



CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

**For Immediate Release**

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**LEARN HERE PROJECT HONORS EDUCATION STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**



*Jon Girod of Quail Homes receives Legacy Award;  
24 volunteers and staff across County honored*

**VANCOUVER, Wash.** (May 19, 2026) – More than 200 regional business and community leaders took a brief recess to honor 25 exemplary staff and volunteers across Clark County’s educational system.

Honorees included those who support students across the pre-kindergarten to postsecondary continuum, including a special honor to Jon Girod of Quail Homes for his work in achieving a 20-fold increase in student participation in vocational career and technical education in just four years.

The honors were presented as part of the Learn Here Project, a 15-year effort to celebrate the staff and volunteers who make a positive impact on student learning across Clark County’s educational system. A quality educational system is a key reason why people choose to land and live in Clark County.

“We are so appreciative of those who go above and beyond for our students and schools,” said Chad Sessions of Windermere Northwest Living. “These are the everyday heroes who work tirelessly to help prepare our next generation of citizens and workers and serve as inspiration for others.”

Windermere Northwest Living is joined by the Port of Vancouver USA, KMR Group Foundation and the business leaders group Identity Clark County in supporting the Learn Here Project.

Learn Here honorees for 2026 include:

<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>
<b>BATTLE GROUND</b>	Rebecca Olson	Brook Trang
<b>CAMAS</b>	Shauna Ruse	Heidi Buhman-McNeley
<b>CLARK COLLEGE</b>	Earl Frederick	Sharif Burdzik
<b>EVERGREEN</b>	Tricia Harding	Jamie Helm
<b>FIRM FOUNDATION CHRISTIAN SCHOOL</b>	Sherina Sours	Jennifer Duke
<b>HOCKINSON</b>	Tasha Hill	Derek Huegel
<b>RIDGEFIELD</b>	Stephanie Goad	Tyler King
<b>VANCOUVER</b>	Erick Hoffarth	Diana Avalos-Leos
<b>WA STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND</b>	Billi Jo Thomas	Ole Helgerson
<b>WA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF</b>	Ami Justice	Carole Kaulitz
<b>WASHOUGAL</b>	Kenneth Kulk	Brittney Johnson
<b>WSU VANCOUVER</b>	Dr. Gunjan Gakhar	Mike Bomar

The third-ever Legacy Award was presented to Jon Girod of Quail Homes for his tenacious efforts to close a significant gap in vocational training that attracts teens to rewarding skilled trade jobs that are in significant demand. His persistent work has boosted participation in construction coursework at 10 high schools to 2,200 students, up from 100 just four years ago.

The Learn Here Project showcases Clark County’s quality educational system and honors exemplary staff and volunteers, in collaboration with area educational institutions. It was formed to celebrate and highlight Clark County’s educational system which often is cited by prospective residents and employers as a prime reason to choose Clark County to land, live and learn for a lifetime. The project is supported by Windermere Northwest Living, the Port of Vancouver USA and KMR Group Foundation, and is coordinated by the non-profit business leaders’ group Identity Clark County.

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*Photo Caption: (attached) 2026 Learn Here Honorees gather for a celebration reception May 19 at Vancouver Innovation Center.*

*Photo Caption: Jon Girod of Quail Homes receives Learn Here Legacy Honor*