February 22, 1010

La Center Casino Charitable Fund,

Our family has been privileged to have had 3 children attend the Cispus outdoor school with the 6th grade of the La School District. Additionally, Kris and I have had the honor to serve our community by joining other parents, teachers, high school students and community members in leading, teaching, mentoring, chaperoning, organizing and guiding in this program. We have also observed the growth, interaction and maturation of La Center students through middle-school and high school, as well as the cross age support and friendships amongst our students and adults that would be the pride of any community. Could their Cispus experience be a contributor?

At Cispus, the students and high school counselors develop a sense of personal independence and responsibility for their actions, their learning, their nutrition and their community. Every student has successes in small groups and all students, including gifted and at risk students, find individual support from their peers, counselors, adults and teachers in being successful, finding their strengths, building confidence and developing a sense of being a part of our community. By mixing the student groupings regularly and having them interact with different adults and counselors over the course of the 5 days and 4 nights, the students meet their classmates in neutral settings, learn to work and bond across age boundaries and develop a sense of respect and camaraderie with their peers, parents, high school counselors and teachers.

The community of students, teens and adults that develops at Cispus each year experiences team work, learning, communicating, cohabitation, sit-down meals, camp fires, acting, singing, laughing, playing, pride and respect. Additionally, the Cispus program helps develop trust, time management, journal writing, scientific process, manors and sharing skills; as well as an awareness of the outdoors, the power of nature, plants and animals, science, history, independent survival, beauty and the interdependent web that is our world.

Our students spend their 5 days at Cispus living with, working with and observing their peers, numerous adults and high school students as guides, mentors and teachers developing bonds, trust and friendships. They get to see their teachers in an interesting environment, and see that learning and school can be fun. And maybe, for some, this experience will plant the seed of a budding outdoor lover or scientist. But for all of our students it is an opportunity to be successful, build confidence, learn new skills, see practical applications of writing, mathematics and science, get a little fresh air, go hiking, appreciate the beauty of Washington, and make friendships that last a lifetime. And all of this in September of their 6th grade year before there has been time for significant middle school cliques to form. We believe that Cispus is one of the key contributors to our district's positive and unique high school experience, and the quality of life in our community.

Our family is in full support of Cispus and we look forward to continuing to serve the program. We believe that the program is a key piece of the fabric that makes the La Center School district great.

It is our pleasure to serve,

Josh & Kris

Josh and Kris Soske.

cc: Members of La Center School District board, Mr. David Cooke and Mr. Warren Westerberg