

# NEWS RELEASE

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**BAINBRIDGE**  
**Community Foundation**

*Inspiring Philanthropy*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **The Bainbridge Community Foundation Honors Local Philanthropists at Annual Celebration**

Cynthia Sears been named the 2016 Outstanding Bainbridge Philanthropist by the Bainbridge Community Foundation (BCF). The Suquamish Tribe was named the 2016 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization and the Fort Ward Youth Advisory Committee were named the 2016 Outstanding Young Philanthropists. These honorees were recognized for their significant acts of philanthropy, leadership, and community-building at the Foundation's eighth annual *Inspiring People* Philanthropy Celebration. More than 170 guests gathered at IslandWood on September 16th to celebrate their generosity, including the First Lady of Washington State, Trudi Inslee, and longtime Secretary of State Ralph Munro.

### **Cynthia Sears**

#### *2016 Outstanding Bainbridge Philanthropist*

In the nearly 30 years that Cynthia Sears has called Bainbridge Island home, her remarkable generosity, spirit, and encouragement have helped build a thriving and vibrant arts and cultural community. Cynthia had the extraordinary vision to create the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, a collecting museum with a focus on artists and collections from the Puget Sound region, which provides free access to art and education to approximately 55,000 visitors from around the world each year. She also founded the Island Treasure Award, which honors two local artists each year for excellence and outstanding contributions in the arts and humanities in our community.

Her generosity extends to supporting education, social services, and more. As a former trustee of BCF, she played an instrumental role in the creation of the Community Grants Cycle, which has to date awarded more than \$1.5 million. A few more examples of the many organizations that have benefitted from her generosity include Island Volunteer Caregivers, the Bainbridge Artisan Resource Network, Bainbridge Performing Arts, and the Copper Canyon Press, an independent publisher of poetry. Cynthia finds giving most satisfying when her gift helps a project reach completion or encourages others to give.

As she accepted her award at the Celebration, she shared a guiding principle in giving that is particularly meaningful to her- “you must add your light to the sum of light.”

## **The Suquamish Tribe**

### *2016 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization*

The Suquamish Tribe were recognized for their longtime tradition of giving generously to help others, especially the most vulnerable populations. Through the Port Madison Enterprises Fund and the Suquamish Foundation, the Tribe have contributed millions of dollars in the spirit of helping our community. In addition to their extensive contributions and leadership in the areas of education and poverty alleviation, tribal giving supports arts, health care, public safety, recreation, social services and more. Some of the many organizations on Bainbridge Island that have benefitted from their generosity include Bainbridge Arts & Crafts, the Bainbridge Island Historical Museum, Bainbridge Youth Services, Island Time Activities, and Bainbridge Performing Arts.

The Tribe promote volunteerism and sponsor community events that bring people of all ages and cultures together. Each year they sponsor the Kitsap Great Give, which in 2016 raised \$1,465,962 for local nonprofits, and host a Spirit of Giving event, where they honor the work of nonprofits and volunteers in the community. Recently the Tribe received the NOAA Excellence in Restoration Award, for their dedication and leadership in coastal restoration in Eagle Harbor. Their dedication to revitalizing culture and community and environmental preservation will enhance countless lives for generations to come.

## **Fort Ward Youth Advisory Committee**

### *2016 Outstanding Young Philanthropists*

In 2014 neighborhood friends Aila Ikuse, Kate Merifield, Mark Dettman, and Erik Appleberry formed the Fort Ward Youth Advisory Committee. As sophomores in high school, they dedicated themselves to restoring a historic brick bakery building for use as the first public hall in the south end of Bainbridge Island. Over time, as they continued to give presentations and hosted tours and events, their enthusiasm for the project motivated countless community members to get involved and led to the creation of a nonprofit, the Friends of Fort Ward. According to Douglas Crist, President of the Friends of Fort Ward board of directors, “They’re terrific young people, and they’ve been great ambassadors for the project. I think they set quite an example for other kids unsure about getting involved in ‘grownup’ issues — they really can make a difference.”

Over the last two years, these remarkable young people raised funds through grant awards, private donations, sales of shirts, prints, and mugs, and reached more than half of their goal. Recently, The Fort Ward Community Hall project was ranked sixth most important among historic restoration projects statewide, and has been recommended for \$92,000 in State funding in 2017 under the state’s Heritage Capital Projects Fund. Though the group have now graduated from Bainbridge High School and embarked upon a new phase in their lives, they left a great parting gift to their community and have ensured that the project will carry on in the capable hands of new youth advisory committee members

Mallory Browne, Stella Streufert, Rachel Fox, Marina Ikuse and the Friends of Fort Ward. Jim Hopper, the Executive Director of BCF, said of the group “The future of our community depends largely on decisions we make today. The Fort Ward youth displayed extraordinary initiative when they decided to renovate this historic treasure into a resource that would last generations longer.”

To learn more about these stories, and to view the videos played at the Award Celebration, please visit the Foundation’s YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyPiA5oZXk-B-qleVODg25g>

### **About Bainbridge Community Foundation:**

In 2001, community members came together to create the Bainbridge Community Foundation. The vision was simple - to encourage, inspire and provide meaningful ways for people to enhance our vibrant community and sustain the unique way of life we enjoy on Bainbridge Island. Our mission to support the community is achieved by providing financial support, educational programming, and leadership to the nonprofits that serve our neighbors and friends. Over the last fifteen years, BCF has grown to nearly \$10 million in assets and has contributed \$8.5 million to fund important causes that matter to Islanders.

### **Photo Credits:**

The honoree group photo is courtesy of BCF, photo credit to Kate Jameson. (Pictured left to right: Leonard Forsman, Suquamish Tribal Chairman, Robin Sigo, Suquamish Tribal Council Treasurer & Suquamish Foundation Director, Kate Merifield, Mark Dettman, and Cynthia Sears. Not pictured are Aila Ikuse and Erik Appleberry).

The group photo of Cynthia Sears and her family and friends is courtesy of BCF, photo credit to Kate Jameson. (L to R- George Lewis of Little & Lewis, Cynthia Sears, Davis Lewis of Little & Lewis, Olivia Sears, and Juliet Sears LeDorze)

The Suquamish Tribe and Fort Ward Youth group photo with Trudi Inslee is courtesy of BCF, photo credit to Kate Jameson.

The photo of Cynthia Sears with Trudi Inslee is courtesy of BCF, photo credit to Kate Jameson.

The photo of Cynthia Sears is courtesy of Cynthia Sears.

The photo of The Suquamish Tribal Council is courtesy of The Suquamish Foundation.

The photos of The Fort Ward Youth Advisory Committee are courtesy of Friends of Fort Ward.

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