



Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year end issue of the WHHS Cougar Pride Foundation newsletter. We've developed this newsletter to inform our stakeholders about our purpose, programs, and progress from day one. The newsletter is scheduled to be provided at least annually. We hope that you'll find it informative and compel you to become involved in our goal of supporting the students of Western Hills.

ORIGINS

The WHHS Cougar Pride Foundation (The Foundation) began October 25, 2017 as an initiative by Western Hills High School Alumni, Patty Azuma Pressley, Saralyn Vance Carrillo and Karen Lindsay Landon, who saw a need to improve the quality of life for students attending Western Hills. The idea came after the first LVTRise meeting; an organization that assists the Las Vegas Trail community in west Fort Worth by providing communication and coordination among all local serving organizations and partnering with the people who live and work in the area. The first organizing meeting for The Foundation was held in November 2017 where it was decided to register as a 501c3 nonprofit organization, formulate a board, and proceed.

As WHHS Cougar Alumni and Friends, we try to do our part by helping current Cougars who are facing poverty-related hardships most of us could never imagine. We use social media; [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and our [Foundation web page](#), as one method to share ideas and collaborate with the community and local assistance organizations to show these Cougars that we support them and will do what we can to help them have the same opportunities we had.

PROGRAMS

Afterschool Frozen Meals (Oct 2017-Oct 2019)

Our first project was putting freezers & microwaves into the boys and girls fieldhouse, in the gym and band hall, loaded with frozen meals that students could eat after school and when they were hungry. A large percentage of the students, 76%, are on free or reduced breakfast and lunch. The goal was to stock freezers all over campus where students could heat up a meal or have something to take home to eat so they wouldn't be so hungry.

We have currently suspended this program due to another source for afterschool meals. *Be a Champ* is a nonprofit started by retired NFL players, it is of no cost to The Foundation or the school and is available to all students. As of last record, they were feeding 80 students after school.

No School, No Food (Oct 2017 - Current)

The first Christmas break, we built 380 food bags loaded with meals that students could cook for themselves. Nonperishable items like canned pasta, tuna and chicken, ramen noodles, Mac & Cheese, instant potatoes, and rice. We distributed all these bags and not one student was left out. During Spring Break, we built 350 bags, and again, all were distributed. Alumni, Faculty, Staff and Community donated food items from a list that we provided. Some items were donated by Western Hills Church of Christ through the Tarrant Area Food Bank. Many of our students don't have the resources for meals while not attending school, so this helps the families fill the food scarcity gap over breaks. This is a continuing program that has helped many of our students over its 3-years of operation.



Cougar Corner (on-going)

One of the first things we discovered at the LVTRise Meeting was hungry students could not concentrate on an empty stomach. Faculty, volunteers, coaches and staff had been sustaining these students for years and we decided it was time to act. We asked for space on campus and moved into a portable in the rear parking lot near the football field. Stocked with shelves full of free snacks purchased with donated funds and the Tarrant Area Food Bank via Western Hills Church of Christ, students could build a food bag with assorted items and nonperishable food to take home when needed. The food pantry, available to all students, also houses clothing, shoes, coats, and hygiene, also free of charge.



Feeding Student Organizations (Oct 2017 - Current)

We began providing hot meals before on-campus extracurricular activities and sack lunches for away events. Simple hot meals like chicken burritos, spaghetti with meat sauce, chicken alfredo, burgers, and chicken sandwiches. Sack lunches included ham or turkey & cheese sandwiches, with chips, a cookie, fruit and granola bar. We made sack lunches for student organizations like Student Council Meetings and Link Crew because offering food could improve student participation, and it did.

Renovation of Weight Room

One idea for Western Hills' 50th Anniversary was to renovate the weight room that was built sometime in early 2000. The school was about to receive new weights, paid for by tax dollars, but the weight room was in desperate need of a makeover and that was not in the school budget. We partnered with Sherwin Williams Paint and Southern Painting, both in Benbrook, to give our Cougars a beautiful place to work out. We received project-specific donations in memory of a 1982 classmate, Rodd Brann, to help pay for the new flooring. Our close friend had passed away earlier in the year and had made his impact on Western Hills in the late 70's-early 80's. The Weight Room will be dedicated to his memory at a future date, TBD.

50th Anniversary (Fall 2018)



Go Cougars!

What better way to help bring back school spirit, than to have a new run-through tunnel! To kick off the 50th Anniversary of Western Hills, we purchased a run through tunnel for sports. The school had been without a tunnel for a couple of years and is a source of pride for other schools in the Fort Worth Independent School District.



50 Anniversary T-shirts

Another fun surprise to all the students, faculty & staff was the 50th Anniversary shirt. One of the things we heard was that students could not afford to purchase “spirit shirts”. We asked Alumni to purchase a shirt for themselves (\$25 donation), which also paid for a faculty/staff and 2 students’ shirts. The shirt logo was designed by Heath Jackson, the Wrestling Coach.

Faculty & staff coordinated all the shirt sizes and Cougar Pride Foundation distributed over 900 shirts a couple of days before Homecoming. It was amazing to see

everyone wearing their shirts on game day. We still see students sporting their shirts around campus.

Senior Prom & Prom Shop (Spring 2019)

The Class of 2019 had a hard time with fundraising for Prom, so we asked Alumni to Sponsor a Senior to go to Prom. We reached our goal of \$7,000 and the students were blown away with the generosity.

We also had so many dress donations for Prom, that some staff and volunteers, as well as others in the community, setup a makeshift dress shop equipped with all the accessories and shoes. Students signed up for a specific time slot and reported to the auditorium. They helped 28 students with dresses, all free!



Donations and Volunteers

We’ve been very fortunate to receive donations in terms of monetary assistance and volunteers. We have a PayPal donation link on both our Foundation’s Facebook page and website. In addition, we’ve sold window decals, flip flops and we also participate in the “Giving Tuesday” program. Additionally, we participate in Amazon’s “Smile” program, where they donate a percentage of purchases for those who specify the Foundation as a beneficiary. To date, we’ve received over **\$500** from the Smile. Amazon program.



Senior Salute (May 2020)

Keri Flores, the Principal of Western Hills needed help funding Senior Yard Signs to give each senior, so we stepped in to help. The Go Center, which helps students apply for scholarships and fill out applications for college decided to make it a full day.

We helped build over 200 baskets, filled with donated candy and snacks. We also purchased and inserted a gift card to a local fast food chain in the area for each basket and distributed food bags and a sack lunch with sandwiches donated by Risky’s BBQ in Benbrook. Seniors drove

through the parking lot and picked up their yard sign, gift basket, food bag, lunch sack and note from Ms. Flores while faculty & staff cheered them on! We handed out over 160 bags of food!

Adopt a Senior (May/June 2020)

With all the craziness of Covid-19, students missing out on Prom and their last few months of school, we were asked by one of our Alumni to adopt out all of the Senior class of 2020. Alumni, faculty & staff, and community friends who wanted to purchase a gift for one of our Cougars were given a specific Senior. There were 214 Seniors, and all were adopted to receive a graduation gift. It was a huge success! The looks on their faces when Cougar Pride Foundation (CPF) volunteers handed them a gift specifically purchased and made for them was priceless!



Covid-19 Food Bag Distribution (Mid March - Mid July 2020)

As Spring Break was ending for our Cougars, the pandemic was in the beginning stages. Our first thought was that students would not be in school and therefore, they would have no food. We began shopping for food and asked for donations of nonperishable items and most of all, financial donations. Knowing this was not only going to be an issue for our students but for the entire country. We setup a temporary Cougar Corner in an Alumni's garage (Lara Dale, 1991) and quickly moved to Alumni's business (Viren Patel 2010) since he was closed. We applied for a grant but realized they quickly ran out of funds.

We made the decision to use all our funds to purchase food and hygiene for our students through this pandemic, for as long as we could. We built food bags to distribute each Monday, using families of 4 which lowered our exposure to the virus and distributed at different locations within a mile radius of campus. Locations where students could walk, to pick up a food bag. Also available were hygiene items, toilet paper, trash bags, laundry detergent and dryer sheets, dish soap, dog & cat food, and bread when available. We distribute anywhere between 12-36 bags a week and will continue through mid-July. We have been fortunate to have the support of Alumni, Western Hills Church of Christ, and the Tarrant Area Food Bank.



Giving Back



During the pandemic, one of our IB students even had a food/hygiene drive on her street. She put flyers on all her neighbors' doors asking for help for her fellow classmates. At the end of May, CeCe Gise delivered a truck, full of groceries and hygiene items to temporary Cougar Corner.

Currently, we have a couple of Cougar athletes who help volunteer each Monday. They load grocery bags and items needed for distribution into volunteers' vehicles. These Cougars are already learning to give back and most important, they want to help.

The Foundation relies on Cougar Pride Representatives to get the word out to their alumni and classmates about its activities and requirements. We sincerely thank them for their participation and efforts. There are currently some vacancies that need to be filled by a dedicated volunteer.

Cougar Pride Class Representatives:

1973	Kris Reynolds	1995	
1974	Cathy O'Neal	1996	
1975	Cindy Vance Young	1997	Amyjo Measles
1976	Vicki Contreras	1998	
1977		1999	Rhonda Belota Psencik
1978	Carol Hancock Murray	2000	Jennifer Pope
1979		2001	
1980	Tiffany Gideon Bils	2002	
1981		2003	
1982	Cheryl Beauchamp & Tracy Forbess Sanchez	2004	
1983	Michelle Adams	2005	
1984		2006	
1985	Dana Voyles Harris	2007	
1986		2008	
1987		2009	
1988		2010	Leah Carter Smith & Viren Patel
1989	Paige Gallagher Bacon	2011	
1990		2013	
1991	Lara Dale	2014	Erica Johnson
1992		2016	Melanie Mounce
1993		2017	Bailey Martin
1994		2020	Linda Mendoza

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thanks to the devotion and commitment of The Foundation's volunteers,

- Over **7,000** meals were provided to students in 2017-2018, **11,072** in 2018-2019, and **11,275** in 2019-mid March 2020, to students participating in athletic and other extracurricular activities.

- 340 meals were given to faculty & staff from money specifically donated for Teacher Appreciation Day for the past two school years
- Over 2,500 breakfast tacos were cooked and served to students for STARR Testing Days in May 2018 and May 2019
- 32 Outstanding Seniors were given free tickets to Prom in 2019
- Band Sponsorships were initiated to feed Band students before all football games.
- During summer workouts, sandwiches, chips, and fruit were fed to the athletes after workouts, in Cougar Corner; about 10-25 kids every Monday – Thursday in the Summer 2018 and 2019
- A Social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and a website devoted to Foundation programs and promotion.

We've promoted the Foundation's work by speaking at reunions, talking on local radio stations, advocating our goals to local government and appearing on local television news and print media.

The Foundation also participated in Back to School Night (Fall 2019), providing hot dogs and chips to parents, students, faculty, and staff. Food donations came from Western Hills Church of Christ.

In addition, we sponsor lunch one day during Teacher Appreciation Week, providing lunch to faculty & staff. This is funded by a completely different source and not through money donated for our Cougars.

Financial donors are too numerous to list; from other charitable organizations to large donations from individuals (who's names we don't have permission to list) to hundreds of smaller, but hugely meaningful donors who've responded to online campaigns we've run.

These successes could not possibly be accomplished without the extraordinary dedication of our volunteers. First and foremost, Executive Director Patty Pressley. Patty is the glue that binds the Foundation together. Her passion and love for the students is unquestionable. She's either at Cougar Corner or involved in a Foundation activity every day of the week.

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to be WHHS Cougar Pride Foundation Class Representatives! If there is not a representative for your graduating class, and you would like to volunteer, please send an email to Karen Landon: karen@whhscougarpridefoundation.org Duties include: 1) Sharing Cougar Pride Foundation news & information with your classmates via social media and other methods. 2) Encourage classmates to volunteer and/or donate money to the Cougar Pride Foundation--especially when class reunions come around and during the Cougar Pride Homecoming Fundraiser Challenge coming soon.

Volunteers with over 1,000 hours of service

Sandi Spence Hanson 1982

Karen Lindsay Landon 1982

Shantel Brewer Schatte 1982

Jessica Grima 2010

Betsy Strother (faculty alumni)

Vicki Contreares 1978

Shelley Martin Brandt 1982

Frankie Smith (Western Hills Church of Christ Elder)

Volunteers with under 1000 hours of service:

Tiffany Gideon Bils 1980	Erica Johnson 2014
Jennifer White 1990	Lara Dale 1991
Saralyn Vance Carrillo 1982	Shawn Doherty 1982
John Medina 1977	Dana Voyles Harris 1985
Michael Biggs 1982	Natalie Holmes (parent volunteer)
Gary Collins 2002	KC Korenek-Robb 1990
Tracy Self 1982	Tiffany Gideon Bils 1980
Cheryl Beauchamp 1982	Cindy Ellis 1978
Tammy Simpson 1982	Hollie Grosklos 1986
Sharon Cahill Riley 1984	Tina Zanes Vance 1982
Tommy Wright 1983	Sandy Hudler Wright 1984
Paige Gallagher Bacon 1989	Tia Russell
Olatia Robinson 1982	Sherri Scott Jameson 1981
Michelle Adams 1983	Gaye Willis Robertson Gilbert 1972
Lynne Willis Holmes 1973	Jennifer Simmons 1982
Kelly Gallagher Register 1982	Megan Register (community volunteer)
Gary Addison 1979	Jennifer Dilulio (parent volunteer)
Viren Patel 2010	Brandi Nemec (parent volunteer)
Ralph Lauer 1981	Catherine Ponder Henderson 1992
Lisa Cartwright Templeton 1982	Angie Day Clemens 1982
Keesha Longlawrence 2019	Andrew Carrillo (community volunteer)
Stella Santos 2016	Vickie Gamble-Young (WH Staff)
Sarah Smith (parent volunteer)	Reagan Smith (student volunteer)
Scott Smith (community volunteer)	Lindy Gonzales (Staff Social Worker)
Vanice Wilson (WH Staff)	Angela Cohen (Intervention Specialist)
Cindy Moilan (parent volunteer)	Sarah Blankenship (WH Staff)
Amy Espinoza (parent volunteer)	Romello Fowlin (student volunteer)
Jude Collins (student volunteer)	Matt Collins (faculty/parent volunteer)
Abid Mehdi (student volunteer)	Rachel Wenthe (parent volunteer)
Jason Greene (student volunteer)	Jacori Williams (student volunteer)
Aaliyah Ruiz (student volunteer)	Theresa Santos (parent volunteer)
Chris Howard (student volunteer)	Larry Boston (faculty alumni)

The Foundation's Board of Directors

Patty Pressley 1982 - Executive Director
Saralyn Vance Carrillo 1982 – Treasurer
Shawn Doherty 1982 – Chairman
Karen Lindsay Landon 1982 – Outreach
John Medina 1977 – Communications Coordinator

For more information: <https://www.whscougarpridefoundation.org/board-members/>