


# UNPAUSING THEIR POTENTIAL

Addressing learning gaps caused by  
COVID and planning for the future.



THEIR FULL POTENTIAL  
IS WAITING

HONORING THE   
BILLIE BUSSMANN  
VOLUNTEER OF THE  
YEAR NANCY O'BRIEN

  
2021 INSPIRING  
STUDENT FEATURE  




## IN THIS ISSUE

**PAGE 3** Letter From the President

**PAGE 4** Donor Feature: Neil & JoAnne Bateman

**PAGE 5** Inspire Awards

**PAGE 6** Nancy O'Brien  
Volunteer of the Year

**PAGE 7** The COVID Learning Gap  
& How You Can Give

**PAGE 8** Mission & Corporate  
Sponsors



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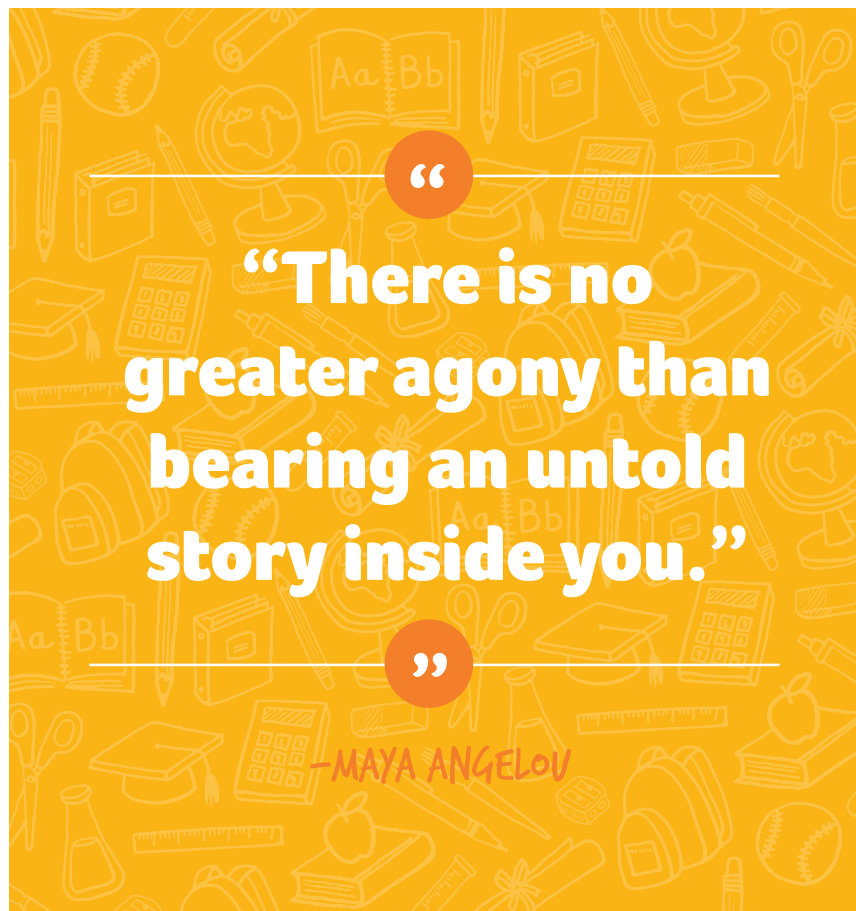
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## LET'S UNPAUSE

Spring brings so much hope, especially this year. As we start to imagine what life will be like when we can gather again, we here at the Foundation are thinking about how we can live our mission. We believe all students should have what they need to reach their full potential, but what does that really look like now? Who was left behind as the world went remote? For some, their potential was simply paused.

**Our focus now is to unpause that potential.** We strive to help students reconnect, rediscover and make up for lost time. We learned so much from this pandemic. We saw where disparity of all kinds played its part, learned about gaps in access to resources and saw the impact these gaps have on families. We also learned how much you care. The support from our community to help overcome these challenges is humbling.

This spring, with a renewed focus on finding and filling the gaps, our board of directors will gather to cast a vision on how our community can come alongside its schools. We will focus on how we can ensure all students have access to resources and opportunities that inspire and challenge them.

We need you to make this vision a reality.

In these pages you will read stories of resilience, inspiration, generosity and hope. As the 20/21 school year comes to a close and summer waits around the corner we look to these stories to inspire us on what we can do together.

With gratitude,



Wendy Van DeLaCastro

“**The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.**”

—CORETTA SCOTT KING

# Helping Students Envision A Better Future For Themselves

## FORMER MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS ENSURE A LEGACY OF HOPE

Neil and JoAnne Bateman taught at Culler and Mickle middle schools for decades. Recently, they created a fund at the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools to help students at both schools as well as the LPS Student Parent Program.

As children of parents who lived through the Great Depression and WWII, the Batemans saw the value of giving modeled for them at a young age through their families and friends. "We planned on this gift for a long time," Neil said. Their first gift to the Foundation was nearly 30 years ago – a \$10 monthly recurring gift.

"The whole idea of having a Foundation for LPS was important to us when we first started giving," JoAnne said. "It seemed like a good way to support the profession we work in and the District we work in, sent our kids to, and our grandchildren to. We are so grateful for a community that values the school district we have and maintains the caliber of education for the kids in our community."

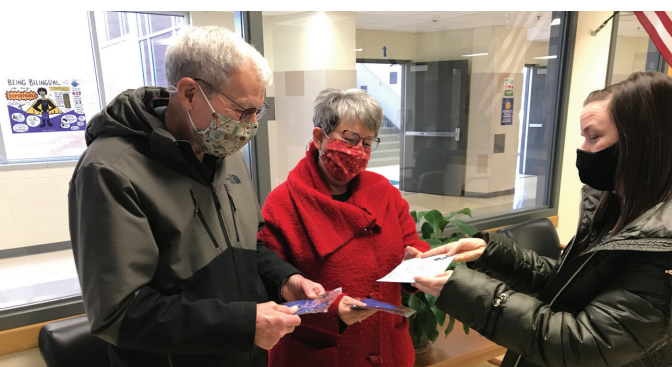
JoAnne taught at Mickle for 33 years – Neil at Culler for 26 years. They learned firsthand the struggles many students and families endure, serving student

populations with high poverty rates.

"There is some disparity between schools – there was when we were teaching, too," Neil said. "And the Foundation can help fill that gap." Mickle Principal Gene Thompson said the school is thrilled to have a source of ongoing support for students. "The contributions the Batemans have made as educators have forever touched the lives of many students," Thompson said. "We are honored to be associated with the values Mr. and Mrs. Bateman have established through their many years of educational service."

The Batemans' recent gift, created from donations of Microsoft stock, is an endowed fund that will provide support to Culler and Mickle to help students there envision a better future for themselves. Additionally, students in the LPS Student Parent Program will receive assistance for childcare and other necessities.

*To learn more about creating your own legacy gift, contact Gary Reber at the Foundation for LPS at [gary.reber@lps.org](mailto:reber@lps.org) or 402.436.1612.*



Culler Middle School Principal Michaela Hahn, right, shares thank you notes with Neil and JoAnne Bateman whose new fund benefits Culler students.



Neil and JoAnne met with former colleagues at Culler Middle School. From left: JoAnne Bateman, Principal Michaela Hahn, Neil Bateman, Jill Deets, Ashlee Znamenacek (a former student and now Culler teacher), and Patrick O'Hare.



# INSPIRE AWARDS

by the Foundation for LPS



# CONGRATULATIONS

## TO OUR 2021 INSPIRE WINNERS

### Clinton

### Elementary School

Inspire School of the Year  
Principal Angee Luedtke



## Featured Student

### MICAH QUIRIE

We could all use a bit of inspiration after this year. Micah Quirie, an Inspire Award winner, did just that for his classmates at Lincoln Northeast High School.

Micah, who will be a junior this fall, invests his time into his passions of soccer and pottery. Being born with only one fully-formed arm didn't stop him from doing anything he put his mind to.

"I first met Micah a year ago," Micah's freshman year art teacher recalls. "He appeared quiet and shy, I feared he may not ask for help. Halfway through his first project it was apparent I had completely underestimated him. Micah's work was the best in the class."

Despite having a disability, Micah excels above and beyond in everything he does. If he can't do something the normal way,

he will make up his own rules and get the job done. "I think my teachers see a hard working individual that doesn't want anything to stand in his way to accomplish what he wants," said Micah.

Through having to be inventive and independent, Micah learned how to lead and inspire others.

"Micah isn't quiet and shy, he has a quiet strength that confident pragmatic leaders obtain," said his art teacher. "He enrolls for the most difficult classes offered and excels in each one. He is an inspiration for many and kind to all."

See the complete list of winners and read more Inspire stories at [foundationforlps.org/inspire-awards/](https://foundationforlps.org/inspire-awards/)



# Nancy O'Brien

## BILLIE BUSSMANN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

**"NANCY WAS NOT ONLY A GREAT DONOR AND A WONDERFUL VOLUNTEER, BUT SHE TOOK ACTION WHERE SHE SAW A NEED"**

Nancy O'Brien is the second recipient of the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools' Billie Bussmann Spirit Award. She was named the Foundation's top volunteer/donor for her unwavering commitment to LPS students.



**It was in retirement, after a 40-year career with LPS, that Nancy's commitment to students really shined through.**

Nancy was a reader. There was a book with her wherever she went.

When Nancy learned that teachers often bought books for their students at garage sales she was motivated to do something about it. She wrote letters, made phone calls, and raised money to create Books Count funds at the elementary schools that held the most childhood memories for her family. She wanted to ensure students had new books to take home and keep. The gifts she raised bought books for students for nearly a decade.

When those funds ran out, she did it again – asking for gifts to replenish the funds for another 10 years.

"Nancy was a giver. She taught all of us how to be better citizens of the world through her generous spirit," said Mary Reiman, retired director of library media services for LPS. Mary worked with Nancy at Southeast High School.

Sue Cassata, principal at East High School, also worked with Nancy at Southeast and remembers Nancy's advocacy for students when it came to writing curriculum. "Her commitment to all students was evident in all parts of her professional and personal

life," Cassata said. "One could always count on Nancy's advocacy to challenge students as critical learners but give them the tools and support to meet that challenge."

Nancy taught for 20 years at Northeast High School and another 20 years at Southeast. She initiated the first scholastic letter for LPS students while at Northeast and later started the same honor at Southeast. She was a Gifted Facilitator at LNE and served as the Social Studies Department Chair while at LSE and served on many LPS committees.

Nancy passed away on Jan. 4, 2021, but her legacy lives on through the Books Count funds that continue to buy books for LPS students every year.

"Nancy was not only a great donor and a wonderful volunteer, but she took action where she saw a need," said Wendy Van DeLaCastro, president of the Foundation for LPS. "She is the true embodiment of service and deeds in action. I can't think of a better recipient for the Billie Bussmann Award. Nancy meant so much to us and to so many LPS kids."

*The Billie Bussmann Spirit Award was created and awarded to Bussmann in 2019. The award recognizes outstanding volunteers and donors whose contributions exemplify her spirit, passion, and commitment to the Foundation for LPS.*

## Thank You For Your Gift

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed

Charge my credit card      Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Visa    Mastercard    Discover      Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my donation to remain anonymous.

This gift is given in honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send notifications to the following name/addresses: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Save a stamp.** Go to [foundationforlps.org/give](https://foundationforlps.org/give) to make a donation online or make checks payable to the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools, and mail to: PO BOX 82889, Lincoln, NE 68501.

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# EDUCATING OUR YOUTH IS A COMMUNITY-WIDE ISSUE

Years from now, the impact of our current efforts to support students during a global pandemic will be measurable and real. Now is the time to ensure we provide them funding to thrive during this difficult time.

**Help Lincoln students stay healthy and strong by donating to the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools this spring.**

### If you are making your donation as part of Give to Lincoln Day

Go to [bit.ly/lpsgivetolincolnday](https://bit.ly/lpsgivetolincolnday) to ensure your gift counts toward the match. After May 25 go to [foundationforlps.org/give](https://foundationforlps.org/give) or use the provided envelope.

Your generosity helps to fill in the learning gap created by COVID. A gift from you means we are able to provide access to more opportunities for students which translates to more kids reaching their full potential. **THANK YOU.**





## Thank You to Our Partners

We could not do everything we do to support learning and teaching at LPS without the help of the community, our sponsors and our partners.

- |                                   |                                       |   |   |
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**All students should have what they need to reach their full potential.**

In order to accomplish that, we leverage the community to create opportunities that enhance academic and personal success of Lincoln Public School students and educators.

