



**Celebrating
65 Years!**

Dedication

We have found the most challenging path to navigate while uncovering the 65-year history of AWSL has been the choice of when to reference an individual name when AWSL always has been and always will be a group effort. For the most part, we referenced the name of the people that were present when something first started, knowing full well that successful journeys require many individuals over time. The program staff who ensure the continuity of progress by their presence each year. The invaluable, behind-the-scenes roles of countless individuals that ensure our success by paying attention to the details. The school bookkeepers and advisers who ensure their students are registered for programs and get on the bus! The students who truly carry AWSL because without students to act on the leadership concepts, the concepts would remain mere words in a forgotten notebook.

Among all these people, our summer camp directors need special mention. They are the lifeblood of our organization. They recruit a staff willing to teach for a week in the summer for the work, not the pay, and they set the vision and push what is possible during a retreat experience. It is a true labor of love. They have been keeping high school programs moving for 65 years, middle level programs for 30 years, and without a doubt, elementary summer camps are just around the corner. Camp directors are the engine for the AWSL train for both students and adults.

The students gain from walking into a live, 65-year successful experiment conducted by dedicated educators and youth advocates attempting to answer one question: What is the best way to teach leadership concepts to engage and empower students? The adults gain through the intrinsic satisfaction that comes from a small group of people working toward educational change. In turn, these adults become the innovators in their school districts and companies, the representatives on school boards, community groups and the Washington Activity Coordinators Association. Many become school principals, our committed sponsors and partners for 65 years.

Two beloved camp directors and AWSL advocates passed within our 65th school year of service. It seems fitting that this anniversary issue be dedicated to both of them as representatives of all the past, present, and future AWSL camp directors, staff and students. It is the effort of this group year after year that energizes all of us to take up the challenge of leadership.

Living the Legacy 65th year edition dedicated to:

Ruth was a classroom English teacher for Tacoma Public Schools for more than 40 years and...

Ruth Fulkerson Anderson
May 19, 1953- September 16, 2020

Ruth was the director of Cascade Middle Level Camp for 25 years. She became involved in AWSL in 1993 as a Team Counselor the first year of Cascade and was a regular facilitator of the Middle Level Regionals program. Ruth was a classroom English teacher in Tacoma for more than 40 years and served as an ASB Adviser and leadership class teacher. She was inducted into the Washington Activity Coordinators Association Hall of Fame in 2011.

"As an educator and friend, Ruth was always genuinely interested in other people. The last line of Mary Oliver's poem The Summer Day reminds me of how Ruth approached life: 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'"

Jeff Sabado,
Cascade Assistant Camp Director



Ruth Anderson (bottom left) in staff picture as Team Counselor (TC) the first year of Cascade Middle Level Camp in 1993.

Duane Magee
April 29, 1929 -April 24, 2021

Duane was the director of the Twinlow/Mt. Adams Leadership Camp for eight years during the critical transition from the old camp sites to Cispus. He became involved in AWSL in the early 60s. Duane was a long-time counselor and boys basketball coach at Foster and R.A. Long High Schools. After retiring from public education, Duane returned to his alma mater to become Alumni Director for Seattle Pacific University.

"Duane was a motivator, cheerleader and storyteller extraordinaire. His foundation was his faith and his unconditional love for humankind. As a camp director he led by example expecting those on his staff to emulate what was being taught to the delegates."

Dorothy Ferguson,
Twinlow Delegate and Mt. Adams Director



Duane Magee delivering the morning message "The Coach Says" as Senior Counselor (SC) at Camp Twinlow in 1966.

Introduction: “Take Your Soul”

In the boxes of archives gathered for the 50th Anniversary history project is a document from 1968 that captures the essence of what the Association of Washington Student Leaders has always been and will continue to be. The letter is from Junior Counselor Richard Swanson from the Seabeck session (Mt. Olympus Leadership Camp). It was attached to the front of the staff camp evaluation summary, and it appears to be a passionate post-camp letter Richard wrote to the delegates.

Richard was aware of the social, political, and racial turmoil of the late 1960s. He had embraced the camp curriculum that looked at “we” rather than “them.” Before they got into the details of preparing for the following year’s camp, the staff must have used the letter to ground them in their hopes of genuinely being a life-changing experience for the delegates and junior counselors.

Our history is the collective force of people compelled to make a difference. It is the story of people doing the extra things to create such a mountain-top experience for others that they, in turn, feel the need to make a difference. It is the story of students finding their voice and dedicated adults encouraging the process of growth.

Our story started in the mid-1950s, when the United States was just beginning to desegregate racially. Then, society and leadership experiences were primarily led by White male principals and open to a select few students from each participating school. Our 65th year lands in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic within another

racial awakening, reminding us we still have work to do in the post-George Floyd world.

We have grown from one leadership camp for high school students serving one boy and one girl from each attending school to a program grounded in the belief that ALL students can lead through multiple access points at every grade level. As our student-centred journey continues, the theme in our 65th year is – “Have You Asked Your Students Yet?”

Richard Swanson’s Letter:

Summer of 1968, Junior Cunsellor

Like me, are these last few summer days catching you, reflecting upon what happened at Seabeck the previous week? And what does it have to do with us as individuals?

I hope so, for I believe we were exposed to many unique things at Seabeck this year. Whereas other years, kids have gone to Seabeck primed for learning how to be effective officers, this year’s delegation had many deeper concerns. Concerns about age, race, economic and national barriers that...keep all humankind from “gettin’ together.”

You pick up some leadership concepts and techniques at Seabeck.

Ideas like evaluation, group dynamics, consensus, and participation are familiar to you now. You were largely satisfied at the end of a frustrating week, feeling that you’d found a handle or two on yourself.

So now you’re a leader! What are you going to do about it? Are you going to build, maintain, or destroy?

Will you get uptight when kids are too busy to patronize your dance or carnival in your high school?

Will you put in another year of handing the same activities to the same people? Or will you develop your values for what you should or shouldn't be doing?

Will you harness some creativity to provide new opportunities for your student body to become involved? Or will you cry for involvement in the dead activities of years past?

Will you extend beyond the "activity center elite walls" or infect the community?

Will you stick your neck out as a leader to help other people really "get together?"

Evaluate your efforts: will the product be a positive contribution to someone? Will the process allow people to relate to each other, joining hands to achieve a tangible goal?

The process and product are essential. See that the product is significant and successful enough to keep people involved.

I pray for you as you attempt to relate to your sphere of influence this year. May you never lose sight of the beautiful and hungry individuals God has given you to be with by classifying "them" or categorizing "them" as a group.

When you go to school this fall, take yourself to people. Don't take your institutions: your office, sport, Seabeck, activity. Take yourself. TAKE YOUR SOUL!

All of us have got to be twenty-four-hour leaders. It will take all we've got to grow as a generation that won't tolerate what happened in Chicago last week, what has happened in the ghettos for

decades, and what's going on in Southeast Asia.

We must be strong. Seek strength to love.

I'm sorry we could not have become better acquainted at Seabeck. I hope you'll feel free to drop me a thought line if you want to this year. I'll be anxious to see what forms your intangible values take.

Remember what you learned from Seabeck, but most of all, what we learned from each other.

As Always,

Richard Swanson.

Starting A Leadership Legacy: 1938-1955

National Roots; Camp Cheley; Seattle Public Schools

Everything has a beginning, and every beginning has a series of small events leading to that pivotal moment when something started. We selected the year 1956 as the official beginning of 65 years of principal-sponsored student leadership programs in Washington for our anniversary and history. More important than any of the dates in our history is the reality of what happened.

From a small beginning of one student leadership camp serving 122 delegates, the Association of Washington Student Leaders has grown into a nationally recognized model of excellence. Today, with the help of more than 500 dedicated program staff, each year, we serve more than 15,000 students and adults through a variety of access points and opportunities.

From our popular summer camps to conferences and workshops to cutting-edge curriculum and consulting, AWSL has led the way in designing learning experiences that empower students and adults to lead their schools and communities.

Our purpose in celebrating 65 years of service to schools is to honor and acknowledge our beginnings, while inspiring the next generation to lean into tomorrow and make us even better than we are today.

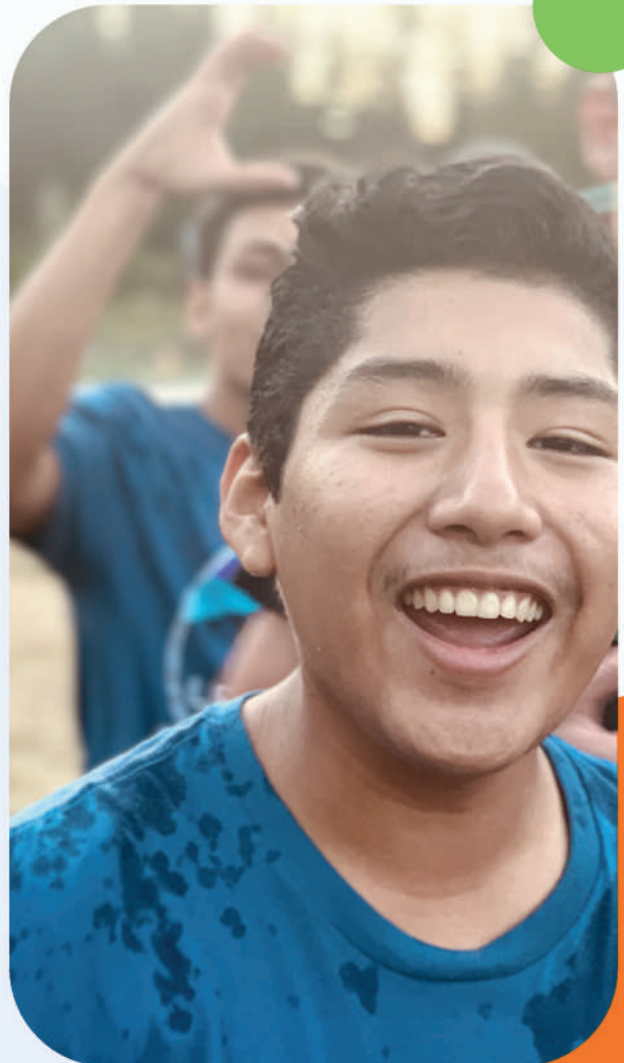
EARLY ROOTS OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Some of the earliest known historical references to student leadership in Washington date to the 1930s. In 1935, Washington was listed as one of the ten states to have started a state association after six schools attended a national meeting in 1931 in Los Angeles to discuss forming a national student association. In 1938, in the National Association of Student Officers' publication "Student Life," Robert Garing of Roosevelt High, Seattle, is introduced as one of the six national officers. Garing was elected the third vice-president at a national convention in Detroit, Michigan.

The following reference is post-World War II, when Don "Pop" Leer, principal of Stevenson High, organized the Washington Association of Student Councils (WASC) to send state delegations to an annual conference sponsored by the National Association of Student Councils (NASC). Roosevelt High appeared again as an early contributor to the student leadership program in 1953. Roosevelt's ASB President Jerry Davis attended the second annual Student Council Leadership Conference at Camp Cheley

(Estes Park, Colorado), sponsored by the National Association of Student Councils and the All-City Student Council of Denver Public Schools.

With Jerry's positive reviews and enthusiasm to bring more students to the camp, Lloyd Turner, Activities Coordinator at Roosevelt, promoted the national summer leadership camp program at a meeting of Seattle school activity coordinators. The question is raised, "Could we do something like this in Washington?" And it was the voice of a student who put everything into motion.



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, CAMP CHELEY, ESTES PARK, COLORADO

Seattle Public Schools acted on their inclination that training student leaders would be worthwhile. A delegation from Seattle Public Schools was selected to attend the third annual conference at Camp Cheley in the summer of 1954.

The attending advisers were Kermit Franks, West Seattle High; and Helen Smith, activity coordinator, Roosevelt High. The students were Dixie Thompson, Roosevelt High; Theodora (Teddy) Cokinakis, Lincoln High; John Burgess, Ballard High; and Larry Pierce, West Seattle High.

After the group's return, discussions about the feasibility of offering a statewide leadership camp in Washington continued. Next, the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals (WASSP) was contacted about the idea. The principals gave support to the vision of the Seattle activity coordinators.

FIRST STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP CAMP SPONSORED BY SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In the summer of 1955, Seattle Public Schools sponsored the first statewide student leadership camp at Camp Seabeck on Hood Canal. Each Seattle high school was allotted six delegates and extended an invitation to all high schools in Washington for one boy and one girl to attend per school. A total of 122 delegates representing the six Seattle schools and 32 other high schools participated in this first-ever camp.

The delegates were divided into six council groups that competed through a point system. Some council competitions were dorm inspection, organized recreation, songfest, stunt night, cheers, and skits. The staff for the camp included 12 junior counselors (including the four students who attended Camp Cheley in 1954) and 15 senior counselors. Kermit Franks of West Seattle High was the director.

Two members of WASSP served as senior counselors: Don Leer from Stevenson High and Karl Weber from Renton High. A consultant from NASC, Charles Mackey, was hired to help organize the conference. The four students who attended the national camp in 1954 were also a part of the planning committee. The camp was a success, and even before it ended, the staff began thinking ahead to the summer of 1956.

Establishing Camps: 1956-1969

Student Leadership Committee;
Original Camp Locations;
Cheer Camp Starts; First State
Student Council

The seed for student leadership training was planted from the success of the 1955 Seabeck session sponsored by Seattle Public Schools. By the time Apollo 11 landed on the moon in 1969, five leadership camps and three cheer camps were up and running, each with a loyal staff nurturing the growth of the students in attendance.

LEADERSHIP CAMPS AT SEABECK, TWINLOW, WASKOWITZ AND BURTON

In 1956, the principals accepted responsibility for being the primary sponsor of student leadership in the state. They established the WASSP Student Leadership Committee and appointed Principal Don Leer of Stevenson High as chair.

To organize the second statewide camp at Seabeck, the principals formed a partnership with the Seattle Public Schools. Kermit Franks of West Seattle High directed the Seabeck camp again. A second leadership camp was added in 1957 at Camp Twinlow in Rathdrum, Idaho. Don Leer led the camp, assisted by Karl Weber of Renton High. In 1961, a third camp was added at Camp

Waskowitz in North Bend, directed by Don Fowler of Federal Way High.

Camp Burton on Vashon Island became the home of the fourth camp. It was established in 1968 and directed by Wally Tonsstad of Issaquah High. By the end of its first decade, over 500 students from more than 150 schools participated in the leadership camp programs. Signifying the support WASSP placed in this new endeavor, each of the original four camps were under the direction of principals from public schools.

CAMP CURRICULUM CHANGES WITH THE TIMES

As the student leadership camp program grew, so did the sophistication of the student leadership curriculum. The mid-60s saw a shift from teacher presentations and lectures to a more participatory model. Council competitions as a significant component of the camp were gradually phased out during the Vietnam era.

The Twinlow camp staff, in a legendary drive across the state in the late-60s, had an epiphany that radically restructured the camp. Instead of centering the curriculum around a series of classes, the camp became organized around three key leadership concepts: communication, decision-making, and group process. Activities were then selected to help the delegates experience these concepts in action.

Staff member Doug McGrath advocated for the idea that student leaders needed self-awareness skills as much as they needed project planning techniques. Instead of being mere participants in the adult-conceived camp experience, students began voicing their opinions, thus helping to shape the curriculum.

CHEER CAMP AT CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

In addition to being early adopters of student leadership camps (the first national leadership camp was held in 1952), the principals were also ground-breakers in the establishment of Cheer Camps. The concept of training cheerleaders was not new, but the idea that cheerleaders should be well-versed in cheer techniques and leadership skills was an innovative perspective.

In 1961 at Central Washington State College, Wally Tonstad of Issaquah High directed the first Cheer Camp, with just over 100 delegates attending. The following year, the camp served 317 cheerleaders from 108 schools. Sandy Stonebreaker, Federal Way High, became involved in cheer camps in 1962 and, with the growth of the program, started directing a cheer camp in 1967 with C.G. "Coke" Roberts, West Seattle, as her assistant director.

A few years later, Coke was running a cheer camp as well. By the end of the decade, there were three sessions of Cheer Camp, each serving 500 delegates and gaining a rapidly growing following. The name of the Cheer Camps eventually shifted to reflect the philosophy of both cheer and leadership training, moving from Yell & Song Leader Camp to CheerLeadership Camp.

FIRST STATEWIDE STUDENT COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

The push for more student voice culminated in 1969 with the formal organization of the student-governed Washington Association of Student Councils, originally called the Washington State Leadership Council.

Each principal on the Student Leadership Committee, organized through Educational Service Districts (ESDs), brought two student representatives to the three meetings during the year. These students discussed school issues and provided a student perspective as the Student Leadership Committee continued to evaluate and design the next steps in the evolution of the student leadership program. In 1972, at the request of the WASC board, the first two students officially served on the State Board of Education.

Superintendent of Public Schools Louis Bruno commented, "I am convinced that today's high school students are competent. These two student leaders will make a solid contribution to our educational process."

From 1967 Camp Newsletter, Lil' Bit O'Soul, Closing Remarks of Don Fowler, Waskowitz Director

We have been tossing the term "leadership." around this week with almost reckless abandon. We've defined, dissected, and dramatized it; we've set it to music. Leadership has been examined in personal qualities, processes, and projects. This has focused on our combined attention for five full days.

Has it all been worth the while? I'd like to think so, although I shall never know. Each of you will have to answer this question for himself as the 1967-68 school year runs its inevitable course.

If your school is a bit better because of an enhanced sense of obligation, if you return to your constituents caring more about them and more determined to involve them, if you are better equipped with the tools and techniques of leadership and if you can sustain a genuine commitment from September to June, the answer to my question is sure to be in the affirmative. In that event, the staff, Mr Weber, and I will have fulfilled our function, and our week with you will not have been in vain. But from today on, it's up to you.

We wish you well.

Expanding Programs: 1970-1990

All-Camp Workshop; Cispus Learning Center; First WASC Conference; State Student Leadership Staff Positions

The expansion of the principal-sponsored student leadership programs during the 70s and 80s increased due to four major factors:

- Camps staff participated in professional development opportunities as a collective group.
- The high school leadership camps adapted to their new, more camp conducive, permanent location at the Cispus Learning Center.
- The principals recognized the need to

create staff positions to support the growing programs.

- Students continued to have life-changing experiences and encouraged their schools to attend AWSL sponsored events and activities.

ALL-CAMP STAFF LEADERSHIP TRAINING AT CAMP BURTON

On March 6-8, 1970, a grant from the Sears Roebuck Foundation of Chicago made it possible for 131 camp staff members to participate in the "Basic Leadership Training" workshop at Camp Burton.

Dr Robert T. "Sonny" Davis of National Leadership Methods and the National Leadership Institute facilitated the workshop with help from Don Leer, chair of the Student Leadership Committee. The focus of the conference was on learning through doing.

The concepts stressed were: "people tend to support what they help create." The emphasis placed on the process and the product of leadership swayed camp staff to explore the use of experiential education as a delivery model.

This gathering of staff from all the summer camp programs cemented the idea of the summer workshops being the best places for innovative and creative approaches to teaching leadership concepts. It was also the beginning of intentional gatherings and in-services for camp staff to share their best practices, lessons, and curriculum ideas.

LEADERSHIP CAMPS MOVE TO THE CISPUS LEARNING CENTER

In 1970, under the direction of State School Superintendent Louis Bruno, with the encouragement of his assistant, Harold "Smitty" Smith, the Cispus Learning Center (a former Civilian Conservation Corp camp in the 1930s and Job Corps site from 1965-69) was established by the state as an outdoor and environmental education center.

Reasonable prices, location, and growth potential were the benefits that steered the Student Leadership Committee to move all leadership camps from their original sites to Cispus. No longer identified by site location, camps were renamed for mountains in the state.

Thus, the Seabeck session became Mt. Olympus, Twinlow became Mt. Adams, Waskowitz became Mt. Rainier, and Burton became Mt. St. Helens. Staff visited the Cispus Center in the spring of 1970 to get a feel for the site and prepare for the first summer camps.

To keep the tradition of family-style dining, camp staff scoured garage sales to locate enough serving bowls and platters to turn Cispus' cafeteria-line meals into the traditional sit-down family meals that were a key element at the original sites. As a requirement for using the Cispus Center, a lesson on environmental education was a part of the camp curriculum.

As the popularity of the leadership camp program grew, the fifth high school leadership camp, Mt. Baker, opened in 1979 under the directorship of Sandy Stonebreaker, Federal Way High. Cispus was full that summer, so Mt.

Baker first hosted students at Central Washington University, then re-opened at Cispus in 1983.

WASHINGTON ACTIVITY COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION

A focus on student leadership in the state led to the Washington Activity Coordinators Association (WACA) organization in 1970. The professional group held its first annual conference on April 29-May 1 at the Roosevelt Hotel in Seattle. The keynote speaker was Cliff Gillies, principal of Mariner High and member of the WASSP Student Leadership Committee.

Today, the annual WACA conference still offers excellent opportunities for professional growth for all those involved in youth development. The Association of Washington Student Leaders continues to be a supportive partner.

STATE COORDINATOR OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP POSITION CREATED

The growth of the student leadership program caused the principals – officially established in 1972 as the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) – to create systemic changes in their support system. In 1974, Coke Roberts was appointed the State Coordinator for Student Leadership to help the chair of the Student Leadership Committee organize the summer workshops.

One of Coke's first efforts was to bring staff members from leadership and cheer camps together for a series of meetings to share, create and adopt a leadership curriculum. The group was called the Innovators Committee. The first wave of camp staff personnel reached retirement age, and a recognition dinner was held for them during the Principals Parliament on November 20, 1975, at the Grove Restaurant in Seattle. Mt. Adams (Twinlow) retired five; Both Mt Rainier (Waskowitz) and Mt. Olympus (Seabeck) retired six, and Cheer retired four. In addition, new staff members, mostly teachers, were recruited for the open positions to continue student leadership work.

By this time, the camp system had been in place long enough that the directors of camps started to come from within the staff rather than from the ranks of principals. In some instances, a delegate who became a junior counselor and then a senior counselor was recruited for a camp administrative position. A family atmosphere and spirit of camaraderie continued to be a part of the culture of the camp staff.

CHEERLEADERSHIP CAMPS EXPAND

The CheerLeadership camps during this period continued to grow in attending participants and the refinement of the curriculum. As a pre-cursor to the many regional programs that would develop within AWSL in the future, Sandy Stonebreaker and Coke Roberts and eight members of the cheer camp staff organized a one-day Cheer workshop on November 27, 1971.

"The Lewis-Clark Empire Regional Leadership Meet" event attracted more than 350 cheerleaders from 80 high schools in eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and northeastern Oregon.

A newspaper article highlighted the workshop in the Lewiston Morning Tribune: "Their efforts [staff of Washington CheerLeadership Camps] have been credited with the rise of the cheerleader's role from a one-time sideshow distraction at athletic contests to positions as responsible and skilled student leaders of all school activities." In addition, a long-term contract with the World Cheerleader Council, directed by Bob Shields, was signed to provide the technical cheer training.

In 1973, four sessions of cheer camp were held with over 2,000 Cheerleaders participating, representing 98% of the schools in Washington. Directing cheer camps for multiple years in the mid-70s as the program shifted from three to four sessions were Rose Larson, Curtis Jr High, Pat Woodard, Cleveland High, and Judi Kosterman, Evergreen High.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE STUDENT LEADERSHIP STAFF POSITIONS

What started as one camp for 122 students was now a robust series of programs that dovetailed into the pulse of a school year. Summer camps for leadership and cheer, regional events, the WASC Board, student representation on the State Board of Education, the U.S. Youth Senate Program, and NASC trips were all opportunities for high school students. During this time, visions of expanding programs to serve middle-level students began.

The principals again recognized the need to support student leadership on the administrative level, and extra support was put in place at the ground level. In the early 1980s, the position of Executive Secretary to the WASC Board was created and was first filled by Mack Armstrong of Mt. Si High. This position was tasked with continuing to help organize the NASC trips that had been sending student delegations from Washington to a national conference since the early 1950s.

This new position was tasked with three primary responsibilities:

1. To help organize the NASC trips that had been sending student delegations from Washington to a national conference since the early 1950s.
2. To oversee a three-day statewide high school WASC Conference in the fall coordinated through a host school with a community-based, home-stay program – started at Lindbergh High in Renton in 1980.
3. To guide the student-led WASC Board.

The student leadership program was now divided into two main categories: summer camps and workshops, organized by State Coordinator Dean Johnsen of Adna HS, and the activities planned through the student-led WASC Board facilitated by the Executive Director of the WASC Board.

All of the programs were guided by the WASSP Leadership Committee.

A test of the principal's creative problem-solving came with the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in May of 1980. The blast caused all camps to relocate during the summer of 1980 to alternate sites and forced the state superintendent of public instruction to abandon the sponsorship of the Cispus Learning

Center. Cispus was deemed a "good program, but not essential." The principals rose to the challenge and signed a special-use permit with the USDA Forest Service in 1981 to preserve Cispus for outdoor education and leadership camps with Jeanette Woodruff as the first General Manager.

The Washington School Principals' Education Foundation was established to pursue this bold endeavour. Jeanette Woodruff was appointed manager of the Cispus Learning Center by AWSP Executive Director Joe Lassoie.

Leadership camps now had a permanent home at Cispus. In recognition of the evolving complexity of the principal-sponsored student leadership programs, a second AWSP assistant executive director position was created in 1984 and housed at the principal's Olympia office. A significant portion of the job was overseeing the student leadership programs.

Lynn Waller, formerly of Shoreline High, became the first to fill this role. Dick Stimpson, the successor to Lynn Waller, strongly advocated for the student leadership programs during his tenure. He organized a workgroup of camp directors and assistants at Federal Way High School to revamp the Goals and Objectives of Student Leadership around five focus areas:

- Communication
- Group process
- Managerial skills
- Self-awareness
- Human relations

These goals guided the leadership program for more than 25 years. During the mid-80s, through the advocacy of Wally Tonstad, Chair of the Leadership Committee, serious consideration was undertaken around a question, "Could the principals create a full-time position to oversee all the student leadership programs?"

Consolidating Operations: 1991- 2002

Brian Barker's Vision; Middle-Level Programs; Publications; Expanding Role of Student Leaders

The consolidation of student leadership programs began in 1991 with the vision of AWSP Assistant Executive Director Brian Barker. It continued through his tenure as Executive Director of AWSP until his retirement in 2003. Brian recruited Marty and Susan Fortin in 1991—two highly active student leadership teachers on the local and state level – to facilitate the growth of training opportunities for student leaders.

Marty's focus was to develop outdoor education programs at Cispus, becoming the Director of Cispus in 1993. Susan was hired as the first full-time staff position created solely to guide student leadership. The patchwork of programs and events pieced together for over 35 years was now under one roof.

The position of AWSP Director of Washington Student Leadership (now AWSL) was established in 1998 – a position Susan held until her retirement in 2019. From Principal Don Leer helping students go on an NASC trip and experience summer leadership camps in the early 50s, students now had an advocate at the administrative level of AWSP to speak for students' interests.

MIDDLE-LEVEL STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Expanding leadership programs to serve middle-level students became a primary focus of the Student Leadership Committee in the 1990s, though the roots of middle-level programs date back to the mid-1980s. The Curriculum Committee of the Washington Junior High/ Middle School Principals Association reported their investigation into the possibilities of leadership workshops for middle-level schools throughout the state.

Local efforts were highlighted as examples of options, such as the Snohomish and Island Counties October 1984 workshop with 120 middle-level students from twenty-three schools. In a foreshadowing of what the mission of AWSL would eventually become, the group suggested that middle-level programs "should be for all students – begin in the classroom – then extend to include ASB elected leaders."

A quote was offered to make the point: "To organize a school without leadership development training is like trying to bake bread without yeast." In a prequel to middle-level summer camps, a two-day Junior High Cheer camp was held in August of 1988, with sites in Vancouver and Seattle. With these events serving as the backbone, the first official AWSL program created was the one-day Middle-level Regional Leadership Workshops in 1992. The program served 1,040 students and advisers from 112 schools in its first year.

This program still exists and serves more than twice the initial number of students and advisers with an engaging, themed day utilizing the host school's student leadership team as co-leaders with the AWSL facilitators. Cascade Middle-level Leadership Camp opened in 1993 (four days, three nights) and was co-directed by Susan Fortin and Joe Fenbert. To build program capacity, Joe was hired in 1993 as an educational specialist to support student leadership and the challenge course and environmental education at Cispus.

The idea behind the name Cascade for the middle-level camp invokes the idea that the foothills serve as the base for the Cascade mountain peaks. Thus, students could explore leadership in their middle-level years to gain the courage to embrace more challenges as they move on to their high schools. In the fall of 1996, a three-day Middle-level Team Retreat was added when more than 100 students had to be turned away from a full Cascade Camp. A second Cascade session was added in 1997, directed by Ruth Anderson. Lana Yenne ran a third session added in 2002. Finally, in 2003, the middle-level camp names were changed to Cascade, Columbia and Chinook, with Ruth directing Cascade, Lana Columbia, and Randy Heath directing Chinook.

The rapid growth of all the middle-level programs during this time, along with the support and encouragement of Shannon Wiggs (a long-time AWSL advocate and then President of the Association of Washington Middle-level Principals), led to the establishment of the AWSP Middle-level Leadership Committee in 2004 first chaired by Crystal Knight of Lakewood MS.

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

High school leadership programs continued to prosper with two new leadership camps added: Mt. Washington in 1995, directed by Ken Crawford, and Mt. Triumph in 2003, directed by Greg Barker, which grew out of Mt. Baker Session 1 and Session 2 in 2002.

Even though by the early 2000s, Mt. St. Helens was decommissioned as a camp and Mt. Washington moved to the Chewelah Peak site, high school leadership camps continued to run at full capacity. The expansion of the Cispus dining hall and dorm capacity in the mid-90s allowed each high school camp to house more than 300 students and adults per session.

Curriculum also evolved. The educational concept of a school within a school enabled camp staff to divide large camp delegations into smaller learning groups. Camps rotated the smaller groups through ideas over a few days, rather than having every delegate understand every concept simultaneously.

Camps also started to devote more time to helping school groups set goals and develop as a team. Mt. Baker and Mt. Triumph organized their councils by school groups rather than mixed school councils. With the expansion of the Cispus Challenge Course by manager Bill Barnes, camps embraced the course as a teaching tool and continued to utilize experiential education to deliver content.

Old standard leadership lessons were retired. The movie *Twelve Angry Men*, used for decades to illustrate group dynamics, gave way to students practicing their leadership skills through planning camp events and activities.

CHEERLEADERSHIP CAMPS

The AWSL CheerLeadership camps continued to offer four sessions of camp. This happened up until the late 1990s, when three sessions were offered. The National Cheerleaders Association became the partner leading the cheer technical training. In 1993, to meet the increasing technological demands of coaching spirit squads, the CheerLeadership Camps established workshops designed for cheer coaches and advisers.

These workshops still provide the most comprehensive instruction for cheer coaches in the state. With the surge of competitive cheer programs during this time, the AWSL cheer camps revamped the curriculum to include essential elite stunt training.

However, they continued to stay true to their roots of also developing the leadership skills of cheerleaders. They also started to offer Mascot Training to integrate this cheer squad role more fully into the culture and climate of a school.



ADVISER TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Starting in the mid-80s, Leadership and cheer advisers could acquire training through Central Washington University for college credit or clock hours that culminated in an internship at an AWSL camp. In the 1990s, professional growth opportunities for leadership, cheer advisers, and camp staff expanded to meet the need.

The “Teaching Leadership” workshop, a three-day retreat for high school advisers, started in 1991. Since their inception, a concurrent adviser strand has been woven into the Middle-level Leadership Camps. AWSP Executive Director Brian Barker brought camp staff together several times for networking and visioning. In 1996, AWSL hosted the National Association of Workshop Directors (NAWD) Conference in Seattle. AWSL had always been a strong supporter of this national group started in the 1970s by legendary activities adviser and educator Dr Earl Reum.

The conference’s theme, “Leadership in the Emerald City,” was based on the Wizard of Oz story. Brains, heart and courage were used to accent the guiding tenants of AWSL programs based on knowledge, compassion, and action. Utilizing AWSL camp staff members for keynote speakers and workshop presenters highlighted the strength and depth of the AWSL programs and curriculums.

With the Cispus Learning Center becoming a state-approved clock hour provider, several practical and innovative ways to strengthen the role of advisers were developed.

PUBLICATIONS

Three AWSL curriculum manuals produced for activity advisers by activity advisers were published through the 90s: Building Leaders for Life: A High School Leadership Class Curriculum (1991); Starting in the Middle: Leadership Designs for Middle-level Students (1993); More than Pom Pons and Pyramids: A Coach’s Guide to a Quality CheerLeadership Program (1996).

Additionally, two other publications were created for school leadership teams. The Assembly Guidebook walked advisers and students through how to organize robust assemblies to promote a school’s mission. Fundraising: It’s Not A Cakewalk Anymore was a comprehensive guide to fundraising authored by Marty Fortin for advisers and students.

To celebrate the accomplishments of the AWSL program and feature the work of students, the bimonthly newsletter, the WASC News, was published from 1996 to 2001. Later this publication became The Leader, published from 2005 to 2008. While still highlighting the work of AWSL and students, each issue of The Leader centered on a timely leadership topic.

EXPANDING ROLE OF STUDENT LEADERS

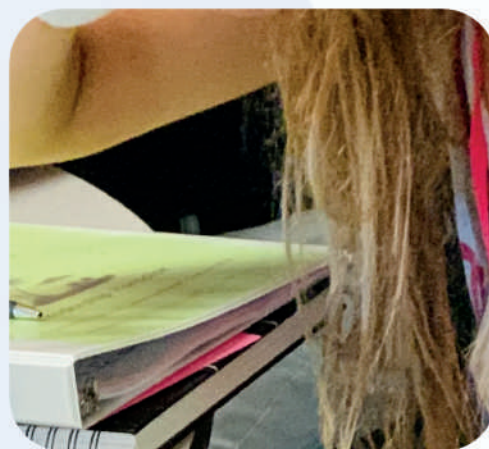
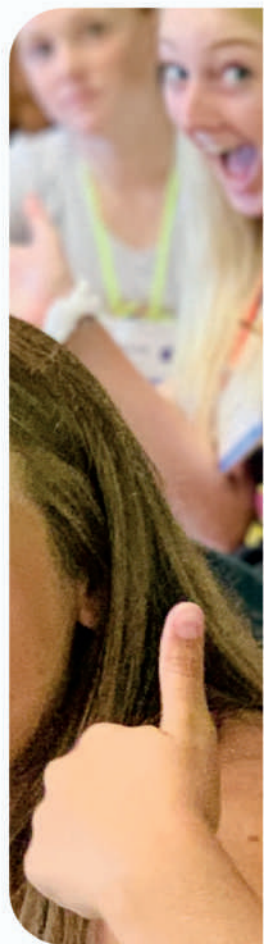
Student leaders continued to play a vital role in developing AWSL programs by expanding their voice and reach. In the early 90s, students began leading the small group workshops at the WASC Conference that, up to this point, we’re being taught by activity advisers.

A significant restructuring of WASC took place in 1996, with representation on the student board shifting from representation based on ESDs to selected students from chartered interhighs (an organized group of high schools based on geographic location, sports league, or school size). With this change, the student-led WASC Board became a better representation of students in the state.

The change also allowed the students to collaborate more effectively with other state agencies to do meaningful work. For example, the WASC Board formed partnerships with the Washington State School Directors Association to lead a series of Diversity Summit Retreats. In addition, they worked with the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) to promote sportsmanship in schools. The position of student representative to the State Board of Education became a two-year commitment.

The selection process of the students—one from Eastern Washington and one from Western Washington—became the responsibility of the WASC Board. As a bookend to the growing influence of engaged and empowered students, a group of Kentwood ASB officers started a two-year effort to change a state law: RCW 28.A325.030. Guided by their Leadership Adviser Kristi Queen and assisted in the second year by the WASC Board and other students from the Kent School District, they successfully advocated for a bill.

The new law allowed students to raise money for charitable causes by providing services to the public for a fee.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: 2003-2020

AWSP Strategic Plan; Latino Programs; Chewelah Peak; Leadership Framework; Elementary Programs; Equity Committee

Several intersecting factors contributed to the awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion within AWSL programs, yet four catalysts stand out.

First, a question asked by Vincent Perez in 2002 led to the creation of La Cima Bilingual Leadership camp, which serves Latinx youth.

"We do a great job of serving students who are well on their way to success, but what can we do for students who might not be in the traditional school corridors of power?"

Second, in 2005 led by AWSP Executive Director Gary Kipp, updates to the AWSP strategic plan were implemented. One of the target objectives for student leadership was to "expand student leadership opportunities, emphasizing underserved populations." This objective was reaffirmed in the 2013-16 plan, then expanded a few years later through a restructuring phase within AWSP and a series of discussions within AWSL to include specific language like "Examine, interrupt and address patterns of historical and current oppression."

Third, the continuing evolution of the leadership camp curriculum and the increasing responsibility placed on student leaders pushed AWSL into new frontiers to help schools ensure that all students experience academic and social success. A fundamental shift in thinking is reflected in the rewording of AWSL's overarching mission. AWSL

focused on training and empowering student leaders in the past, which changed to a broader interpretation of providing access points for all students to lead. The word change aligned our language with our internal beliefs.

Finally, AWSL hired Spokane band teacher and Mt. Triumph staff member James Layman in 2017 as a full-time Program Director specifically to reach out and create programs in Eastern Washington. James' ability to connect across social and racial demographics immediately increased AWSL's ability to examine and modify programs using the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

LA CIMA AND DEAF TEEN LEADERSHIP

The Hispanic Bilingual Leadership Development Camp opened in 2003 with 14 students and the innovative delivery model of presenting all verbal and written content in Spanish and English. A former leadership camp delegate and AWSL Latinx Outreach Coordinator, Vincent Perez, directed it, later changing the name to La Cima (The Summit).

Today, La Cima serves more than 225 students each year with the mission to "impart leadership and life skills to Latinx youth." Growing out of the success of La Cima, ¡La Chispa! (The Spark) program was created in 2011 to serve middle-level Latinx students. These one-day workshops utilize high school near peers as mentors to build a positive academic and self-identity. ¡La Chispa! sites in 2015 served more than 2,500 students.

Another unique program spearheaded by a former leadership camp delegate and Mt. Adams

staff member, Mat Lyons, opened in 2006 to help Deaf and hard of hearing youth. Deaf Teen Leadership Camp, first directed by Mat, Howie Seago, and Carol Carrothers, continues to serve around 30 delegates per summer. The efficacy of La Cima, ¡La Chispa! and Deaf Teen Leadership stems from bringing together advocates for these student demographics to share best practices and create a culturally relevant curriculum.

Students become empowered with skills and confidence to engage in their schools and communities more fully. The personal relationships developed at camp give delegates hope, counter the isolation that often comes from being a part of a marginalized group, provide them with a path forward, and more importantly, give them support.

CHEWELAH PEAK LEARNING CENTER

In 2003 AWSP opened the Chewelah Peak Learning Center, a sister site of Cispus one hour north of Spokane. With an entire challenge course run by Bill Barnes and an outdoor education program facilitated by science teacher and site manager Sue Fisk, Chewelah began serving the surrounding schools. Two AWSL programs were offered the first summer: Chinook Middle-Level Camp, directed by Randy Heath and La Cima, directed by Vincent Perez. In 2004, Washington HS Leadership Camp, directed by Ken Crawford, was offered along with Chewelah Peak ML Camp, directed by Bill Barnes. Later, the high school session changed its name to the Chewelah Peak Leadership Camp and was co-directed by Bill Wadlington and Sue Fisk. The opening of Chewelah Peak allowed AWSL to better serve the geographically isolated small rural schools in

Eastern Washington and the neighboring western states with the opening of the Western Leaders Summit, first launched by Leanne Donely in 2011 then directed by Sandy Ginger of Nevada and Meri Benedict of Washington. Continuing the push to expand opportunities, Mission Peak High School Leadership Camp opened at Chewelah in 2017, co-directed by Amanda St. Pierre, James Layman and Rachel Obenchain. Mission Peak was designed to break down barriers and include school leaders from all corners of a school.

Students from sports, performing arts, visual arts, clubs and activities, multicultural clubs, Link Crew, and other school leaders without a title could come together as school teams and develop their skills as leaders. Using the concept known as affinity spaces, AWSL launched a Native American Leadership Camp in the summer of 2018 with the knowledge gained from the success of other affinity camps like La Cima and Deaf Teen Leadership. The Native American camp opened under the directorship of Ben Charles, Jr., Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and Kristeen Johnson, both long-time staff members of the Mt. Baker Leadership Camp staff. The camp has offered our Native Youth in Washington an opportunity to explore identity, stories and culture while opening the doors to being leaders in their schools and communities. Additionally, the camp position of Elder was added to better serve this specific group of students.

50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA EVENT

More than 200 past and present summer camp staff members, leadership advisers, and principals participated in the 50th Anniversary of Student Leadership. The gala event was held at the

Sheraton Hotel in Tacoma on October 28, 2006, with Merlin Epp, long-time Mt. Rainier Camp Director, serving as the Master of Ceremonies.

As part of the anniversary, an oral history project was organized, capturing the stories of the early contributors to student leadership training in the state. The first edition of the *Living the Legacy* historical publication was produced. Archives to store camp memorabilia and historical documents were created at Cispus, including a small time capsule box to be opened at the 100-year mark!

To add to the festivities, a “50 Years of Student Leadership” video presentation was produced by Jeff Sabado (Assistant Director Cascade Camp) and Tracy Dethlefs (former camp delegate). Before the gala, an all-staff leadership training was held from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The evening had many meaningful moments.

A standing ovation paid tribute to three educators who participated in the 1955 and 1956 launch years: Kermit Franks, West Seattle HS, Frank Hannawalt, Garfield HS and Don Fowler, Federal Way HS.

Three students that attended the national camp in 1954 and served as Junior Counselors (JCs) in 1955 also attended: Theodora Cokinakis, Larry Pierce, and Dixie Thompson. They had no idea what the program had grown into from their involvement in the humble beginnings of AWSL. Former WASC Board member and La Cima JC, Zain Paloalto, was the student speaker.

To get into the camp spirit, current and past Mt. Adams staff members led a sing-along to “Everybody Loves Saturday Night,” a Nigerian miner’s song that was a main campfire staple through the 1950s and 1960s.

CURRICULUM EVOLVES

Summer camps act as learning labs to develop leadership concepts and curricula. Many concepts springing from camps were brought back by students and infused into their schools. The Sensitivity to Others Continuum, a guide to confronting bullying behavior, came out of Cascade Camp.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs applied to school climate and culture was integrated into the Mt. Triumph session.

The Humor Triangle, which offers students a lens to judge the appropriateness of jokes, was developed over several years by the Mt. Baker staff.

The concept of Servant Leadership, coupled with an activity that encourages students to build their character “muscle” through daily challenges, was introduced to students by the Mt. Adams staff. With the continuing use of the Cispus and Chewelah Peak Challenge Courses, team building activities adaptable to mentor programs, in-coming student orientation, and relationship building were perfected for the school environment by several camp staff. Trauma-informed care practices and an emphasis on mental health awareness came from La Cima Leadership Camp.

The increasing role of students as genuine stakeholders in the school improvement process was growing alongside these curriculum adaptations.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS GROW

Using near peers as a way for students to lead each other was incorporated into three initiatives during this time. A 2004 collaboration between the WASC Board and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction launched the Student 2 Student program. This student-led initiative engaged the Class of 2008 and beyond in conversations about the new state standards for academic success and graduation.

Instead of adults teaching the incoming freshman the necessary steps to graduation, a cadre of trained juniors and seniors presented the information utilizing a video and lesson plan conceived by the WASC Board. More than 200 schools participated in the program in the first year. In 2006 through the WASC Board, Washington became one of 11 states selected to pilot the national Raising Student Voice and Participation (RSVP) program. The RSVP program trains students to facilitate a series of school-wide summits to engage the student body in discussions about school and community issues.

Action teams are then formed to resolve the most pressing issues identified during the summits. The WASC Board continued the legacy of student empowerment through its process to define the term leadership and establish statewide standards for student leaders in high-performing schools. (This was the first significant re-writing of a statewide student leader accountability program since the WASC Board introduced the WASC Achievement Award in the 1970s.) Schools could apply for levels of distinction, and a student review group scored the applications.

Additionally, the students started a partnership with Washington Special Olympics in 2007. Together they created a campaign to promote inclusion and participation in Unified Sports. This program brings people with and without intellectual disabilities to compete on the same school sports team.

In 2015, when Washington Student Leadership was rebranded as the Association of Washington Student Leaders, the students also rethought their organization. To become a better representative body for student voice in the state, the WASC Board became the AWSL Executive Committee, with representation coming from geographic regions based on an application process. This change significantly increased the diversity of students on the board because representation was not limited by whether a functioning local association of high schools existed in an area.

The AWSL slogan for 2016 was It's not WHAT you do, It's WHY you do it. All student outcomes for AWSL programs were tied directly to the AWSP Leadership Framework, eight evaluative criteria for school principals. Though all the concepts weave into students' work in schools, the four criteria that most directly relate are Creating a Culture, Ensuring Safety, Closing the Gap and Engaging the Community.

By this time, AWSL had grown from a program started by principals for their students to a program where students were now working in partnership with principals to lead their schools.

ELEMENTARY LEADERSHIP

In 2014, after ten years of tinkering with concepts, asking questions and holding visioning meetings, AWSL established an elementary leadership program. As a result of this endeavor, a vision was integrated into all AWSL programs. It was decided that all students in elementary school should have access and opportunities to lead. The title of the elementary guide, *Inspiring Students to Lead: A Guide for Elementary Schools*, reflected this change in thinking. Just like it is understood that all students can learn English, math or social studies, the new paradigm in leadership training is that all students can learn to lead when given the opportunity and access.

Additionally, three assembly-type workshops offered schools a jump-start to launching an elementary leadership program. The All Play workshop teaches kids to lead themselves in inclusive games at recess and around tables. The Walk, Talk, and Rock Like a Leader workshop utilize a near-peer model of older students leading younger students. The curriculum focuses on improving school climate through a school-wide focus on being your best self, team building, listening, and being NICE (Noticing others to Invite, Compliment and Engage in Empathy). The Leadership 101 workshop trains students on how to run meetings, plan projects and serve their schools. AWSL served 20 schools and more than 2,500 students in the first two years of the elementary programs.



AWSL ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

In 2016, after an estimated half-million students had participated in an AWSL sponsored program, the AWSL Alumni & Friends was formed. Their first official act was to acquire the domain: www.lwenttocamp.org. The organization's initial goals were to provide scholarships to summer camps for underrepresented schools and students, provide alumni with a way of re-engagement after their positive AWSL experience, and support the continued use of the Cispus and Chewelah Peak Learning Centers as sites for the AWSL summer camps.

ENTER EQUITY: A NEW LENS TO LOOK AT LEADERSHIP

In an innovative move in 2016, AWSP reworked the way the organization's mission affects each of its eight parts, one of which is AWSL. Three broad goals were set for all eight teams to work toward in everything they did. Equity, organizational health and principal longevity became the cornerstones of the work.

With these concepts in mind, AWSL continued to promote the idea of students and principals as partners in the school improvement process. Through a task force of educators and AWSL camp staff, conversations began on how AWSL could integrate equity concepts. The task force accomplished the rewriting of AWSL's goals and objectives with an equity and social-emotional learning lens. A deep dive into the demographics of the students we serve through our programs and the camp staff we engage each summer was examined.

An AWSL belief statement centering on equity, access and opportunity was developed to better reflect AWSL's values, mission and goals. Key concepts included – students in leadership roles should represent and reflect the demographics of their school; schools should promote multiple opportunities and access points for all students to lead.

Leadership should be thought of as another content area in which all students can learn to lead just like all students can learn math, English, social studies and other subjects. The task force set the stage for what will come from AWSL in the coming years.

Currently, both AWSL and AWSP work toward identifying and dismantling historically inequitable and deeply entrenched systems in our state by equipping school leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead equity in their respective contexts. One way AWSL is doing this is actively organizing an entire strand of workshops themed on diversity, equity and inclusion at the annual conference of the Washington Activity Coordinators Association.

Beyond belief statements and goals and objectives to help schools lean into diversity, equity and inclusion, several AWSL programs modeled these concepts. The Dare to Dream Academies started in 2016, pulling together several educational agencies to serve migrant students. Working collaboratively, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, AWSP, AWSL and four major state universities provide migrant students with a summer experience on a college campus while earning high school credit in math, science and leadership.

The program serves both high school and middle-level students. Na-ha-shee, a similar credit-bearing program in partnership with Washington State University, serves Native American youth in the Health Sciences. Outdoor Recreation Health and Fitness offers students a chance to earn Physical Education credit through a one-week outdoor experience.

The XITO Institute for Teaching and Organizing, brought to Cispus initially by AWSL in 2016, is now an annual event. The workshop teaches educators how to use an indigenous epistemology to better serve Latinx and Native-American students in a culturally responsive way, while at the same time, learning how to de-colonize their classrooms to better engage with all students. A regional workshop



bringing alternative school students together was organized by AWSL leadership camp staff Amanda St. Pierre in the Spokane region in 2017.

To serve the small rural schools in Eastern Washington, a 7th-12th grade Blue Mountain Region Leadership Day started in 2013 and is hosted annually at Pomeroy Junior-Senior High School. New bus routes to summer camp continued to be plotted through geographically isolated areas, giving all schools better access to summer camps. AWSL again hosted the National Conference on Student Activities (formerly known as the NAWD Conference) in December of 2017 in Spokane.

The conference theme, Leadership Revolution, highlighted the many innovations coming out of AWSL programs and Washington activity advisers and their students. Caping off the activity of this time was the rewriting and republishing of three AWSL curriculum resources: Building Leaders for Life in 2016, Inspiring Students to Lead in 2017 (with all student handouts in English and Spanish) and Starting in the Middle in 2018.

END OF AN ERA: LEGACY RETIREMENTS

All successful programs carry a spirit of the work forward as new people come in and veterans hand them the torch of leadership. It is the work and desire to constantly improve that drives the motivation and commitment of its members.

Three major transitional changes occurred within the comprehensive partnership between AWSP and AWSL. Long-time AWSP Executive Director Gary Kipp retired in July of 2018. His successor, Dr. Scott Seaman, is continuing the legacy of the work within the state and on a national level. AWSL Director Susan Fortin retired in the summer of 2019 after serving since 1991. Her successor, Greg Barker, was brought on board in the summer of 2018.

Thanks to a generous commitment from AWSP, AWSL was able to hire the next Director a year early to experience the entire arch of the AWSL year. Greg, an Assistant Principal in Snohomish SD, had been woven into the fabric of AWSL for twenty years both as Director of the Mt. Triumph Leadership Camp and chair of the AWSP Leadership Committee. Marty Fortin – the lead planner behind the expansion of services at the Cispus Learning Center and the creation of the Chewleah Peak Learning Center – retired as Director of Learning Centers in August of 2019. Marty also served on the Mt. Baker Leadership Camp staff for more than 35 years. All three players, Gary, Marty, and Susan, built structures and systems that are looked at as models of excellence around the nation.

Their legacy can be described as builders, creators, visionaries, weavers, and guides. Through their role modelling and ability to attract

others to the work, they left AWSP and AWSL in the hands of a cadre of committed folk with the skills, passion, and drive to continue to provide opportunities that support and increase the academic and social success of each and every student.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and the future of AWSL: 2020 and Beyond

Module-based AWSL programs, Chewelah Peak Closes, Student Voice Expands, Statewide Support for Outdoor School

Every generation has historical events that mark a moment in time: “Where were you when...?” AWSL was at the WACA conference in March of 2020 at the Toyota Center in Kennewick when Covid-19 hit. As the conference went on, hotel workers continued to wipe down surfaces, and phone call after phone call from school districts asked their teaching staff to leave the conference and come home to start preparing for online school.

For the first time since 1956, AWSL was forced to cancel summer programs. AWSL and the Learning Centers are designed to bring large groups of people together from all walks of life to live in close community, forge relationships, learn and share rich experiences together. The pandemic forced all of these opportunities to cease.

Sadly, AWSL and the Learning Centers (Cispus and Chewelah Peak) were forced to lay off employees and shutter for an extended period of time.

The pandemic proved to be financially devastating to many aspects of the Washington School Principals Education Foundation, which oversees the Learning Centers and AWSL. In September of 2020, the Chewelah Peak Learning Center was closed. Chewelah Peak provided extraordinary opportunities, retreats, camps, and conferences for 17 years. This difficult decision to close Chewelah Peak also meant saying goodbye to long-time Learning Center employees Bill Barnes and Chuck and Polly Messenger. Bill and the Messengers began working for the Learning Centers at Cispus in the 1990s. Bill served as the Challenge Course Manager at Cispus from 1992 to 1998 and built many of the elements that still exist on the course today.

Bill's knowledge, storytelling, and innovative approach to experiential education expanded the thinking around what a challenging course could be for both participants and facilitators. Chuck's extensive background in construction allowed him to design everything from water systems to bunk beds, and he kept the facilities user-friendly and running smoothly.

Polly used her talents as a welcoming host, and she made delicious meals for thousands of students and adults during her time at our learning centers. Their talents and expertise made Chewelah Peak a vibrant and dynamic learning center experience. We thank Bill, Chuck, and Polly for their years of service to our Learning Centers.

In December of 2020, after 25+ years of service, Joe Fenbert transitioned out of his full-time position with AWSL. In a variety of roles from assistant challenge course manager to education specialist to communications and curriculum coordinator, Joe served alongside the Fortins developing AWSL programs that have influenced, taught, and inspired hundreds of thousands of students.



He began his journey with AWSL as a delegate to Mt. Rainier Leadership Camp in 1979. Joe continues to support AWSL through special projects and by serving as the AWSL historian.

Reimagining Programs

The pandemic challenged the AWSL Team to develop and create new ways to deliver programs. In 2020, three new module-based programs were created. Calling All Superheroes was designed for elementary schools. Find Your Vision was developed for secondary schools, and the traditional annual program ¡La Chispa! was modified. These programs, rich in social-emotional learning, allowed schools to utilize them in both socially distant and virtual settings.



In October of 2020, AWSL held its annual Fall Conference virtually. The experience allowed for students and advisers at the middle level to join for the first time. The conference featured dynamic speakers and on-demand workshops. The new virtual format attracted 5,000 conference attendees!

The workshop titles from 2020 reflected AWSL's commitment to equity, opportunity, and access for each and every student. Workshops focused on privilege, bias, breaking through stigmas, leadership in the adult world, mental health, the power of connection, and growth mindset.

The AWSL Student Voice and Advisory Council provided the topics they wanted to learn about, and the camp and program staff rose to the challenge of developing the workshops. A global

pandemic did not stop AWSL from creating an accessible leadership training relevant and meaningful to the times. In January, James Layman developed an MLK Assembly with follow-up activities for schools to use.

The I AM | WE ARE MLK program reached over 100,000 students in more than 160 schools from five different states. AWSL also developed a Reimagining Recess training for elementary schools. The training teaches inclusive games, social-emotional learning and conflict-resolution strategies to recess staff and other adults supporting the growth of students.

In the continuing effort to keep the standards of AWSL relevant to the times, the Goals and Objectives have now been rewritten as the Foundations of Learning. In a shift of focus, the Foundations center on what all students must reach, rather than the objectives in which AWSL programs are rooted. While maintaining parts of the past goals and objectives and the recent addition of social-emotional learning, they have expanded to include social justice and cultural competence standards. AWSL continues to be innovative in serving students and adults in schools.

Outside is In!

In the spring of 2021 – after 20 years of advocacy from within the outdoor education community – the Legislature voted to support Outdoor School in Washington State financially. Outdoor School is defined as a multi-day, hands-on, residential science education experience for 5th or 6th-grade students. This support focuses on retreat centers and camps like Cispus throughout Washington.

The Washington School Principals Education Foundation has been tapped to serve as the fiscal agent for this exciting opportunity for students in our state. This vast undertaking has led to the internal movement of AWSL positions to best support operations and programs.

- Greg Barker was named the Deputy Director of the Washington School Principal Education Foundation (WSPEF) and the Outdoor School Director.
- James Layman took responsibility as the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) Director.
- Heather Muir became the AWSL Office Manager.
- Chase Buffington continues to serve as the Director of the Cispus Learning Center.

In the spring of 2021, new members were added to the AWSL/Cispus team.

- Austin Taute, AWSL Program Coordinator
- Billy Hager-DeMye, Cispus Challenge Course Manager

The AWSL Team remains committed to delivering relevant and meaningful programs that support and increase each student's academic and social success.

Student Voice Takes Center Stage

For 20 years, along with Susan Fortin, Central Valley High School Adviser, Leanne Donley led the AWSL Student Executive Board (earlier named the WASC Board and originally named the Washington State Leadership Council). Since the late 1960s, a group of students has always provided students' voices, perspectives and insights into AWSL and state initiatives, policies and practices. Leanne elevated the importance of students during her tenure, bringing students to the table both as decision-makers within AWSL and their schools and communities.

"Nothing for us, without us" emerged as not just a catchy phrase, but a seismic shift in the importance of students becoming a part of the educational process at the administrative level.

In the fall of 2019, the student group's name changed to the AWSL Student Voice and Advisory Council (SVAC) to better reflect their collective work. Thanks to technology such as Zoom, the size of the group expanded to 18 students (two students from every ESD). Building on the past students' foundation, the AWSL SVAC group presented at several AWSP professional learning events, including the AWSP Summer Conference. They have also played an essential role in providing insight and testimony for the state legislature, and they continue to work closely with the State Board of Education.

In July 2020, the decision was made to start an additional student voice group, the AWSL Student Equity Cohort. The group's mission focused on race, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Seventy students joined the inaugural meeting. During the six weeks of sessions, the students

met and shared with the Directors of AWSP and authored a Student Equity Guide.

This guide, thanks to the efforts of AWSP, was shared with state legislators, U.S. senators and representatives, school districts and many other education stakeholders.

The students were featured presenters at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee, discussing race and equity from the students' perspectives. They led a professional-learning series in conjunction with AWSP called "Turn Up the Volume on Student Voice" and were featured keynote speakers at AWSP/WSSDA/WASA's 2021 Equity Conference. The students also created a variety of publications.

The Critical Conversation Guide: For Students by Students is a guide to help students lead needed conversations within schools in a productive manner. The School Equity Audit helps school leaders examine equity practices and policies within schools. The Unity Starts with You is a children's picture book companion to the publication Student Equity Guide.

In May of 2021, the Student Equity Guide was the featured resource in a joint letter composed by key educational organizations in the state. "The students provided sample engagement phrases and open-ended questions adults can utilize... to facilitate and create space for discussions about race, racism, racial injustice, and equity." The letter served as a guide to schools for critical conversations after former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of murder and manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. The following groups co-signed the letter:

- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)
- Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)
- Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)
- Washington School Personnel Association (WSPA)
- Washington Education Association (WEA)
- Public School Employees of Washington (PSE)
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU 925)

Through this letter, the work of AWSL's Student Voice groups reached every school in the state of Washington!

As we begin to look at the next era of AWSL, we will be posing a question to schools: "Have you asked your students yet?" The power of this question has allowed AWSL to be transformative in our programs, offerings and ability to support schools and school leaders. AWSL looks forward to continuing the legacy of partnering with students to pursue excellence in leadership.





CONCLUSION: YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

Throughout its history, the Association of Washington Student Leaders has kept pace and adapted to the changes in society. It started more than 65 years ago. Camp directors ran their budgets through their checking accounts. Today, AWSL receives its 501(c)(3) status through the Washington School Principals Education Foundation. The registration process in the early years was a cottage industry, with people assigned to organize bus runs and collect registrations working out of their homes, frequently securing help from their spouses and children to get the jobs done. Today, online registration is the norm. At one time, the major leadership programs operated as independent islands with program coordinators located in schools all over the state. Today, AWSL is a brand that embodies the idea that students working together with their principals can change the world. Around the corner is the vision to create the AWSL/AWSP Teacher Academy as a “grow your own” teacher program to develop the next generation of innovative educators.

Even with all the program and personnel changes through six decades, there have always been two constants – a strong spirit of family and purpose has emanated from the cadre of program staff and students that breathe life into AWSL each year, and the curriculum has constantly changed to meet the challenges of the times.

This is the essence of our story. Through the unwavering support of school principals and a constant stream of dedicated adults and students, we have been making our schools, communities, and world better for 65 years. We plan to continue doing so for the next 65 years and beyond. AWSL has always been willing and committed to doing today’s work to make tomorrow a bit better than yesterday.



Contributors, Authors, and Historians

- Joe Fenbert, AWSL Historian
- Sandy Stonebreaker, AWSL Historical Editor
- Susan Fortin, AWSL Director (1991 - 2018)
- James Layman, AWSL Director



AWSLeaders



AWSLeaders



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