



News Release

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Sand Point Elementary School Wins \$20,000 Symetra Heroes in the Classroom 'MVP Award'

BELLEVUE, Wash.—(April 22, 2019)—Symetra and the Seattle Seahawks awarded Sand Point Elementary School in Seattle with the 2018 Symetra Heroes in the Classroom® “MVP Award.” The \$20,000 education grant will fund “Hear Our Voices,” an innovative student achievement program focused on providing a platform for fourth- and fifth-grade students to share stories by recording and producing oral histories. Students will use technology to create a digital library that can be accessed at school and in the community to encourage a better understanding of the diversity in the school’s learning community, students’ connectedness with one another, and relationships between home and school culture.

“Symetra is proud to act as a catalyst for innovative programs that benefit our local schools. ‘Hear Our Voices’ is a creative concept that will help build academic skills and build bridges between students,” said Sharmila Swenson, AVP, Public Affairs at Symetra. “Together with the Seahawks, we applaud educators like the Sand Point Elementary School team who recognize the wonderful, diverse voices that make up a school community and are providing a platform for young students to share their unique stories and learn from each other.”

“Hear Our Voices” was announced as the grant recipient during an April 19 luncheon reception held in the Coach’s Loft at CenturyLink Field to celebrate the 16 King County teachers recognized as Symetra Heroes in the Classroom during the 2018 NFL season. The program honors K-12 teachers for educational excellence and offers each of the 16 schools with a teacher-Hero the opportunity to submit an MVP Award proposal. Nominated programs are evaluated on a range of criteria, including innovation, feasibility and demonstrated need.

Swenson and Mike Flood, vice president of Community Outreach for the Seahawks, presented the MVP Award to Sand Point Elementary School Principal Kristen Roberts and Zoe Manzo, a Sand Point Elementary teacher, 2018 Symetra Heroes in the Classroom honoree, and key contributor to the “Hear Our Voices” proposal.

About the “Hear Our Voices” Program

“Hear Our Voices” seeks to integrate social emotional learning (SEL), writing, speaking, listening and pre-vocational technology skills while simultaneously giving voice to all of Sand Point Elementary School’s students, including often-underrepresented populations. The school’s diverse demographics — 66 percent of students identify as non-white, 44 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 21 percent identify as English Language Learners — present unique academic challenges. “Hear Our Voices” will support all Sand Point students by creating a common expressive language around personal challenges and life experiences. The program gives each of the diverse voices in the school community a platform to share and learn from one another.

“Hear Our Voices” will employ a multidisciplinary framework to achieve multiple academic goals. The program harnesses the power of a student’s personal and family narratives to use as the framework for SEL and writing. It also provides students with the pre-vocational technology skills necessary for college and career readiness by teaching them how to use field-recording devices and sound recording and editing software to capture and edit the stories.

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About Symetra Heroes in the Classroom®

Since 2006, Symetra Heroes in the Classroom has celebrated 264 K–12 teachers across the Puget Sound and contributed \$640,000 for schoolbooks, classroom supplies and equipment, and in support of innovative student programming.

Symetra Heroes in the Classroom are recognized in front of their students and peers at surprise in-school presentations. They receive tickets to a Seahawks home game, where they are acknowledged during on-field presentations at CenturyLink Field. In addition, Symetra makes a \$2,000 donation to each teacher-Hero's school for classroom books and supplies.

Teachers may be nominated by their principal, district staff, student or student's parent. The honorees are selected based on their ability to make a real difference in students' lives; to go above and beyond in their day-to-day responsibilities; and to help students build life skills.

For more information about the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom program or to nominate a teacher, visit www.SymetraHeroes.com/Seahawks.

About Symetra

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