



News release

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Foundation grant supports story pole project at Forest View

Students stretch their knowledge, learn from one another and become more inclusive



[Everett, WA] — Tate Loftin's fourth and fifth grade highly capable class at Forest View Elementary recently finished a culminating project that took a deep dive into the culture each of its 26 students, a project that would not have been possible without grant funding from the Everett Public Schools Foundation (EPSF).

With more than 80 percent of her class students from diverse cultural backgrounds, Loftin applied for the grant to expand the indigenous peoples' unit. To better support her students with their understanding of their family's cultures and beliefs, the final project of the curriculum was the creation of "story poles" as a symbol to express what they learned through art. The project included students interviewing relatives, conducting research, designing a slide show and presenting to their own class, as well as other classrooms at the school.

They then took what they learned and designed story poles (similar to totem poles) with their own family-generated symbols pertaining to their cultural beliefs and customs as the capstone project. The images were painted or colored on wooden posts to be placed in student's yards as a conversation starter in the community.

Loftin's hope is, "these poles will initiate conversations amongst neighbors to create a more inclusive community."



This is the second time Loftin has done this project with her students, the first time was in 2021, also funded by a EPSF grant, and now the community is asking for her to do it again. She believes, "It is a great opportunity for Highly Capable students to stretch their knowledge, learn from one another and become more inclusive."

Students were excited to share the significance of the symbols on their story poles, were even more grateful for their families and learned no family is alike.

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For more information:

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