

Leadership Skagit



*Celebrating
the Class of 2024*



Leadership Skagit

A program of  EDASC in partnership with  SVC
Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County Skagit Valley College



John Sternlicht,
CEO, EDASC

Many congratulations to the Leadership Skagit Class of 2024, one of our largest and most diverse classes ever! 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 just as Leadership Skagit reaches “legal age,” 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 and across industry sectors. This collaboration 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 2024 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, SVC President Dr. Chris Villa, Dr. Laura Flores Cailloux, the facilitators, advisors, alumni, 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 such a joy.



Dr. Laura Flores
Cailloux, Skagit
Valley College

Congratulations Leadership Skagit Class of 2024! It has been an honor to walk this journey with you. I hope you have been filled with many memorable moments, lifelong lessons and lasting friendships. Throughout the program we emphasize there is rarely a single simple story – I hope you will continue to seek out untold stories throughout Skagit County to promote justice and equity.

I kept notes of your reflections throughout the year, and it is clear the experience of Leadership Skagit is composed of many stories. Some noticed greater self-awareness, a shift in internal dialogue, and more alignment, authenticity and confidence as a leader. Many experienced a shift in priorities. Many found inspiration in “climbing down the totem pole” to find the place at the bottom where you can hold the community up. You expressed the desire to use your voice, take personal accountability, and move into action to make this community a better place. I know Skagit County is going to benefit greatly from your knowledge, insight and action.

HIP Harbingers

Team Members: Jamie Betz, Sandra Davila, Jennifer Dumas, Kathryn Languille, Frances Negranza, Haley Sebens, Charis Weathers

Team Advisor: Michele Metcalf

Project Name: Honoring Native Voices: “Valley of Our Spirits”

Project Partner: Mount Vernon Downtown Association

Erected in 2018, the “Valley of Our Spirits” story pole is a visual centerpiece in Mount Vernon’s thriving public hub, Riverwalk Park. Our project is the installation of permanent signage for this stunning story pole, interpreting the culturally-bridging art, introducing the Lushootseed language, and recognizing the powerful, ongoing presence of local tribes. The sign includes text in English and Lushootseed, as well as a QR code to a City of Mount Vernon website page that contains additional narrative, photos and multimedia links.

We are thankful for the generous consultation of Upper Skagit Elders, the artists, the Mount Vernon Downtown Association, Meyer Sign, and the support of Mount Vernon Parks & Enrichment Services, Mount Vernon Arts Commission, and the Mount Vernon City Council.



“Leadership Skagit is a great program for people at any stage of their leadership journey. I’ve often looked at ‘leadership’ as a solitary pursuit, but Leadership Skagit has shown me that to lead is to create a community of partners.”

Kathryn Languille

“The Mount Vernon Downtown Association is happy to partner with the HIP Harbingers of Leadership Skagit ’24. Their project to catalyze the centering of native voices with the sign for Valley of Our Spirits is a perfect fit for our organization and coincides with our own commitment to work harder to incorporate the history of our place before white settlement. We are hopeful that this project heralds just the beginning of celebrating our community’s history more inclusively.”

Ellen Gamson,

Mount Vernon Downtown Association



**MOUNT VERNON
DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION**

Super Friends

Team Members: Jamie Carpenter, Jordan Hay, Emily Johnson, Kelly Pearson, Mia Roozen, Renee Silva

Team Advisor: April Moore

Project Name: Skagit Game Night

Project Partner: United General District #304



“Skagit Game Night” is committed to combating the loneliness epidemic by using board games to foster intergenerational social connections among Skagit County residents. Through partnerships with diverse venues such as the Upper Skagit Library, Sugar Mama Cafe, and Skagit Preschool and Resource Center (SPARC), the project has organized three recurring game nights across the county. These events provide opportunities for people of all ages to come together, share experiences, and build meaningful connections. Additionally, we are building and installing Little Free Game Libraries in public outdoor spaces, starting with Clear Lake Food Bank, to encourage intergenerational interaction and play. By building connections through fun and games, the project aims to strengthen the fabric of community bonds in Skagit County.

“Creating a game night has been a wonderful way to bring patrons into the library and gently bring them out of their comfort zone, reintroducing them to the joys of in-person interactions and challenging themselves to use fun as a learning strategy. The library and its patrons have been thrilled with the support of Team Super Friends, and will happily continue this program for as long as patrons request it!”

Upper Skagit Library



Building Healthier
Communities

Make it Happen

Team Members: Jennifer Eddleman, Paul Cover, Tami Schnell, Lori Bouza, Zulma Tifre, Dulce Vazquez, Andrea Brown

Team Advisor: James Malcolm

Project Name: East Skagit County Community Resource Fair

Project Partner: Helping Hands Food Bank

Many members of rural and isolated communities have a greater challenge accessing important services, such as those around housing and food distribution as well as resolving warrants, fines, etc. Team Make it Happen joined forces with Helping Hands Food Bank & Solution Center and Skagit Probation/Community Court to organize an event in Concrete to bring numerous services together in one place for a day. Organizations present included Helping Hands, Barrier Breakers, WIC, DSHS, DOL Mobile Relicensing and more. This was the first in what will become a regular event with Helping Hands. The day served 71 participants with dignity and grace. Participant surveys showed an appreciation for the services provided as well as the opportunity to socialize.



“Team Make It Happen took on a challenging social problem in an under represented part of Skagit County and helped create an event that actually changed lives. To build something that allows community members to be more resilient is powerful. Helping Hands already plans to put the event on again in October and thanks the team for kickstarting a much-needed service. Best of luck in your leadership journey.”

Helping Hands Food Bank



“The Leadership Skagit experience has prompted me to rethink how I view leadership. I have learned to show up differently by expressing vulnerable thoughts and feelings that previously I would have kept hidden.”

Andrea Brown

Captain Skagit

Team Members: Karlee Deatherage, Cecily Gubitosi, Tatum Kenn, Dani Hodge, Jason Wells

Team Advisor: Karla Klein

Project Name: Housing Empowerment

Project Partner: Anacortes Family Center



Our team wanted to support the work at the Anacortes Family Center to help residents in the emergency shelter find permanent housing. To do that, we made commitments to support at least five unhoused individuals or families to work through the circumstances that brought them to the shelter. By the end of our project, we helped nine different client families transition from emergency shelter to more permanent accommodations. We also supported the Family Center to showcase “success stories” to increase the outreach effectiveness.

“Your team brought so many different things, we were delighted to find ways to take advantage of your strengths and help our clients.”

Anacortes Family Center

“For all of the different challenge days and community organizations we’ve met, my takeaway is straightforward – there are many more people working to help (and help others) in Skagit County than I understood. The impacts range from everyday to profound. I am better for learning to see those impacts wherever I go.”

Jason Wells



SIY'am

Team Members: Maria Balmas, Peter Cavan; Svenja Simon-Marshall, Lizzy Millenaar, Sandra Nootenboom, Emma Oates

Team Advisor: Sarah Hastings

Project Name: Magic Skagit Day

Project Partner: Jefferson Elementary School

Team SIY'am organized an educational event at Jefferson Elementary school where several community partners who are involved in the Skagit agricultural community came together to teach students about farming. These groups represented different aspects of agriculture from farm animals, entomology, farm equipment, planting, to the final product in the form of baked goods from local ingredients and locally sourced honey. The goal was to help youth gain knowledge of agriculture in Skagit County, spark curiosity about various aspects of farming, and experience hands-on learning. At the same time, we wanted to create a project that is repeatable, and are pleased to say that the Skagit County Fairgrounds is considering adopting the event.



“I found knowledge: effects of fiber intake on smaller ruminants; a nemesis: 16-foot hog feedlot panels; and, most importantly, joy: Working on the critical twin issues of agricultural and childhood development in concert with passionate team members driven to give back to this community.”

Peter Cavan

What students learned

“Rhubarb can be made into treats.”

“Newborn bees are more fuzzy than adults.”

“I learned how to hold a chick.”

“Farmers work hard.”

“I learned that goats’ pupils are square, so they can see all around because they are prey.”

“A beetle can be the size of your palm.”

Thank you, Leadership Skagit 2024 Sponsors



Thank you, Volunteers

Samantha Cabaluna, LS '21, Facilitator
Danny Hagen, LS '18, Facilitator
Jill Rohrs, LS '10, Advisor
Sarah Hastings, LS '21, Advisor
Karla Klein, LS '23, Advisor
James Malcolm, LS '21, Advisor
Michele Metcalf, LS '23, Advisor
April Moore, LS '23, Advisor
Jenna Blade, LS '23, Curriculum Committee
Nathaniel Block, LS '23, Curriculum Committee
Mary Dumas, Curriculum Committee
Kara Stamback, LS '12, Curriculum Committee
Justin Smock, LS '21, Curriculum Committee

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

Thank you to 34 additional Leadership Skagit alumni who served on a Challenge Day Committee as well as the 74 community members who served as program speakers.