

Advanced Placement Scholarships

Due to drastic state and federal budget cuts, LISD was forced to eliminate financial assistance for students taking the AP exams. Without this financial support, some LISD families with students taking AP courses could no longer afford for their child to take AP exams.



LEEF is extremely grateful to **Wired Orthodontics** for their very generous donation of \$10,000 to provide students at each LISD high school school with need-based scholarships for Advanced Placement exams. LEEF appreciates the support of caring business partners in our community!

Looking Forward

For today's workforce, advanced training and education has become a standard regardless of the industry. Yet the process of acquiring the necessary education can be daunting for many students. LEEF plans to work with outside businesses and community organizations to secure funding for not only college readiness but also much needed career skill training.



LEEF IN THE COMMUNITY

A Night Under the Giving Tree

In October of 2013, LEEF hosted A Night Under the Giving Tree to kick-off our annual giving campaign. More than 60 of our community members, business leaders, parents and LISD representatives came together to hear from a few of the educators who've been impacted by LEEF through classroom grants, free books for their students and our student-teacher recognition banquet. Additionally, we use this time to discuss how together we can address the needs of our schools.

At this event, as well as later in the school year, we saw several of our longtime business partners (American Constructors, Pfluger & Associates, Cedar Park Regional Medical Center, McCreary, Veselka, Bragg & Allen, P.C., O'Connell Robertson, and Walsh, Anderson, Gallegos, Green & Trevino, P.C. commit to another year of LEEF partnership.

It was truly an inspirational night to see so many great people in one room, working toward the same goal of supporting and enriching our local schools! Thanks in large part to the generous contributions we received for our annual campaign, we were able to fund so many worthy projects that have made--and continue to make--a difference in the lives of our students and teachers.



LEEF Mudstacle 2013



We are THRILLED to announce our first major fundraising event: the 2013 LEEF Mudstacle & Family Fun Run was a huge success!

Combining a muddy obstacle course and fun run is no easy task, but because of the overwhelming support we received from our community, the LEEF Mudstacle & Family Fun Run was a huge success! Over 550 Mudstacle registrants got their shoes muddy on November 2, 2013 at Vista Ridge High School. We are excited to share that the Mudstacle raised more than \$24,000.



Family Friendly Fun

Because we too live, work and raise families in the greater LISD area, we have welcomed opportunities to provide other families with access to discounted, family-friendly activities.



LISD Festival of Bands

Each September, middle and high school bands perform in the LISD Festival of Bands--a particular treat since LISD became the first Texas school district to take the top three spots in the 4A UIL division in 2013. For several years, LEEF has made a donation at this event to help provide need-based scholarships for students to participate in fine arts programs.

Our wonderful relationship with the Cedar Park Center has also provided us the opportunity to offer discount tickets and receive a portion of proceeds for amazing events like Cirque du Soleil, Texas Stars hockey games and the Cedar Park Pro Rodeo.

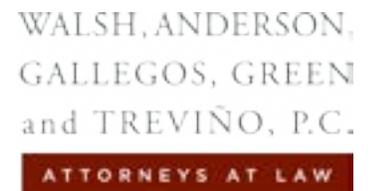
OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

We extend our deepest appreciation to these contributors who join LEEF in giving every Leander ISD student the opportunity to succeed and help grow our strong community.

Diamond (\$10,000+):



Platinum (\$5,000+):



Gold (\$2,500+):

A+ Federal Credit Union

Bartlett Cocke

Cedar Park Center

Cedar Park Pediatrics

Cedar Park Regional Medical Center

McCreary, Veselka, Bragg & Allen, P.C.

O'Connell Robertson

Outside in Style

Wells Fargo Foundation

Silver (\$1,000+):

Jeffrey Dietz

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union

Joshua Rosenberg

Scott & White Health Systems

Texas Pioneer Foundation

Walmart

Bronze (\$500+)

Monta Akin

Greg Bowden

Drs. Tripp & Robyn Buckley

Anita and Moe Cotter

Danita Futch

Don & Ruth Hisle

Michael & Grace Jordan

Pickett, Kelm & Associates

Kim Pruet

Ellen Skoviera

Texas Stars

Texas Tooth Fairies

The Moviehouse & Eatery

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS *(continued)*

Friends of LEEF (\$250+)

Jim & Beverly Barnette	Dr. Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia	Torchy's Tacos
Billy Braxdale	Sreenivasa Gorti	Pam & Chris Waggoner
Scott Caplan	Shandalyn Porter	Erich Wallschlaeger
Dr. Bret Champion	Kelly Schutze	Christian Watson
Patrick Girard	Dr. David A. Slaughter, DDS	Jennifer Williams

Supporters (\$100+)

Lauren Bingham	Good News United Methodist Church	Jason and DeeDee Nutt	Michael and Crystal Smith
Virginia Britton	Trudy Haas	Mark Pace	Scott and Julie Smith
Jason and Michele Dishongh	Ryan Hansanuwat	PRN Supply, LLC	Veronica Sopher
Brown, Graham & Company, P.C.	Timothy and Jennifer Huey	Pro One Fitness	Texas Family Physicians
Joseph Ciccarelli	Larry Holt	Dr. Alan Runge	Mike and Ann Weir
Four Points Allergy & Asthma	Robert and Gretchen Langston	Shenandoah Christian Bass Club	Dawn Wright

Total Revenue for 2013-2014



Program Funding for 2013-2014



Enriching Great Teaching
55%



College Ready, College Bound
28%



Foundations for Learning
1%



Other LISD Support
16%

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The LEEF Board of Directors is comprised by members of the Leander ISD business, parent and school community who generously donate their time to help the Foundation succeed.

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Raymond James

Michael Jordan

Vice President, Development

Zenoss, Inc.

Anita Cotter

Vice President, Programs

Retired (Leander ISD)

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Brown Graham & Company, P.C.

Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia, Ph.D.

Vice President, Marketing & Events

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