

Leadership Skagit

Celebrating the Class of 2023



Cover photo by Aaron Weinberg

Leadership Skagit



A program of  EDASC in partnership with  SVC
Skagit Valley College



John Sternlicht,
CEO, EDASC

Many congratulations to the Leadership Skagit Class of 2023! It has been my honor to share this leadership journey with you. I have been so impressed with the depth of your discussions and self-examinations – this is indicative of your great potential for success in implementing the leadership principles you learned during this experiential program.

As this class graduates and we prepare to celebrate the 20th birthday of Leadership Skagit, it is appropriate to reflect on the benefits this program has brought to our larger Skagit community. One of the greatest is that Leadership Skagit has brought people together across Skagit County: This has contributed significantly to tearing down walls and silos that plague many other regions, and to fostering a just, inclusive, healthy and sustainable Skagit community.

Congratulations again to the 2023 graduates, their families and colleagues. We celebrate you and cannot wait to see the amazing things you bring about. Thank you to our partner Skagit Valley College, Dr. Laura Flores Cailloux, the facilitators, advisors, and other caring volunteers who help make this program run. And countless thanks to the EDASC team who keeps improving the operations of Leadership Skagit and make this role a true joy.



Dr. Laura Flores
Cailloux, Skagit
Valley College

When I was invited to chair the committee to imagine and build the curriculum for Leadership Skagit I was afraid we would have trouble sustaining a program beyond its first year. Little could I dream I would be writing these congratulations to the 20th graduating class! As you graduate you join a network of more than 500 community members who have shared this learning experience and invested time to become more informed and inclusive leaders.

You have experienced the many facets of Skagit, practiced powerful storytelling to communicate your values and vision, and taken inspired action. Now you can approach the work that is needed in our community as an inclusive listener who can embrace difference and apply adaptive and servant leadership to co-create change. Not easy work, but the necessary skills for our times. I am certain as you apply this knowledge and skill you will be making your home, workplace, and community a better place. Congratulations Class of 2023!

Empowerment Rangers

Team Members: Lauren Christian, Nathaniel Block, Donnell Austin, Berenice Puente Ibarra, Jocie Slepyan

Team Advisor: Samantha Cabaluna

Project Name: Youth Empowerment Services (Y.E.S.)

Project Partner: Skagit Valley Family YMCA, Oasis Teen Shelter

When the Empowerment Rangers first came together, we discovered we had a common passion for youth empowerment. We formulated a common goal to find a way to help empower youth by asking: What resources are available to youth and families in Skagit County? At first glance, there didn't appear to be many resources for youth. As we dove into our networks, we discovered many hidden resources. It was through this discovery that the Youth Empowerment Services guide was conceived to answer the question: Are there youth resources in Skagit County? The answer is Y.E.S.

The Empowerment Rangers partnered with the Skagit Valley Family YMCA to compile resources into a PDF guide that resides on the YMCA website, and is accessible to youth, schools, families, doctor's offices, nonprofit organizations, and more to empower youth to know and understand the resources available within Skagit County.



"I learned a valuable lesson about the power of teamwork: When you make room for others and encourage diverse perspectives and strategies, the results can be incredible."

Donnell Austin

"Working with the Empowerment Rangers team of Leadership Skagit is a boon to the work of the Skagit Valley Family YMCA. The Y is currently serving teens and young adults through the Oasis Teen Shelter, Sedro-Woolley Rec Center, and through street outreach. With the resource guide that the Empowerment Rangers team is putting together, our cache of resources will greatly increase, allowing us to better help and inform the communities we serve. We are grateful for their support!"

Skagit Valley Family YMCA



Team CHAT

(Compassion, Honesty and Awesome Teamwork)

Team Members: Savannah Phillips, Jason Winship, Mark McGahan, Ericka Coley, Maria Miramontes, Danielle Freeman

Team Advisor: Jill Rohrs

Project Name: CHAT (Community Hygiene Accessible Toiletry) Bags

Project Partner: Helping Hands Food Bank

Team CHAT is a group of six Leadership Skagit students committed to becoming community leaders who make a difference using compassion, honesty, and awesome teamwork.

We believe we can help bridge the gap in access to hygiene items through a project called CHAT (Community Hygiene Accessible Toiletry) Bags. The team provided 200 ready-made hygiene bags, which include items such as body wash, shampoo, toothbrushes, and laundry soap. Team CHAT also recognized the need for access to menstrual products, an under-supplied provision, and provided an additional 100 ready-made menstrual bags that include items such as tampons, pads and wet wipes.



Leadership Skagit provided so many impactful and memorable experiences. It brought attention to amazing organizations, businesses, and people within our community. Helping Hands Executive Director Rebecca Skrinde supports and appreciates our project and sees the growth potential. It was moving to know that our project was so fully supported and will keep going even after we hand it off.

“Thank you for doing this project with us. My team is excited to support this.”

Rebecca Skrinde, Helping Hands Food Bank



Eiffel '23

Team Members: April Moore, Andrew Vander Stoep, Elizabeth Turman-Bryant, Megan Breedlove-Speece, Rosa Soria-Mondragon, Heather Beauvais

Team Advisor: Jesica Kiser

Project Name: Community is Home

Project Partner: Welcome Home Skagit

Team Eiffel '23 partnered with Welcome Home Skagit to create a mobile shower and community space for unhoused participants in their overnight parking program. For our project, we purchased and modified a 28-foot RV trailer to create a safe gathering space for unhoused individuals and families where they can heat food and water, take showers, complete homework and put their feet up for a while. Our modifications expanded the shower area and reworked the bedroom for an overnight volunteer. Overall, it is our hope to create pathways to community and stability for those in Skagit who have been affected by the current housing crisis.

"I've learned so much about our county and am especially encouraged by all the collaboration that is taking place across sectors."

Elizabeth Turman-Bryant



"The partnership with Leadership Skagit Eiffel '23 team in this project has provided Welcome Home Skagit the ability to expand our service to those in our community who are living out of their vehicles. With the work being done by the team on this trailer modification, we will be able to provide more than just a safe place for them to sleep, such as the ability to create a plan to work toward permanent housing. It also builds awareness in the community as to the continuing issue of housing instability here in Skagit County. All of us at Welcome Home Skagit look forward to an ongoing and continued relationship with Leadership Skagit beyond this much appreciated project as we work to create pathways to community."

*Curtis Steinhauer,
Welcome Home Skagit*



The Resourcerers

Team Members: Karla Klein, Michele Metcalf, Krista Sweeney, Leticia Nunez

Team Advisor: Justin Smock

Project Name: Mother's Day Gift Baskets

Project Partner: IRIS NW (Immigrant Resources & Immediate Support)

The Resourcerers partnered with IRIS (Immigrant Resources & Immediate Support) to provide a day of gratitude to immigrant mothers and their families in honor of Mother's Day.

The Children's Museum of Skagit County hosted a day of family fun with complimentary food, entertainment and resource tables. Gift baskets were gifted at the event through donations collected by The Resourcerers. The families will also meet at a local store to shop for groceries from the donations received from the drive.

We hope to help support IRIS as they make a difference in the lives of these resilient, hardworking women and their families.



"My Leadership Skagit journey has been amazing. Not only have I grown as a leader, but I will also be gaining lifelong friendships. This experience has pushed me out of my comfort zone at times, but, ultimately, I am prepared to continue my journey as a leader."

Michele Metcalf

"When I first met with Karla, I remember her saying something like, 'We don't want to do something small, we want to make an impact,' and what an impact the team has made. Important connections with other local non-profits and grant opportunities have been made because of them. Their impact will be felt for years in our organization and the immigrant community we serve."

Norma Suarez Govea,
IRIS NW



Fiery Gecko Farmers

Team Members: Orlando Macias, Bennett Massey-Helber, Laura LeBrun, Aerial Corey, Jenna Blade, Grant Lee

Team Advisor: Bridget Ibarra

Project Name: Parks 4 Generations & Youthnet Community Room

Project Partner: Mount Vernon Parks & Rec and Youthnet

The Fiery Gecko Farmers tackled two projects related to improving community spaces.

Parks 4 Generations was a collaboration of community organizations and businesses to improve 25th Street Park in Mount Vernon. The project provides a welcoming place for children and their families to play and relax. The improvements included adding a soccer goal, picnic table, park bench, fencing, and landscaping, including a new flower bed with rhododendron, azaleas and a variety of trees.

The Youthnet project focused on designing and furnishing a community room at the Youthnet office building where youth in foster care can have a safe place to play, socialize and study. Having access to a safe space will contribute to the mental wellbeing of the at-risk youth Youthnet serves in the Skagit Valley.



“Working with Leadership Skagit volunteers has been a great experience. It’s refreshing to see a group of people come together with new ideas and work toward bettering the quality of life in our community.”

*Sean Corcoran,
Mount Vernon Parks
& Rec*



“Youthnet is so appreciative of the partnership with Leadership Skagit this year. It has been extremely valuable to have the help of these community leaders to support the work we do on behalf of children, youth and families. Leadership Skagit has always been a service that Youthnet has been honored to receive over the years. We are thankful and thrilled to have been chosen again for our project. It will have a huge impact in supporting those we serve.”

Carla Arnold, Youthnet



Thank you, Leadership Skagit 2023

Major Sponsors



Thank you, Volunteers

Gina Eakin, LS '22, Facilitator
Claver Hategekimana, LS '18, Facilitator
Samantha Cabaluna, LS '21, Advisor
Bridget Ibarra, LS '22, Advisor
Jessica Kiser, LS '22, Advisor
Jill Rohrs, LS '10, Advisor
Justin Smock, LS '21, Advisor
Mary Staley, LS '17, Advisor
Morgan Curry, LS '20, Curriculum Committee
Mary Dumas, Curriculum Committee
Danny Hagen, LS '18, Curriculum Committee
Kara Stamback, LS '12, Curriculum Committee
Nichole Long, LS '19, Photographer

Thank you, Staff

Laura Flores Cailloux, Skagit Valley College
John Sternlicht, EDASC
Audra Ramerman, EDASC
Matthew Johnson Money, EDASC
Ellen Hiatt, EDASC
Hilary Parker, EDASC