



LEADERSHIP LAUNCH

“Leadership Launch changes the trajectory of teens’ lives so they can change the trajectory of their communities.”

~ Kandace Barnes, Director of Snohomish S.T.E.M. Network

2017: Our Year in Review

Highlights

- **A.C.E.S.:** Revamped curriculum to incorporate Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (“A.C.E.S.”) training through Leadership Launch’s version of A.C.E.S.: Action + Character + Education = Success (p.3)
- **Five-Year Curriculum:** Developed five-year program progressing from individual leadership to international leadership (p.3)
- **Including Families:** Hosted family orientation and quarterly dinners with student families (p.4)
- **Orientation:** Held pre-orientation experiential hike at Lake Diablo and two-day orientation packed with learning and growth, including ropes course (p.4)
- **Diamond Knot Sponsorship:** Diamond Knot began sponsoring quarterly student dinners
- **Weekly Student Meetings:** Hosted weekly meetings and family-style dinners with students every Sunday, featuring key leadership lessons, inspiring guest speakers, and more (p.4)
- **LIT Mentoring:** Working with Leadership Snohomish County to develop “LIT Mentoring” (Leaders In Training) (p.5)
- **New Board Members:** Art Saenz and Kandace Barnes joined the Board of Directors; Leadership Launch graduate Liz Cordova joined the Board of Directors as a student representative
- **Emerging Leader Awards:** Executive Director Rachel Kittle honored as one of four finalists for Everett Herald’s Snohomish County Emerging Leader Award (p.6)



Meet Some of Our 2017 Students



“Leadership Launch is not just an organization that trains youth to become better leaders for the future, but it is also a family where it is safe to express yourself. It is a place where it is safe to show your brokenness and your happiness. Leadership Launch is a supportive family that accepts you for who you are.”
~**Sheila**, senior, Mariner High School



“Leadership Launch has impacted my life in so many different ways. It has encouraged me to do big things in life, and it has taught me to take risks and become a better person each day. Leadership Launch has supported me in my education and my leadership skills as a person.” ~**Kayleen**, freshman, Kamiak High School



“Leadership Launch is a place to begin creating a better future for yourself because everyone will always help you and will always give you the best advice whether it’s personal or not. Leadership Launch is a safe place for your ideas to shine and bring out who you are as a leader.” ~**Brittany**, freshman, Mariner High School



“Thank you for everything. I really appreciate what you guys have done for Leadership Launch. It has made a difference in my life as a student and a friend. It also as impacted many other students so I would like to say thank you so much.” ~**Fernando**, sophomore, Mariner High School



“Leadership Launch has made a big difference in my life. It has showed me how to be my own person, and how to keep going in life with my head up and one foot forward, always.”
~**Jennifer**, sophomore, Mariner High School



“Leadership Launch has helped me by making me realize that I have potential. It has also made me see a lot of my wrongs that I have turned around and made right. Leadership Launch has also helped me have a better mindset.” ~**Careana**, freshman, Mariner High School



“Through Leadership Launch, I met people who really listen to me and care, no matter what. Leadership Launch has made me more confident.” ~**Johnaven**, freshman, Mariner High School



“Leadership Launch is a leadership program that sees kids as kids, not just another number. Leadership Launch invests quality time in helping shape the young leaders of tomorrow.” ~**Liz**, sophomore, Everett Community College

Lessons Learned from 2016-17 School Year

Action + Character + Education = Success

We learned a lot from working with our class of freshmen last year. For instance, students wanted to meet more frequently, not less. Community Passion Projects were key to helping the students come alive, but they required a lot of support to complete. Hands-on experiential learning is what resonated most with our students, and many of our students needed additional social and emotional support to transition into high school.

These lessons allowed Executive Director and Founder Rachel Kittle to make some changes to the program. One of the most exciting changes was incorporating Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (commonly referred to as “A.C.E.S.”) training into the curriculum. A.C.E.S was a health study conducted by Kaiser Permanente showing how unaddressed childhood trauma—and the negative coping mechanisms that accompany them—have detrimental effects on behavior, health outcomes, and readiness to learn into adulthood. For instance, the study showed that childhood trauma can significantly increase a teen’s risks of alcohol abuse, drug use, absenteeism from school, suicide attempts, and many other issues—not to mention long-term health risks such as diabetes, heart disease, and early death.

The A.C.E.S. study itself can be a bit overwhelming, particularly for teens who have endured (or are still enduring) childhood trauma. As a result, Leadership Launch is taking the A.C.E.S. research and turning it into an empowering formula for change. To accomplish this, we created our own A.C.E.S. acronym: Action + Character + Education = Success. We teach our students that they have the most important role to play in how they respond and cope with hardship. We say, “You cannot always control what happens to you, but you can control how you respond.”



Stable Loving Environment

With this A.C.E.S. lens, we also examined research showing that the **single most important factor** in helping teens recover from childhood trauma is having a stable, loving adult in a teen’s life. This discovery led Leadership Launch to focus on creating a stable and loving family environment as a foundational element of our program, including weekly family-style dinners.

From Individual to International

We also realized we need to start small with high school freshmen, helping them first understand the impact they can make locally before we gradually broaden their vision over the course of their five years in the program. To do this, we developed a new progressive impact program. The focus for the first year (9th grade) is on the **individual** (meaning family, school, and neighborhood). The second year (10th grade) expands the focus to the **city / county** level. The third year (11th grade) includes the **state** focus. Fourth year (12th grade) focuses on the **national** level. Finally, the fifth year (1st year college) includes an **international** perspective. The types of projects we choose, the schools we visit, the organizations we tour, and the professions we explore will grow in scope as the students progress through the program.



2017 Orientation Events

First Annual Family Orientation

In August, we held our first annual family orientation, where we welcomed our students and their families for an evening of food, introduction, and fun team-building activities. We saw so much value in this activity that we added a quarterly family potluck to our schedule so that our students' families could stay connected and learn about their work with Leadership Launch.

Student Pre-Orientation: Colonial Creek Trail

We added a pre-orientation hike to Colonial Creek Trail at Lake Diablo. At the top of our hike, we reflected about how the different twists and turns, the incline, and the pressure and fatigue might represent their journey through high school, as well as their path toward success. After the hike, we bonded by enjoying a group dip in the lake's chilly glacial waters! It was exhilarating.

Two-Day Student Orientation

Our two-day student orientation was held in August. The first day we reviewed the mission and structure of Leadership Launch, included a session on A.C.E.S., and rolled out Leadership Launch's A.C.E.S. program model. We created rockets to symbolize how we need action, guided by character, and supported by education to provide the foundation for "launching" into success. The second day we went to The Waterhouse Center in Snohomish for a day of ropes course team building and leadership development. We finished the day at Flowing Lake with a swim and more team building.

Weekly Student Meetings and Dinners

As we kicked off Leadership Launch's new structure for the 2017-2018 school year, we launched weekly family-style dinners to help provide a stable and loving presence for our students. Dinner every week is followed by personal evaluations, an icebreaker or team builder, and a 60-90-minute lesson relating to one of our leadership development components. These weekly dinner and meetings occur at the home of Daniel and Rachel Kittle, and in a few short months, we have seen tremendous impact from this format.

Our weekly meetings included:

1. Practical Skills: The Art of Making a Good First Impression
2. Character Development: Foresight and Fortitude in Sports, Family, and Community
3. Community Launch Project Introductions: The 11 "W"s of Quality Project Planning
4. STEM Careers: Guest Speakers Ranger Peg Bohan and STEM Network Director Kandace Barnes
5. Practical Skills: Time Management Tips and Techniques
6. Keys to Communication: Guest Speaker Neuro-Linguistics Master Coach Diane Bradford (UpwardNW)
7. Practical Skills: The Art of Writing Thank-You Cards
8. Halloween: Team-Building and Fun
9. Community Launch Project Selection
10. Finding Your Career Path: Panel Discussion with Leadership Snohomish County's Young Professionals
11. Diamond Knot Dinner and Community Launch Project Planning
12. Family Potluck and Celebration



Jennifer and Brittany with Mukilteo Mayor Jennifer Gregerson

Community Launch Projects

Since our program is now geared toward experiential learning, we are using Launch Projects to teach character and practical skills, along with the value of education. Consequently, the first quarter of 2018 will focus primarily on the students' Community "Launch Project" (formerly Community Passion Projects).

This year, our students voted to adopt Liz's idea from last year of establishing a mobile dental day on Casino Road. The idea originated from Liz's observation that many of her family members, friends, and neighbors needed dental work, but they did not have the financial ability to receive the treatment they needed. Our students aspire to coordinate dental services as part of a larger community event.

Our students have prepared a list of ten organizations as potential partners for this project, and each student is taking the lead to partner with these organizations, including writing a letter, setting up follow-up meetings, and ultimately coordinating the event.

We have a lot of work to do, and we would love your help and support. Contact Rachel for ways to get involved, and stay connected for more information!

LIT Mentoring

We applied to become a Project Partner with Leadership Snohomish County ("LSC") in order to develop a leadership mentoring program for our students. LSC is an adult leadership program working with leaders from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors to make a positive impact on Snohomish County.

We are thrilled to announce that LSC selected Leadership Launch as one of its Project Partners for 2017-18. With the help of a team of Young Professionals from LSC, we are developing a mentoring program called "LIT Mentoring" (Leaders In Training Mentoring). This program matches Leadership Launch students with current community leaders who are alumni of the LSC program as mentors for our students.

The LSC mentors will provide accountability for students' Launch Projects while connecting them with other area events and leaders in our community. We are thrilled about this partnership. Our LSC team includes Melvin Givens III from the Future of Flight, Kristen Almgren from March of Dimes, Emma Kumpf from Hopeworks (AmeriCorps), and Lauren Corboy from Experience Momentum.



Executive Director Honored

In April 2017, Leadership Launch Executive Director Rachel Kittle was recognized for her hard work as one of four finalists for the Everett Herald's 2017 Snohomish County Emerging Leader Award. The Herald Business Journal published a full-length feature on her work with Leadership Launch, highlighting her time, dedication, and commitment to the development of youth leaders in our community.

In addition, Rachel was selected to join the 2017-18 Signature Class of Leadership Snohomish County, where she works closely with other leaders across the county to develop her own leadership skills while completing a project for the City of Everett.



Thank you for supporting Leadership Launch!

To stay connected, please contact Rachel Kittle at Rachel@leadershiplaunch.org or 206-388-7552, or like our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/leadershiplaunch.org>)