



IMPACT REPORT

20 23



FUNDING OUR MISSION

Mission

Our mission is to level the socio-economic playing field by supporting students from underserved communities to achieve their career and college dreams.

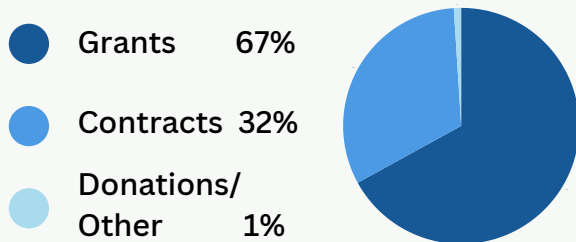
Vision

We aspire to live in a region where one's income, race, or ethnicity cannot be a statistical predictor for academic success, and where every child has equitable access to post-secondary education, training, and opportunity.

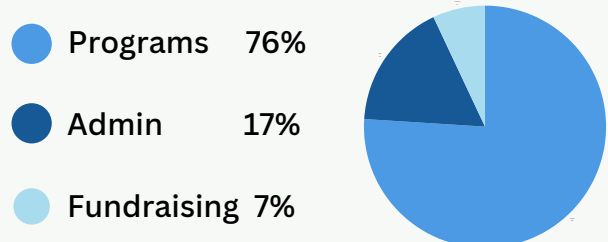
Thank you TO OUR FUNDERS!

Bellingham Technical College
Career Connect Washington
College Success Foundation
Inatai Foundation
Kinetic West
Northwest Educational Service District 189
Puget Sound Energy
Skagit Valley College
United Way of Whatcom County
WA Department of Social and Health Services
Whatcom Community College

Income \$458,857.42



Expenses \$350,349.23



QUICKSTART TO COLLEGE

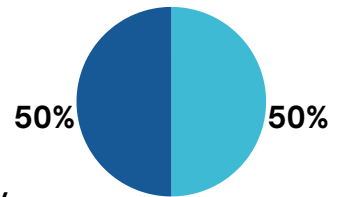
QTC is a free summer camp program designed to encourage and empower high school seniors as they prepare for college selection, applications, scholarships, and financial aid processes. In August 2023, students got to stay in the Nash Hall dorms on Western Washington University's campus for an unforgettable experience filled with comprehensive college prep, mentorship, and adventures.



4 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS

Participants by County

- Skagit County
- Whatcom County



I feel so much more confident about the whole college process. I love the connections I've made and I'm so much more sure about my decision to not live at home for college. I'm also very happy that I don't have to worry so much about money.



STUDENT VOICE

 **28**
STUDENTS

 **9**
MENTORS

 **12**
VOLUNTEERS

 **10**
WORKSHOPS



QUICKSTART TO COLLEGE

During their camp experience, students were personally walked through the college application process, common myths, and compelling ways to share their stories. Students also embarked on an excursion to Lake Whatcom where they got to explore sailing, paddleboarding, kayaking, and plenty more.

Want the full scoop on QTC 2023?

[READ OUR BLOG POST!](#)

“

I loved this program and I will never forget the mentors who have been a huge motivation to me.

STUDENT VOICE”

We saw nearly **2X** the number of student participants in 2023 in comparison to 2022.



Students forged meaningful, lasting connections with our incredible team of mentors and networked with college representatives from BTC, WCC, SVC, NWIC, and WWU.

“

QTC has given me more confidence in being able to return from a bad grade year and be successful in college.

STUDENT VOICE”



LEARNING WITH LEADERS


In October 2023, we joined forces with Whatcom Community College to put on the first LWL of a three-event academic year series. These events offer exploration experiences to introduce students to high-wage, in-demand careers that match their unique talents, gifts, and strengths.

Want the full scoop on the October event?

[READ OUR BLOG POST!](#)



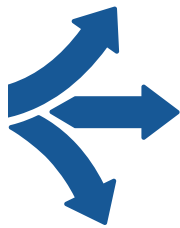
22
WORKSHOPS



145
STUDENTS



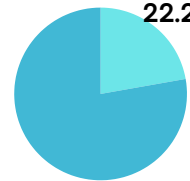
12
SCHOOLS



ENGINEERING
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
HEALTHCARE

Students by County

Skagit County
Whatcom County



22.2%

77.8%



Nursing was my favorite workshop because I learned a lot of new things. I learned to do CPR, take vital signs, and how to help a patient get up.

STUDENT VOICE



LEARNING WITH LEADERS

During the event, students had the opportunity to meet professionals from well-renowned local companies like PeaceHealth, the International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE), and PACCAR.

I loved the medical assisting workshop. I was able to learn new things and I feel as though I understand my career interests more.

STUDENT VOICE



38
PROFESSIONALS

Participant Demographics

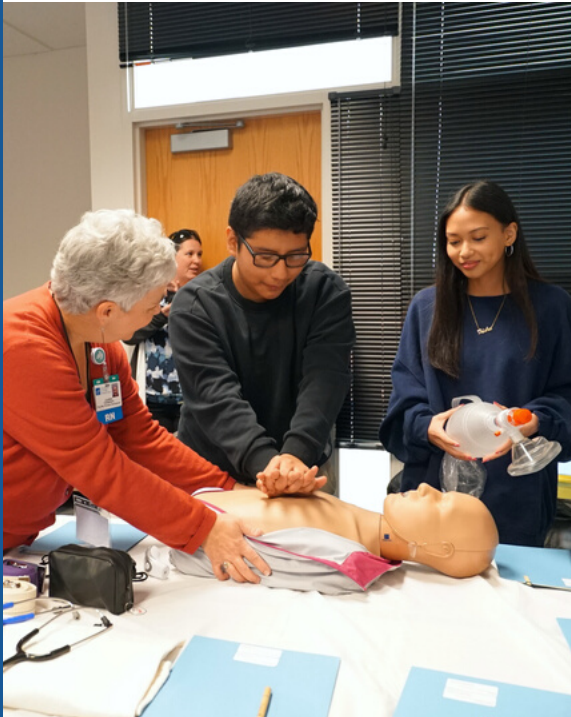
- 25%** have a disability
- 48%** are low-income
- 19%** are first-generation college aspiring



21
VOLUNTEERS

The enthusiasm and excitement that followed each session were unbelievable...one particularly memorable moment involved a student rushing up to me, clutching three vials of fake blood, enthusiastically proclaiming her ambition to pursue a career as a medical assistant.

ALLISON TRAFF,
GEAR UP COORDINATOR



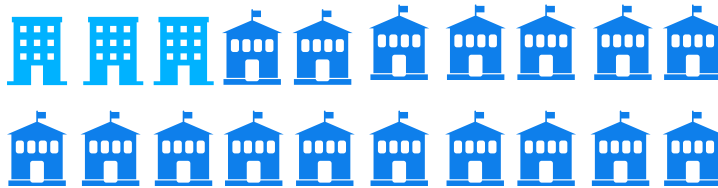
FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT

This year, we encountered some unique challenges within the world of financial aid. Since 2016, the FAFSA has opened on October 1st each year, allowing students ample time to complete their application. However, the recent implementation of the FAFSA Simplification act delayed the start to the 2024-2025 FAFSA application until December 31st, 2023.



39 OUTREACH EVENTS PROVIDED IN 2023!

Despite this setback, our highly trained financial aid team stepped up to the challenge, adapting to meet the new requirements and student needs. Our resilient team traveled to numerous locations in Whatcom and Skagit Counties to ensure our community was equipped for the FAFSA/WASFA.



We served students at 17 schools and 3 community centers.




Financial Aid was good cause it was actually helpful for me!

STUDENT VOICE



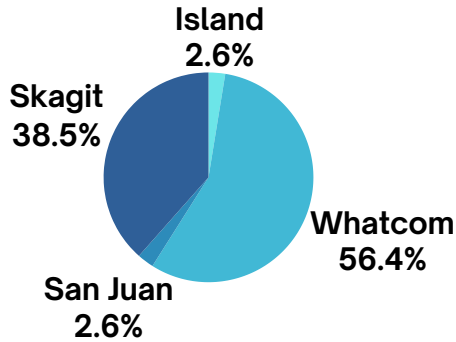
FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT

Venturing into the realm of financial aid can be mysterious, complex, and oftentimes daunting. This is why we launched our one-on-one virtual support initiative to provide students with personalized navigation. This allows students to receive direct support in filling out their FAFSA, WASFA, and scholarship applications, complemented by meaningful mentorship support from our highly experienced team.



**BOOK A
PERSONALIZED
SUPPORT SESSION
HERE!**

FA Support by County



800+

**STUDENTS AND FAMILIES
SERVED**

[This] has opened a lot of pathways and made scary college applications/scholarships/financial aid a lot more approachable and easy.

STUDENT VOICE



ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

From One to Many

Through this program, we provided more than 125 Lummi Nation students and families with specialized support in navigating tricky systemic barriers to education. From One to Many aims to promote and increase access to post-secondary education and training programs by implementing a community-led, peer-to-peer program. Led by Lummi Nation Educational Advocate Kathleen Solomon, these individual and community meetings teach and engage families in financial planning for college, exploring pathways, and ultimately increasing access to resources that support their journey.



13

Work-Based
Learning
Workshops



22

Pathways
Exploration
Events



15

Self-Advocacy
Workshops

Mentor Navigators

We provided 99 Mentor Navigation Office Hours to help support students in exploring post-secondary pathways and colleges. Our near-peer mentors are experts in forging meaningful relationships with students and disseminating support resources when it comes to college applications, financial aid, and navigating diverse post-secondary pathways options.



HOPE THEORY

In 2023, we began implementing the science of hope into our programmatic design strategy. We now track “Hope Scores” to effectively measure our students’ levels of hope for their futures. Research that connects hope to education has shown that hopeful teens have fewer absences, higher college enrollment rates, higher retention rates, and higher graduation rates.

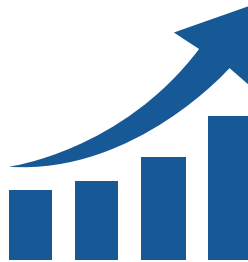
HOPE

7

STAFF MEMBERS TRAINED IN HOPE THEORY

We are thrilled to report that after surveying students who participated in Learning with Leaders and Quickstart to College, we found a significant statistical increase in student hope.

*QTC Hope Scores
increased by*
2 POINTS



*LWL Hope Scores
increased by*
4 POINTS

“

You helped me realize that doing research and finding new tools to achieve your goals can help with the process of applying to schools and scholarships.

STUDENT VOICE

”



LOOKING FORWARD

Ways to Get Involved

Our partners, volunteers, and supporting organizations deeply impact the work we do. We are always seeking individuals and groups who share our dedication to making a difference in the lives of students and their families.

[JOIN US HERE!](#)



One student was very excited when she heard her friend's pulse using the stethoscope. Another student was just very excited about the program in general...Their respective excitement was the best part of the day.



VOLUNTEER VOICE

Strategic Plans

Our priorities for the next couple of years are:

- Organizational development and sustainability
- Assessing program outcomes
- Creating robust partnerships
- Planning for fiscal sustainability

Did you know our website can be translated into more than 100 languages? Simply launch the ["Accessibility & Language Tools"](#) button in the top righthand corner!



I feel so much better about my future!

STUDENT VOICE

