

# Kirkland Reporter

## District Institutes Pilot Mentoring Program

July 9, 2008



From left, LWSF trustees Terri Blier and Kim Axelrod, AXA advisors Heather Dooley and Don O'Donnell, LWSU Superintendent Dr. Chip Kimball, Claire Beighle, Scott Harlan, Nanci Wehr, Mary Locke, Shelley Flores and Tracy Hoiem met June 20 to kick-off the district's new mentoring program.

A volunteer appreciation picnic on June 20 celebrated the kick-off of a pilot volunteer and mentor program in the Lake Washington School District. LINKS -- Looking Into the Needs of Kids in Schools -- has been a program of the Lake Washington PTSA Council since 2004, placing community volunteers in schools as classroom helpers, tutors and lunch buddies.

In June, the program was adopted by the Lake Washington School District as a pilot program, with initial funding of \$6,790 coming from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation. The donation was made possible by a \$6,000 contribution from AXA Advisors of Bellevue and \$790 from Catherine Victorino, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones in Sammamish.

The adoption of LINKS by the school district and the funding from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation will allow the program to expand its recruiting and volunteer placement efforts. A new mentor program will focus on placing caring adults from the community with students needing emotional support as well as assistance with academics.

Mentors offer guidance and encouragement to enhance the academic, social, and emotional development of students at risk, the Schools Foundation said. The Lunch Buddy program will continue to support kids with mentors as well.

Also at the picnic, two LINKS volunteers were recognized for outstanding service to children in the district. Carl Puehn was named Volunteer of the Year for his contribution of three to four hours per week helping kids with reading and writing at Rosa Parks Elementary, and Ann Corey was named Mentor of the Year for her work as a lunch buddy for two children at Juanita Elementary.

To become a LINKS volunteer, community members are asked to donate one hour of their time per week. Opportunities include classroom helpers, tutors, one-on-one mentors and lunch buddies.

An application and Lake Washington School District background check must be completed.

Interested volunteers and mentors can contact LINKS Coordinator Nanci Wehr at [links@lwsd.org](mailto:links@lwsd.org) or or (425) 702-3410.

A training session will be offered in the fall for all community members interested in becoming a LINKS volunteer.