



WHEREVER THEY START  
WHATEVER THEIR PATH  
WE ARE COMMITTED

# Invest in the path to **OPPORTUNITY**

2024 ANNUAL REPORT | PALMER SCHOLARS

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# WHO WE ARE

## OUR VISION

Our vision is for our students to succeed in graduating from 2-year, 4-year, or apprenticeship program with the essential tools to be catalysts for change and leaders in our community.

## OUR MISSION

We are committed to bridging the gap between potential and opportunity for young adults of color in Pierce County.

## OUR VALUES

Through this work, we center our values: personal growth, relationships, leadership opportunities, community responsibility, advocacy, family support, and access to opportunity.



Wherever They Start, Whatever Their Path, We Are Committed.

# 2024 LOGO REDESIGN

This year, we proudly unveiled our updated Palmer Scholars logo. Designed with intention, this new logo pays tribute to our rich history by honoring our visionary founders, Merle Palmer and Reverend Al Davis, while reflecting the growth and impact of our mission today.



## Updated Program Logos



# WELCOMING OUR NEW CEO

It is an honor to write to you as the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of Palmer Scholars. In my two short months here, I have already been deeply inspired by the unwavering commitment of our Scholars, staff, and supporters. Joining this incredible organization feels like coming home to a place where passion, purpose, and possibility come together to create real and lasting change.

This past year has been a testament to the transformative power of our work. Together, we awarded over \$286,000 in scholarships, celebrated the graduation of 13 college students, and supported 145 Scholars in pursuing their dreams. These numbers tell a powerful story of impact, but behind every statistic is a young person whose life has been changed because of the collective efforts of our community.

I've spent these first weeks listening to the voices that sustain this mission, from the Scholars who share their dreams and challenges to the staff who tirelessly bring our programs to life. I am in awe of their dedication and heart. Our team embodies the spirit of Palmer Scholars, relentlessly advocating for every young person and ensuring that opportunity is not just a possibility but a reality.



Reflecting on my journey, I am reminded of the mentors and opportunities that helped me navigate challenges and achieve my goals. Like our Scholars, I was once a young person dreaming of a future that seemed out of reach. That is why I am so passionate about our work. It is personal, and it drives my commitment to carry forward the legacy of those who have built this incredible organization.

Looking ahead, my priorities include strengthening the systems and programs we already have in place, fostering deeper connections with our partners and stakeholders, and ensuring our Scholars have the support they need to thrive. I will continue reaching out to learn from our community, listening to their insights, and building meaningful relationships that advance our mission. Transparency, equity, and collaboration will remain at the heart of our work as we create opportunities that empower every Scholar to realize their full potential.

To our staff, thank you for your incredible dedication and passion. You are the heartbeat of Palmer Scholars, and your efforts inspire me daily. To our supporters, donors, volunteers, board members, and community partners, thank you for believing in our Scholars and fueling their success.

I invite you to continue this journey as we look to the future. Your contributions, whether through your time, expertise, or financial support, are vital to sustaining and expanding our mission. Together, we can transform lives and build a brighter future for every Scholar.

Wherever they start, whatever their path, we are committed.

In community and partnership,

*Tricia R. Speid*

Tricia R. Speid  
Chief Executive Officer

# Rooted in Legacy. Growing a Future.

At Palmer Scholars, legacy is the foundation that propels us forward. We're incredibly grateful to Mother Mary and Angel Davis for sharing the rich history of Palmer Scholars and reminding us of the vital roles we all play in preserving and advancing this legacy.

Their stories inspire us to honor the paths paved before us, ensuring we continue creating opportunities for future generations to thrive. Together, we build bridges from potential to purpose and from opportunity to legacy.

"It's hard to understand Legacy when you haven't been born into a Legacy." -Angel Davis



# Rooted in Legacy. Growing a Future.

We are deeply grateful to Pastor Alex Davis, The Davis Family and the Eastside Assembly of Believers for their incredible support! Their 60th Annual Gala was a tremendous success, raising \$1,500 for the Alfred and Mary Davis Community Grant in support of our Legacy Scholars. We truly appreciate their dedication to uplifting young scholars and investing in the future of our community. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to making a lasting impact!



Make a contribution to the Alfred and  
Mary Community Fund



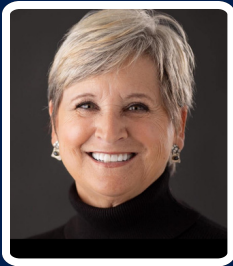


# LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION

This past year marked a significant transition in leadership for Palmer Scholars. Through times of change, our Interim Executive Directors provided steadfast guidance, ensuring our mission remained strong and our scholars continued to thrive. Their dedication, resilience, and passion for our community made all the difference. We extend our deepest gratitude for their leadership and commitment, paving the way for a bright future under new leadership.



We extend our deepest appreciation to [Denise Nicole' Franklin](#) for her incredible leadership and dedication as our Interim Executive Director. During her tenure, Denise provided unwavering strength, guidance, and vision, ensuring that Palmer Scholars continued to thrive and uplift young people in our community. Her commitment to our mission and her steady leadership helped navigate a time of transition with grace and determination.



A heartfelt thank you to [Helen McGovern-Pilant](#) for stepping in during a time of transition and providing the stability, wisdom, and care that kept our team moving forward. Your leadership created a sense of reassurance and continuity, allowing us to stay focused on our mission and our Scholars.

# OUR TEAM



**Tricia Speid**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER



**Denise Nicole' Franklin**  
Deputy Director



**Kim Kennedy-Tucker**  
Assistant to the  
CEO



**Chad Tibayan**  
Senior Development &  
Communications  
Coordinator



**Jessica Griffiths**  
Director of Scholar  
Experience



**Monique Ferrer**  
Senior Scholar  
Experience Coordinator



**Kenneth Prince**  
Scholar Experience  
Coordinator



**Brooke Summerlin**  
Director of Enrollment  
and Placement



**Kory Eggenberger**  
Senior Navigator



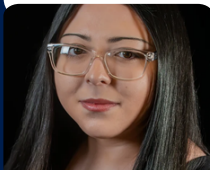
**Ron Werre**  
Instructor



**Malachi Cabrera**  
Navigator



**Janiaka Ellington**  
Navigator



**Alondra Mendoza**  
Outreach & Enrollment  
Specialist

# Legacy Progress Report

The Legacy Program empowers underrepresented high school seniors to achieve their academic and career goals through personalized mentoring, college readiness training, and financial support. This year, scholars demonstrated exceptional achievements, including college admissions, financial aid completion, and community leadership. By breaking barriers and fostering future leaders, the Legacy Program continues to create lasting change in the lives of our scholars and their communities.

## TOTAL IMPACT

145

Scholars served in 2024

## COLLEGE RETENTION

100%

students matriculated from high school into a post-secondary institution within 2 years

## STUDENT LOANS

86%

of scholars took out \$5,000 or less in student loans

## SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

\$286.783.05

AWARDED

## COLLEGE GRADUATES

13

who have reported they graduated from a post-secondary institution

## PROGRAM GRADUATION RATE

84%

of scholars have graduated from the entire program



## TOTAL TRAINING REPORTED HOURS

70 +

College prep, workshops, etc

# 2024 GRADUATES

Aaron Dahh - University of Washington  
Aldo Meneses-Campos - University of Washington  
Alexander Evans - University of Washington  
Brandon Lee - Western Governors University  
Brooklyn Hose - University of Washington  
Elaine Azul - University of Washington  
Ethan Quinones - St. Olaf College  
Jah'Niya Myers - Washington State University  
Jasell Henderson - University of Washington  
Therese Pacio - University of Washington  
Marisol Rivera - University of Puget Sound



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## THE PANAGO HORTON LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of the Panayotis (Panago) Alexandrous Horton Scholarship, which helps us continue our mission of building equity for the students and communities Panago loved. This scholarship honors the legacy of Panago—a son, brother, uncle, and friend—who was an Epilepsy warrior taken from us by sepsis on August 22, 2017.

Panago's unwavering passion for humanity continues to inspire the work we do today. A bold advocate for social change, he never hesitated to challenge injustice, remaining hopeful that progress was always possible. His dedication to activism and community service was evident through his work with AmeriCorps in 2012, where he launched an after-school program at Jason Lee Middle School (now Hilltop Heritage Middle School).

By donating materials for our Back-To-School Supply Drive, this scholarship carries forward Panago's belief in access, opportunity, and the power of education. His values, rooted in the mission of the Movement for Black Lives, live on through our efforts to empower students and create lasting change. We are honored to uphold his legacy and ensure that his impact is never forgotten.



The Panago Horton Legacy Scholarship is administered by Palmer Scholars for the benefit of a promising young adult from Pierce County.



The Panago Foundation

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## THE PANAGO HORTON LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting students who have shown a strong track record for community service and compassion for others.

This scholarship, awarded annually, will help ensure students graduate from their postsecondary program with minimal student loan debt.

Pictured: Dr. LeRoy Horton and scholarship recipient Ernest Balezi share a moment of mentorship through the Panago Foundation, a legacy honoring Dr. Horton's brother.



## Support the Panago Horton Legacy Scholarship!



Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera, visit [www.palmerscholars.org/donate](http://www.palmerscholars.org/donate), or mail a check to PO Box 7119, Tacoma, WA 98417 to donate

The Panago Horton Legacy Scholarship is administered by Palmer Scholars for the benefit of a promising young adult from Pierce County.



The Panago Foundation

# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

## *Stevie*

On Indigenous Peoples' Day, we celebrate Indigenous cultures and contributions. Stevie L., a proud Kalispel and Spokane Tribal member and senior at Silas High School, aspires to attend NYU for Fashion and Marketing. Determined to break barriers, she embraces education as a path to success.

Growing up in Tacoma while staying connected to her reservation, Stevie's culture has shaped her deeply. Powwows, fry bread, and stick games were her norm, grounding her identity. Though she sometimes stood out in school, she has always taken pride in her Indigenous roots and the strength they provide.

For Stevie, Indigenous Peoples' Day is a time to honor her family and community. Her grandmother's teachings remind her that 'Peoples' signifies unity, resilience, and recognition beyond history books. She hopes other Indigenous students will continue to dream big, knowing they are capable of greatness beyond reservation lines.

"LemLemts and thank you, Palmer Scholars, for helping this Native girl dream big."  
-Stevie



# Supporting Student Success: Legacy Program Scholarships

The Legacy Program is proud to offer five exclusive scholarships that directly support our scholars' educational journeys. These scholarships are funded by generous individuals and organizations who share our commitment to empowering students and reducing financial barriers to higher education.

Through their support, these scholarships provide critical resources that enable our scholars to focus on their studies, achieve their academic goals, and thrive in their chosen career paths. The impact of these contributions is immeasurable, creating opportunities that change lives and strengthen communities.

## Join Us in Supporting Scholars

Would you like to make a lasting impact on the lives of students in the Legacy Program? By establishing a named scholarship, you can directly support our mission and help pave the way for future leaders. For more information about creating an internal scholarship, please contact Denise Nicole' Franklin at [dfranklin@palmerscholars.org](mailto:dfranklin@palmerscholars.org). Together, we can make a difference.





# Pathways Progress Report

This year, the Palmer Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Program continued to bridge the gap for young adults disconnected from traditional education and employment. This year we facilitated 4 Cohorts. With over 200 hours of hands-on training, career development, and personal support, participants built the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the trades.

## TOTAL IMPACT

**75**

Scholars served in 2024

## JOB SECURITY

**90%**

of scholars were placed in jobs in first year

## COHORT RETENTION

**90.67%**

enrolled scholars completed Phase One of Program

## INCOME GROWTH

**43.49%**

Increase in pre-program average hourly wage to post-program average hourly wage

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

**\$88,829.84**

Awarded in work attire, stipends, rental assistance, gas cards, and care packages

## TOTAL TRAINING HOURS

**1,344**

In 2024



THANK YOU TO OUR CHAMPION FUNDERS!



# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

## *Jeremiah - Cohort 9*

On August 30, 2024, Jeremiah interviewed in person for the Material Handler position at Univar Solutions, arriving well-prepared with a polished resume and cover letter. His professionalism and qualifications impressed the hiring manager, leading to a conditional offer of employment for a full-time position at \$32 per hour, contingent on completing the Pre-Apprenticeship program.

Throughout the program, Jeremiah has demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership, serving as a team lead and consistently inspiring his peers. His dedication earned him the honor of being selected as the keynote speaker for the graduation ceremony.

Jeremiah's journey reflects his resilience, hard work, and determination to succeed, showcasing the values and opportunities the Pre-Apprenticeship program aims to foster.



Scan the QR code to the right to read our Pathways feature by Port of Tacoma



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## TACOMA SUNRISE ROTARY



Tacoma Sunrise Rotary Club, you multiply the impact of our Palmer Scholars Legacy Scholarship Partnership, a 15 year partnership and over \$100,000 in funding breaking barriers and building futures.

Palmer Scholars is proud to celebrate the Tacoma Sunrise Rotary Club for their incredible partnership and continued support of our mission. Their PORTHOLES TO THE FUTURE event, held on June 1, 2024, was a huge success, raising over \$100,000 to support local and international programs.



Today, we're thrilled to announce the first-ever Palmer Pathways Pre-Apprentice Rotary Scholar, La'Nijga! She has been accepted into the Welding Program at Dakota Technical College in Minnesota. In addition, she has received the Sunrise Rotary Scholarship, providing \$5,000 toward her tuition.

This is the definition of unity for community, and we are proud to highlight Tacoma Sunrise Rotary Club's commitment to empowering students and strengthening pathways to success.

We can't wait for the next PORTHOLES TO THE FUTURE event on June 7, 2025—mark your calendars!

# Holcom Family Scholarship



Celebrating the Holcom Family Pathways Scholarship Recipient

The Holcom Family's dedication to empowering future leaders in the trades shines brightly through their generous \$5,000 investment in the Palmer Pathways program. Their belief in our mission is reflected in their decision to support a scholar who embodies excellence, determination, and a passion for the trades.

We are proud to announce Genesis Fullwood as the recipient of the Holcom Family Pathways Scholarship. A standout member of Cohort 10, Genesis has consistently demonstrated the drive and commitment necessary to thrive in the trades. Currently enrolled at Pierce College, Genesis is pursuing a degree in Construction Management—a field that not only mirrors his ambitions but also aligns with the Holcom Family's esteemed legacy in construction.



This scholarship will be a transformative resource, enabling Genesis to continue his education, achieve his goals, and build a promising future. On behalf of Palmer Scholars, the Holcom Family, and everyone in our community, we congratulate Genesis Fullwood. We look forward to witnessing the lasting impact you will make in the industry.

# Eastside Pathways SPOTLIGHT

## Clover Park Technical College & City of Tacoma

Partnership Highlight: Building Tacoma's Workforce Through Pre-Apprenticeship Training

Funded by the City of Tacoma Training & Employment Program (TTEP)

From September to December 2024, Clover Park Technical College (CPTC) and Palmer Scholars partnered to deliver a 15-week construction pre-apprenticeship program for young adults on Tacoma's Eastside. Funded by TTEP, the program addressed barriers to success, combining CPTC's workforce education expertise with Palmer Scholars' mentorship and support.

In December, 17 scholars graduated, earning 18 college credits and vital skills for construction careers.

Program Highlights:

- **Enhanced Accessibility:** Training was conducted on Tacoma's Eastside to serve economically distressed areas.
- **Integrated Strengths:** The program combined CPTC's expertise in workforce education with Palmer Scholars' proven support and mentorship model, leveraging the successful Palmer Pathways framework.
- **Education Advancement:** Graduates earned 18 college credits through CPTC's Construction program, creating a pathway for continued education and professional growth.



# 2024 GRADUATES

Aaron Mayo-Carrillo  
Adolfo Briseno  
Aidan Rosa  
Ajalaun Booker-Green  
Andre Carter  
Andrew Martin  
Arillius Reevis  
Braden King  
Brody Laudenglos  
Cesar Zarate-Juarez  
Christopher James Love  
Christopher Wang  
Clarence Jones  
Corey Alicea-Murray  
Danielle Hughley  
Eddie Salanoa  
Eduardo Lopez  
Eduardo Rodriguez  
Edwin Araujo  
Elizabeth Irepan-Huerta

Francisco Alvarado  
Genesis Fullwood  
Guadalupe Zamora  
Hezekiah Hodges Lauano  
Isabella Gonzales-Sandoval  
Ivan Corona  
Jabez Manuma  
Jamara Matlock  
Jarell Chiddick  
Jeremiah Anderson  
Jesus Damian Angel  
Joshua Williams  
Jsha'ron Young  
Jude Tomokane  
Julian Robertson  
La'Nijga Hunter  
Larry Guerrero  
Lauren Ayres  
Leon I. Jackson-Jimenez  
Lorenzo Ward

Maceo Lewis  
Malcolm Frank  
Marco Villagomez Keating  
Muelu Salanoa  
Muriuki Kuria  
Nathaniel S. Sea  
Nikoh Rivers  
Osasa Saunoamaalii  
Qu-Ran Y. Bell  
Raheem J. Edwards  
Sean Allen  
Sebastian Jesus Sanchez  
Tarun Tarun  
Terrell Hampton  
Tre'Von Ragin-Purter  
Ty Bradley-Temmel  
Zavion Holt  
Zhyrill Serrano

# Fit-4-Me Progress Report

In 2024, we celebrated the program's growth with the addition of the Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) initiative in October, offering practical experience in sustainable construction practices. Graduates from our program have embarked on promising careers, contributing to their communities and creating legacies of success.

TOTAL IMPACT

10

Scholars served in 2024

GRADUATION

100%

Scholars completed the program



The Nature  
Conservancy



Washington

# 2024 GRADUATES

Ajalaun Booker-Green  
Bridget Breithaupt  
Danielle Hughley  
George Thomas III  
Jamal Middleton  
Javiar Antonio Lopez  
Juan C. Carlos  
Kyree'Onte S. Keys-Johnson  
La'Nijga Hunter  
Tarun Tarun





# Inspire the Future:

## Become a Mentor Today!

Our Palmer Legacy Program is kicking off another exciting year, and we need mentors to guide and inspire and motivate students in our new Legacy cohort. As a mentor, you'll play a pivotal role in shaping the future of these young scholars, helping them navigate their paths to higher education and meaningful careers.

### Mentor Match Event

FEBRUARY 5 | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
McGavick Conference Center - Clover  
4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood, WA 98499

### Interested?

Contact Jessica Griffiths

[jgriffiths@palmerscholars.org](mailto:jgriffiths@palmerscholars.org)



Jackie with her mentor Sandra on the right

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

We've created this special section on our website to catch up with our alumni, learn about their transformative experiences with Palmer Scholars, and see how their journeys have evolved since then.

## *Andrea C.*

Andrea, a 2000 Lincoln High School graduate, was awarded a Palmer Scholars scholarship after interviewing with Merle Palmer. Encouraged by Merle and Rosie Palmer, she and fellow scholars visited Willamette University. The scholarship supported her undergraduate and graduate studies. Andrea later served on the Palmer Scholars Board, bringing her experience to improve the program. Now, as a Senior Program Officer at the Gates Foundation, she continues her commitment to expanding educational opportunities.



# OUR 2024 SPONSORS

The Anne Hampton Foundation  
The Baker Foundation  
The Bamford Foundation  
Bates Family Foundation  
Ben B. Cheney Foundation  
Black Futures Co-Op Fund  
Building Industry Association of  
Washington  
Chapter AY P E O Tacoma Washington  
Degrees of Change  
Dimmer Family Foundation  
Discuren Charitable Foundation  
Ellingson Partnership  
The Elliott Family Foundation  
Florence B. Kilworth Foundation  
Forest Foundation  
Foundation for Tacoma Students

Gary Milgard (Windows of Hope)  
The Gottfried & Mary Fuchs Foundation  
Hoffman Construction Company  
John Voight: Voight Charitable Trust  
KeyBank  
Kiwanis Club of Tacoma Foundation  
Liberty Mutual Foundation  
Magic Cabinet/Ken Birdwell Foundation  
Mannix Canby Foundation  
Marco J Heidner Foundation  
Medina Foundation  
MJ Murdock Charitable Trust  
Neeb Family Foundation  
Rotary Club of Tacoma North  
The Russell Family Foundation  
Safeco Insurance Fund  
Seattle Foundation

Sequoia Foundation  
Silver Family Foundation  
Stewardship Foundation  
Stockdale Family Foundation  
Sunrise Rotary Club of Tacoma  
Titus-Will Families Foundation  
Umpqua Bank Charitable Fund  
United Way of Pierce County  
U.S. Bank Foundation  
Voigt Charitable Foundation  
Washington Alliance for Better  
Schools  
Washington Women's Foundation  
William Kilworth Foundation  
Windows of Hope Foundation  
Woodworth Family Foundation  
Wells Fargo



# 2024 STAND UP & CHEER SPONSORS



Jerry McLaughlin





# Megan Mathews

MPA, CDE, CDP.

Washington State Office of Equity | Director



A proud Palmer Scholars alumna and a leader in advancing equity, now serving as The Director of Washington State Office of Equity. As our keynote speaker for the Stand Up & Cheer event, Megan's journey exemplifies the power of opportunity, resilience, and community support. From scholar to changemaker, she continues to uplift others and pave the way for a more just and inclusive future. Her story is a testament to what's possible when passion meets purpose!





# THE REV. AL DAVIS LEGACY IMPACT AWARDS



# The Reverend Al Davis Legacy Impact Award Inaugural Recipients

## Reverend Al Davis Impact Award

The Davis Family

## Reverend Al Davis Legacy Lifetime Achievement Award

Jonathan Jackson, MBA

## Scholar Shaper Award

Christina Rupp, MAED

Ken McgLaugflin

## Peggy Palmer Mentor of the Year

Carol Webster

## Reverend Al Davis Unity Champion Award

Marissa Rathbone

Christal Harrison, JD

Amalia Perez

Steve Schain

## Reverend Al Davis Vanguard Award Honorees

WorkForce Central

Clover Park Technical College

Tacoma Public Schools

Multicultural Child & Family Hope Center

Hoffman Construction

Sound Transit

Pacific Lutheran University

ROOTED IN LEGACY, GROWING A FUTURE

# STAND UP & CHEER

PRESENTED BY

**PALMER**  
SCHOLARS

*Save the Date!*

May 15, 2025 | 4:00-6:00 PM

McGavick Conference Center - Clover Park Technical College

Interested in Event Sponsorship?

Contact Denise Nicole' Franklin: [dfranklin@palmerscholars.org](mailto:dfranklin@palmerscholars.org)





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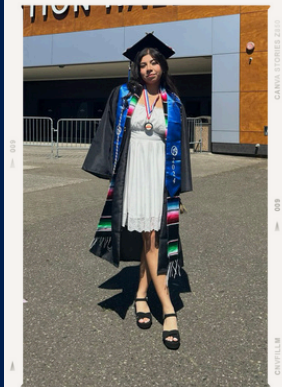
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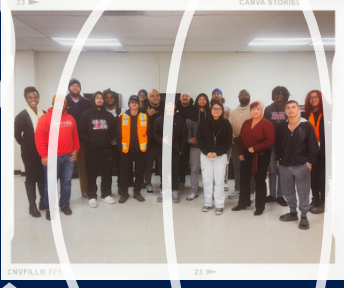
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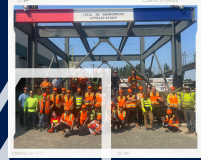
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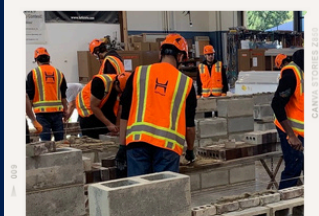
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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Executive Committee

Kacee Woods, Board President & Equity in Contracting & Workforce Programs Manager for City of Tacoma

Amalia Perez, Immediate Past President & Early Learning Director at Multicultural Child & Family Hope Center

Brett Freshwaters, Board Treasurer  
Retired CFO

Logan Noel-Endres, Board Secretary & Director of Advocacy & Policy at BrightSpark Early Learning Services

Heather Curl, At-Large Member & Director of Leadership Development at Washington State School Director Association (WSSDA)

## Members

Sandra Calvillo  
Stephanie Croom-Williams  
Kidane Yohannes  
Brendan Nelson

## Emeritus

Sally Jo Bose\*  
Peggy Palmer\*  
Willie Stewart  
Steve Schain, PhD

Chief Executive Officer  
Tricia Speid

Palmer Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Advisory Board  
Members:

Shontia Whitehead  
Rio Frame  
Jeremy Clevenger  
Christina Rupp  
Rachael Pease  
Krisiti Williams  
Lowell Glodowski  
Rachael Geyer  
Kacee Woods

**PALMER**  
SCHOLARS



\*Deceased

palmerscholars.org | 4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW BLDG 16 | Lakewood WA 98499-4004  
Mailing Address | PO Box 7119, Tacoma, WA 98417