



NEWS RELEASE

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Denver Public Schools Foundation Achieve Gala raises more than \$900,000 to support DPS students and schools

DENVER, April 29, 2016 – [The Denver Public Schools Foundation](#) hosted its 14th annual Achieve Gala presented by the Western Union Foundation on Thursday, April 21, generating more than \$900,000 to support Denver Public Schools (DPS) students and schools. Gala chairs included Jennifer Hallam, Senior Operations Manager of BKD CPAs & Advisors; Ruth Rohs, current DPS Foundation Board of Director and Vice President of Corporate Communications and Executive Director of IMA Foundation; Stephen Rohs, chef and owner of Painted Bench Catering; and Travis Webb, Managing Partner of BKD CPAs and Advisors.

Nearly 1,000 business and community leaders heard from DPS school leaders, local officials including Gov. John Hickenlooper and Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock, and many talented and inspiring students throughout the evening. The event celebrates the tremendous impact community support has on Denver’s public school system, and it calls upon the community to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with educators to help every child in DPS succeed.

The evening featured many talented DPS students. The keynote address was delivered by Lisa Rhodes, a senior at Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College, who will attend the University of Colorado at Boulder this fall.

“Thank you to my teachers and to my schools for being my foundation, for helping me to become the person I am. Thank you for being positive adult figures in my life and teaching me so much more than how to read and write,” Lisa said during her keynote speech. “You were my home away home. You were my home when, sometimes, I didn’t feel like I had one. Thank you for going above and beyond to show me how to find the strength within myself to persevere during the darkest points in my life. No matter which neighborhood I was living in at the time, I had strong schools and teachers to go to every day. Throughout an unstable childhood, I had constants in my life. My DPS schools. And my teachers.”

“It’s hearing from students like Lisa that always reminds me of the importance of advocating for ALL students,” said Verónica Figoli, President and CEO of the DPS Foundation. “Lisa’s story tells us that the caring adults in her life helped her to succeed and to build the backbone she needed to overcome challenge. Each of you here tonight has the power to be that person who transforms a child’s life.”

The Achieve Gala was emceed by DPS students – Nolan Kelly and Claire Wineman, students at the Denver School of the Arts. The evening also featured inspiring performances from students from schools across the city, including Bruce Randolph School, Teller Elementary and Bryant Webster Dual Language ECE-8 School.

In addition to Presenting Sponsor the Western Union Foundation, the Achieve Gala was made possible by generous community investments from corporations and individuals, including premier sponsors: United



Launch Alliance, Polsinelli, BBVA Compass, The Anschutz Foundation, BKD CPAs & Advisors, Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center, Kristin & Blair Richardson, and Cille & Ron Williams.

View photos from the event, a full list of sponsors and information about the DPS Foundation at www.dpsfoundation.org.

About the Denver Public Schools Foundation

The Denver Public Schools Foundation is Denver Public Schools' fundraising partner. We generate resources, build relationships and champion public education to help Every Child Succeed. We are built and sustained by the community; by supporting the DPS Foundation, businesses and individuals are creating positive, sustainable change in our schools and contributing to the success of our next generation. We are all DPS. For more information, visit www.dpsfoundation.org.

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