

# WILD FOR LHHS

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD STUDENTS DESERVE ONLY THE BEST IN ACADEMICS

The first decision was to think of a catchy name. It needed to inspire, but in a pithy way (and, no, I don't have a lisp). Should it suggest a need for English tutors ["Wild for Kats"]? Should it promote math and science ["Wild for Stats"]? Should it jump on the bandwagon of hope and change ["Wild for 'Crats"]? Should it capitalize on the recent Super Bowl winner ["Wild for Dats"]? The guys down at C&M Tires, Walnut Hill and Audelia, suggested "Wild for Flats".

As you can see, there were many worthy contenders. But in the end, it seemed to make sense to name the fundraising effort for academic programs at Lake Highlands High School after the school's mascot, and simply name it "Wild for Cats".

Wild for Cats is the Lake Highlands community's response to the continuing highway robbery being perpetrated by state government under an arrangement unaffectionately known as "Robin Hood". Under the Robin Hood law, where so-called "wealthy" school districts have to surrender their local property-tax revenue to so-called "poor" school districts, the Richardson Independent School District has sent away \$400 million of our own tax dollars since 1999, including \$21 million this year alone. Russell Crowe



or not, that Robin Hood needs to be strung up by his leotards. My guess is that Sherwood Forest probably has a pretty nice football stadium.

As a result of RISD being "robbed" of that much money, Lake Highlands High School also has had to suffer its share of that loss. Rather than simply stand by and watch the "School of Champions" become the "Museum of Yesterday's Champions", the Lake Highlands neighborhood hitched up its britches and decided to stand in the gap.

In 2005, led by Jim and Kathy Adams, a group of committed Lake Highlanders formed the Lake Highlands Foundation (aka Wild for Cats) as an academic booster club, whose sole purpose is to raise private funds that go straight to Lake Highlands High School to pay for resources, programs and personnel to improve academic opportunities at the high school.

Between 2005 and 2009, Wild for Cats raised more than \$500,000. These funds have paid for items such as: 50 headsets for the computer lab, 32 cameras and projectors for the technology program, a science-lab assistant, an Advanced Placement art history teacher, AP tutoring, a theater auditorium upgrade, classroom sets of novels and dictionaries, and so much more.

And then, at the start of the 2009-10 school year, Wild for Cats funds created the first and only College and Career Counseling Center at any RISD high school. Dr. Brenda Prine, a Lake Highlands resident and mother of two LHHS alums, has become an incredibly popular and well-utilized resource among LHHS stu-

dents and parents. No one else has anything like her or her position — but LHHS does because of Wild for Cats.

The 2009-10 edition of Wild for Cats fundraising has been particularly challenging because of the difficulties resulting from the recession. Wild for Cats solicitations were competing with limited money that families needed for college tuition, for mortgages, to keep the lights on, and to keep food on the table (even if that table happened to be at Tony's).

Nevertheless — and quite incredibly — when all was said and done, Wild for Cats ended up raising more than \$115,000. Of that total, more than \$100,000 came from 74 major donors who were recognized at a brief reception at LHHS before senior awards night on May 13. A new donor board now hangs in the LHHS foyer, listing the names of these major donors for 2009-10.

Wild for Cats is making a significant difference in the quality of education available to our kids at LHHS. Whether you have kids at LHHS now, sent them there years ago, are an alum yourself, and especially if you plan to send your kids there in the years to come, or you simply want to support the continued success of our high school, there could not be a more effective way to help LHHS continue graduating Wildcat champions.

And it should be a no-brainer to be "Wild for That".

[Full disclosure: Bill Keffer is the Wild for Cats chairman. Find more information about Wild for Cats at [wildforcats.com](http://wildforcats.com).]

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