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ESTATE PLANNING

Many Ways to Send Your Message When Leaving Legacy Gifts Behind

By Gestrin Sattler - Leave A Legacy® of Western Washington

To Mirak Lee, the children she straddles to and from school for the Bellevue School District are more than just young passengers she encounters while doing her job.

Rather, Lee sees a world of promise within each student.

"These kids are our future," Lee said recently after one of her driving shifts. "I watch these kids grow up and rejoice in what they can do."

So it is fitting that Lee, a Bellevue School District bus driver since 1972, who grew up in these public schools, has decided to invest in that future by leaving most of her estate to the Bellevue Schools Foundation.

Like the millions of other individual donors who name chari-

ties in their wills, Lee is leaving a legacy. She's not doing it herself, but for the youth served by the charity, and for the community where the charity operates.

"By including the Bellevue Schools Foundation in her will, Lee has set a vivid example for others to do likewise and is proof that you need not be as wealthy as Bill Gates to do so," said Sherry Ladd, executive director for the Bellevue Schools Foundation.

"Everyone has the opportunity to continue to make a difference beyond their lifetime, no matter the size of their estate," Ladd said. "We are especially honored and humbled by Mirak Lee's plans to continue supporting the students she has transported all these years at a school bus driver."

While non-profits continue to rely on the generous annual gifts they receive, they're also trying to encourage donors to remember them in their wills, to give the organization a reliable future.

It is not difficult to do. Only 46 percent of adults even have wills. And of those who do, only six percent name a charity in their wills.

Leaving a gift to charity via a trust or in a will sends a message about the donor's values. In addition, donors may receive considerable tax benefits when they name a charity in their will to set up a trust that gives the non-profit organization a portion of their assets when they die.



Photo courtesy: Louise A. Lepczyk of Western Washington. Mirak Lee began driving school buses for the Bellevue School District in 1972.

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Although future residents Doris and Chuck Ranares are active and healthy, security was a primary factor in their choice of a senior living community. "I think if you had to pick one thing that makes Timber Ridge a great choice, LifeCare would be it," Chuck says. "It provides a seamless transition that will cover most health care situations."

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