

2019 LCFEF GALA PADDLE PLEDGE OVERVIEW

Empowering Our Kids to Strive AND Thrive

"Wellness is a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential." - The National Wellness Institute

The La Canada Unified School District (LCUSD), with the support of the La Canada Flintridge Educational Foundation (LCFEF), is committed to providing our students with a world-class academic program. We pride ourselves on preparing our children for the rigors of college and beyond, and we have been remarkably successful in that regard.

It has become clear, however, that our students need more than academic knowledge to thrive in our increasingly complex and changing world. They need a broader set of social and emotional skills – a “toolbox” of sorts – that will anchor them as they navigate through childhood, adolescence, college and adulthood. As parents and educators, we can expand that toolbox by offering our students opportunities to:

- develop adaptive coping skills, grit, and resilience
- learn effective communication and problem-solving strategies
- enhance relationships with peers and adults
- acknowledge stress and mental health challenges
- practice self-awareness and self-care
- access self-help and expanded counseling resources

With the Foundation’s help, and after much research and development, LCUSD is prepared to launch several major projects as a part of its wellness initiative next year. This year’s LCFEF Gala Paddle Pledge will raise funds to support three specific elements of the initiative that will touch more than 4,100 students from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

1. NEW SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) APPROACH FOR GRADES K-6

The LCFEF Gala Paddle Pledge funds will be used to cover training, curriculum materials, and other implementation costs related to strengthening and augmenting current K-6 SEL activities to implement a common, research-based core adoption at all three elementary schools district-wide.

2. NEW LCHS WELLNESS CENTER & RESOURCE HUB

Along with the proposed design and construction of a beautiful campus Wellness Center, LCUSD issued a Request for Proposal to partner with a youth mental health service provider. This contract will include the integration of a full-time mental health clinician in the Wellness Center, providing additional supports to students and staff. The 2019 Gala Paddle Pledge funds will go to start up costs and furnishings needed to realize the host of program offerings planned for the Center.

The Center will provide LCHS students access to:

- A quiet, calming space open 8-3:30 daily
- Drop-in support
- Crisis support
- Electronic and print self-serve resources
- Individual and group counseling services by referral
- Student lunchtime and schoolwide activities based on monthly wellness themes and student leadership
- Peer Support outreach

The Center will provide all staff and families access to:

- Consultation and resources related to mental health and wellness
- Expanded electronic/website resources curated and maintained by Wellness Center staff along with community partners on its District Wellness Advisory Committee
- A designated setting coordinated for mental health and wellness related trainings and parent education

3. NEW LCHS COLLEGE & CAREER CENTER

As a part of the LCHS “wellness initiative,” and following best practices such as those recommended by *UCLA’s Mental Health in Schools*, LCHS will emphasize focusing systems of support around student transitions, one very important one being the transition to college and career. LCHS has long been without a designated space to house materials and events related to student College and Career planning. A new College Career Center (CCC) will be established in the existing iMac lab space on the mezzanine level of the IRC to serve those specific needs. The LCFEF Gala Paddle Pledge will raise funds for the renovation of that space, which will include new furniture, computer monitors, and presentation/projection equipment.

Please raise your paddles at Gala to help empower your children to strive and thrive!