

# PUGET SOUND BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Think Tank Breaking Records

By: Patti Payne  
October 7, 2016

Washington Policy Center, a non-profit think tank and research organization that deals in economic issues affecting the state of Washington, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in a big way.

For the first time in its history, it raised more than \$1 million at its annual fundraiser dinners held in Spokane and Bellevue. The money will go to the seven areas of research work that are the cornerstone issues of WPC: education, environment, government reform, health care, small business and labor reform, transportation, and agriculture, which was just launched this summer.



The dual city events attracted more than 2,400 people and brought in the record amount through advance ticket and table sales and sponsorships.

They have not yet tabulated what was raised above the \$1 million in a fundraising "ask" at the Bellevue event, but estimate the final count could go higher.

Some 1,100 people attended the Spokane event. "That is the most the Davenport Grand has ever had," says WPC President **Dann Mead Smith**.

And more than 1,300 signed up for the dinner at the Bellevue Hyatt Regency Oct. 7, chaired by **John** and **Sarah Rindlaub**. The couple recently returned from Hong Kong after living there more than four years while John served as president of Asia Pacific Wells Fargo.

At the Bellevue event were European Parliament member **Daniel Hannan**, who talked about what the United States can learn from Britain's recent vote to exit the European Union, and **Arthur C. Brooks**, the president of the American Enterprise Institute and a New York Times columnist who addressed what the conservative movement is doing wrong and offered some solutions. Brooks grew up in the Queen Anne area of Seattle and his parents still live here.

Mead Smith says the WPC research is effective. He cites the area of education and says, "We did a full court press, ran ads, raised awareness and helped lead the way for the Legislature to pass a bipartisan bill to save charter schools this past legislative session."

WPC does not push candidates, just issues, says Mead Smith.

"Our work is not partisan," he says. "We are about good ideas and solving problems. It doesn't matter what party – we work both sides of the aisle. We don't like the word 'conservative.' We like the free market approach to solving our state's key problems."