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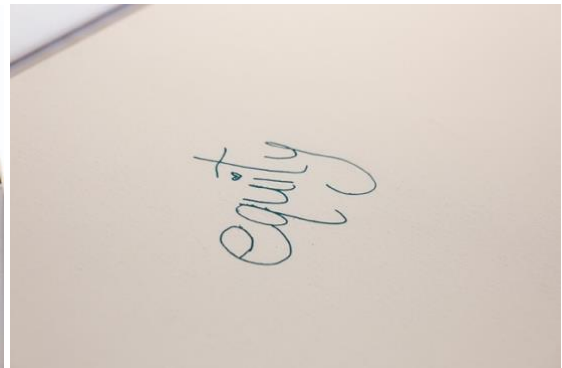
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### Los Angeles Education Partnership Celebrates 40 Years of Impact with Successful Holiday Luncheon

**Los Angeles, CA, December 16, 2024** – The Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP), the first nonprofit to focus on education equity in Los Angeles, recently celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a successful Holiday Luncheon.



The luncheon was a resounding success, filled with laughter, history, and a deep sense of gratitude for the transformative work LAEP has achieved over the past four decades. The event honored long-standing employees, recognized outstanding contributions, and celebrated the collective impact of the organization.



Held at Luminarias, the event brought together over 100 guests to celebrate LAEP's four decades of impact and honor the dedication of its staff and supporters.

"We are incredibly grateful for the overwhelming support we received at this year's Holiday Luncheon," said Dr. Dawn A. Kurtz, CEO of LAEP. "This event is a testament to the power of our community and the enduring impact of LAEP's work in transforming education for over four decades. It was particularly meaningful to see representation from our founders, a reminder of the legacy we are building together." This event also marked a special occasion for Dr. Dawn A. Kurtz, who joined LAEP as CEO earlier this year.



The event showcased LAEP's rich history, featuring a timeline of milestones and a display of historical photographs, including images from some of LAEP's very first STEAM classes and black and white photos of founding members. This poignant display served as a powerful reminder of LAEP's commitment to community-centered education. A highlight was a photograph of a young staff member working with toddlers – a powerful reminder of LAEP's dedication to early childhood education, as she continues to serve as an Early Head Start teacher 24 years later. A significant milestone, celebrated throughout the evening, was the 2019 award of a \$10.2 million grant from the Department of Health & Human Services Office of Head Start, enabling LAEP to expand its Early Head Start services in Hawthorne and Inglewood. Notably, 85% of children in the Early Head Start program met or exceeded developmental benchmarks after one year, a testament to the program's effectiveness.

Honors and awards were presented to recognize the dedication and impact of key individuals and organizations. The **LAEP Legend Award** was bestowed upon Peggy Funkhouser and David Abel, Co-Founders, and Rod Hamilton, Founding Board Member, for their instrumental roles in establishing LAEP. The Stuart Foundation was honored with the **Platinum Partner Award** for their unwavering support. Long-standing employees were also celebrated, with Nancy Villarreal receiving the **Sapphire Loyalty Award** for 26 years of service and Paul Gavini receiving the **Emerald Loyalty Award** for 25 years of service. The **Tenure Impact Award** recognized the dedication of Dolores Marron (24 years), Meyli Martinez (23 years), and Ana Contreras for 20 years of service to LAEP, respectively.



The Holiday Luncheon was made possible by the amazing planning of the holiday committee, invaluable guidance of the leadership team, the amazing LAEP team members, and support of the esteemed Board of Directors, including founding members and past chairs.

LAEP extends its sincere gratitude to all who supported this momentous occasion.

To donate to LAEP, visit [laep.org/donate](https://laep.org/donate).

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**About Los Angeles Education Partnership**

*The Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance educational equity. Together with families, schools, and the community, LAEP facilitates access to and opportunities for quality educational and wellness practices so that children thrive from diapers to diplomas. For more information about Los Angeles Education Partnership, please visit [www.laep.org](https://www.laep.org).*

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