

## **COLUMBIA BANK GIFTS \$20,000 TO PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHARITIES IN HONOR OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

*Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, Washington State Smile Partners and Family Building Blocks awarded funds to support community programs*

**Tacoma, Wash. (January 8, 2014)** — Columbia Bank announced today the recipients of the \$20,000 grant in honor of the bank's 20th anniversary. The grand prize of \$10,000 has been given to [Tacoma Youth Symphony Association](#) (TYSA), an organization that has provided all-inclusive music education to nearly one million students since 1963. [Washington State Smile Partners](#), a nonprofit that provides affordable oral health services for low-income children and seniors, as well as [Family Building Blocks](#), a private child-abuse and neglect protection agency, have each received \$5,000.

Throughout the months of November and December, community members were encouraged to nominate non-profit organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest in an effort to highlight three deserving groups. More than 2,600 nominations were received from individuals throughout Washington and Oregon. The winning organizations were selected by a Columbia Bank committee based on need, commitment to community and other critical factors.

"We were thrilled and overwhelmed with the incredible response to our anniversary campaign," said Columbia Bank President & CEO Melanie Dressel. "In addition to these three wonderful organizations receiving this special donation, we look forward to continuing our commitment to support our communities throughout the markets we serve."

As one of the largest youth orchestras in the United States, [Tacoma Youth Symphony Association](#) (TYSA) offers orchestras, seasonal music camps and festivals, private lessons and classes, as well as educational sponsorships for children and youth around the Puget Sound, ranging from ages 7 to 21. The organization hosts upwards of 75 performances each year and reached more than 30,000 people in 2013.

"These gracious funds will allow us to expand and reach even more students from under-served communities," said Dr. Loma Cobbs, executive director of the TYSA. "Our organization works to expose classical music to children, frequently for the very first time. Being able to provide children a free opportunity to learn and experience music - well that's the greatest thing we could ever do for a community. We cannot thank Columbia Bank enough for this support."

Based out of Bainbridge Island, Wash., [Washington State Smile Partners](#) strives to make good preventive oral hygiene services attainable and affordable to kids and seniors in King and Kitsap

counties. Executive Director Imbert Matthee says the \$5,000 award will support its school-based program, and contributes to an expansion in Kitsap County, specifically Bremerton, Suquamish and Kingston areas.

[Family Building Blocks](#) is headquartered in Salem, Ore. and works to empower families and provide free, preventative services including therapeutic classrooms, dependency treatments and interactive playgroups in Marion and Polk Counties. Executive Director Patrice Altenhofen said the \$5,000 award will directly support its therapeutic work in Salem.

### **About Columbia Bank**

Headquartered in Tacoma, Washington, Columbia Banking System, Inc., is the holding company of Columbia Bank, a Washington State-chartered full-service commercial bank. For the seventh consecutive year, the bank was named in 2013 as one of *Puget Sound Business Journal's* "Washington's Best Workplaces."

Following its recent merger with West Coast Bank, Columbia Banking System now has 142 banking offices, including 80 branches in Washington State and 62 branches in Oregon. More information about Columbia can be found on its website at [www.columbiabank.com](http://www.columbiabank.com).

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