



EVERYTHING. EVERYWHERE.

A Message from Mark - October 2024

This month we are celebrating the idea of "Everything. Everywhere." I love this theme. If you take our mission statement of meet you where you are and be what you need, and flip it, you get the idea of Everything Everywhere. Although neither of these is really possible, we will always strive to do our best to help our students, schools and districts to be the best that they can be!



In terms of being Everything, many of you have heard me say that West40 sees ourselves as the 411 and the 911. We don't always have the answer or the solution, but we are relentless in finding them for our partner districts, schools and students. When it comes to being Everywhere, those who follow our social media have seen members of our teams all over the country. We are not limited by boundaries, but we look for opportunities to serve all students and families. Most recently our safety team was contracted by a number of school districts in Wyoming to do safety assessment work as well as design safety plans. And late last month, I was in our nation's capital advocating for affordable telecommunications services to schools. These are great examples of being Everything Everywhere!

As we forecast this theme into the future, we are exploring ideas that would be of service or helpful to the districts in our region. To this end, we would love for you to take a couple of minutes to complete a survey for our Grants Team that is planning for upcoming adventures! The link to the survey is below, and we would really appreciate your input, please.

Please have a safe Autumn!

Dr. Mark Klaisner
Executive Director

Supporting a Young Entrepreneur's Dreams



Antony Sanchez arrived at West40's Heart 2 Heart pantry in Westchester with his mother and younger brother earlier this month expecting to pick up a snow blower that could help him earn money by clearing driveways this winter. But he left with more than just a new battery-powered snow blower donated by [World Vision](#). World Vision also pledged to donate additional landscaping equipment so the 17-year-old could have earning potential beyond Chicagoland's snowy seasons.

"I'm more shocked than anything. It's going to be a really big start for me, for the business I'm trying to run. A big start. I have no words," Sanchez said.

Sanchez, who worked for West40's facilities team for several weeks this past summer, said his goal with the business is to make money to pay for college and financially help his parents and younger siblings.

Sanchez's mother, Nancy Ramirez, said her son has been a tremendous help around the house.

"Not just only right now, but since my son was younger, I've been really proud. He has so much drive and with this, I won't have to worry about him staying at home," Ramirez said in Spanish.

Sanchez said there are no words to describe how much he loves his family and he wants to make them proud.

"They've been along with me for 17 years and why not return the favor back?" Sanchez said.

West40's partnerships with organizations like World Vision support us in our mission to be what our students and families need.

"To meet this young man and hear his story, it was like, you know what, if we have the capacity, why not just pour into him and help him out and be able to give so that his family can continue to thrive," said Perrise Thomas of World Vision.

World Vision said the additional equipment for Sanchez would include a larger snowblower, a leaf blower, trimmers, and batteries.

West40 Expands Services Across the Country

Members of the West40 STAT (School Safety and Threat Assessment) Team have traveled to other states in recent months to share their knowledge with educators and school safety officers. In September, team members spent several days in Wyoming to conduct numerous building physical assessments. Also, team member Randy Braverman led an emergency preparedness training session in Georgia.



Phil Abraham and Alex Campos in Wyoming



Randy Braverman in Georgia

Raising Awareness About Digital Inclusion through FREE Laptops and Tech Support!

West40 was proud to support a digital literacy and computer giveaway event in Franklin Park on October 5th, sponsored by Alliant Credit Union and Compudopt. The purpose was to raise awareness about digital inclusion. Attendees picked up a laptop, two years of tech-support, and one year of Internet service for free! Digital skills training was also provided to those who wanted to learn more.



"To do financial services, education or healthcare, you've gotta be connected. Not even mentioning connection with family or friends. But for those things you have to have a device to schedule appointments, to go see your finances, to take a class. It's a given in today's age that everybody needs to be connected, so we want to try to make that happen," said Meredith Ritchie, president of Alliant Credit Union Foundation.

West40 student advocate Isboset "Tito" Gonzalez said most of the students he supports do not have computers of their own. So he helped point the students' families to the laptop giveaway.

"We all know how important access to information is and how it can be life transforming for students and families, particularly at an early age," Gonzalez said. "One by one I was able to register my students and the parents were just as thrilled as their children. This event was a great step in closing the digital divide."

Attendees Share Feedback on West40's First Comprehensive Literacy Plan Session

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan is designed to ensure that every child has access to high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction and that educators and school leaders are prepared and supported to deliver this instruction. West40 recently started a FREE series that explores this new plan. Our first session focused on oracy, which is defined as the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech. Included in feedback we have received so far, an attendee said the session will help move forward their school's shift to balanced literacy and another attendee said it will help bring teachers up to speed to ensure equitable practices. The next session focuses on phonological awareness and will be held October 23. To register, click this [link](#).

Explore the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan with West40



Illinois School Safety Conference Recap

West40 held its annual Illinois School Safety Conference on October 2nd in Niles. Approximately 600 attendees registered for the event, which included guest speakers, a panel of law enforcement



experts, and vendors displaying the latest in school safety technology. The event received local news coverage from NBC Chicago and Telemundo Chicago.

The conference is FREE to attend and is supported through sponsorships.

"People are dedicated. They count on our conferences and other conferences in the state of Illinois to give them the reputation that this is what you need to be doing for best practices for school safety," said conference organizer Randy Braverman.

West40's podcast, Shift Everything, featured the event in its most recent episode. [Click here](#) to listen to conversations with organizers and attendees!

Survey Time: Understanding our Students' Physical & Mental Health Needs

The West40 Grants Team is seeking your input to better understand the physical and mental health needs of West40 area youth. This information will help the organization identify gaps in existing support systems and develop targeted strategies to enhance the overall health and wellness of youth. By collecting this data, we aim to design effective, youth-centered interventions that promote healthier lifestyles, enhance emotional resilience, and support their overall growth and development. We appreciate any information you can provide!

[TAKE THE SURVEY \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[REALIZAR LA ENCUESTA \(ESPAÑOL\)](#)

West40's Student Programs - Fall 2024



Helpful Noteables

IMPORTANT DATES & REMINDERS from West40 Comprehensive Educational Services

- October 15 - Deadline to submit AFR's to West40 (a 60-day extension request can be sent to sbogren@west40.org)
- October 24 - West40 Compliance Kick-Off for districts on this year's compliance rotation
- Law Enforcement Drill (required to take place within the first 90 days of the beginning of school)

SAVE THE DATE for the West40 Spring 2025 Educator Job Fair!

- February 25, 2025 from 10am-1pm
- West40 at Lexington, 415 Lexington St., Maywood, IL 60153



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