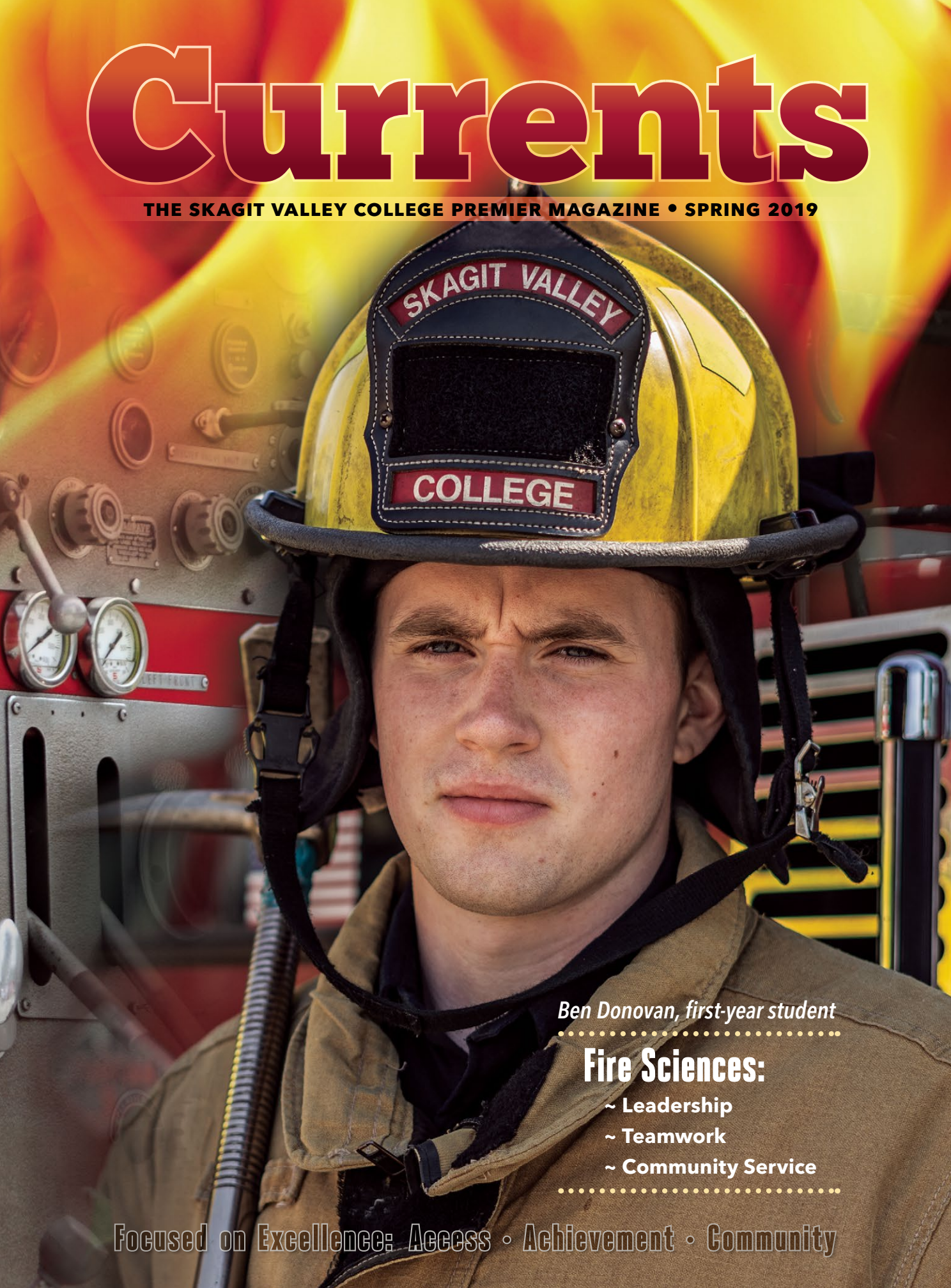


# Currents

THE SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE PREMIER MAGAZINE • SPRING 2019



*Ben Donovan, first-year student*

## **Fire Sciences:**

- ~ Leadership
- ~ Teamwork
- ~ Community Service

*Focused on Excellence: Access • Achievement • Community*



**S**kagit Valley College is making a difference throughout the communities we serve by opening the doors to higher education in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties. Whether our students are starting their college experience, training for a career, pursuing a bachelor of applied science degree, or exploring a lifelong passion, SVC provides innovative educational pathways and caring support that helps them achieve their educational goals and enriches their lives.

One of the things that makes our College special is that we are focused on excellence and equity in access, achievement, and community. I am very proud that SVC serves as a model in student achievement for other community colleges. Our commitment is to meet students where they are when they come to us and to provide education, services, and support that creates a sense of belonging. When they complete their degree or certificate, we know they are prepared to take the experience they had with us and begin a successful future of learning, working, and contributing to a better world.

As our cover story in this edition of Currents, we are pleased to feature the innovations taking place in SVC's Fire Sciences program. Our rigorous curriculum is preparing the next generation of exceptional firefighting professionals. Not only are they becoming highly skilled first responders, they are also gaining critical values in leadership, teamwork, and community service.

In the pages that feature the SVC Foundation, you will see how your support is making a big difference in the lives of our students. Your gifts – whether they create scholarships, support technologies, or provide program enhancements – support student success. In response to our students' needs for access to childcare, we are on the precipice of making our vision of opening a childcare facility on the Mount Vernon Campus a reality. We are grateful to the amazing leadership of many throughout our community who are helping us make this happen!

On behalf of the SVC Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, thank you for joining our commitment to students. Together, we are transforming the communities we serve in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas A. Keegan  
 President

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## Alumni Spotlight: Meet Wes Wood and Shell Puget Sound Refinery



Shell PSR positions are hyper competitive, but after a few attempts, Wes Wood was hired as a process operator this past July. "Honestly, SVC was great on the resume. It showed [my employers] that I was committed to what I wanted by dedicating two years to bettering myself," Wes reflected. The technical school education helped him stand out.

This was just the first step in a string of good news for Wes, however. After only seven months on

**F**or Wes Wood, the journey to achieving his dream was anything but a straight path. Since his days at Sedro-Woolley High School, Wes wanted to become a firefighter, which heavily influenced his higher education destination. The choice was easy, "Numerous people recommended the Skagit program."

The program Wood refers to is the two-year Fire Sciences program—a great tool that allowed Wes to pair classroom knowledge with his field experience as a volunteer firefighter. As a volunteer, Wood was pulling double duty, serving part-time for both the Sedro-Woolley Fire Department and North County Fire in Stanwood. But after two years, the toll was weighing on Wes and his family. Part-time work and uncertain schedules made it challenging to establish his career. For the benefit of his then-girlfriend/now-wife, Wes took a job as a train conductor. The dream was on hold for five years.

But Wes kept chasing his dream. Shell's Puget Sound Refinery (PSR) in Anacortes, Washington was a company with whom Wes knew a number of employees. "They all said it was a great job with great benefits...I knew it had great people." Their living wage jobs, for both hourly and staff employees, would directly improve the quality of life Wes could afford his family.

the job, he was given the opportunity to join the refinery's emergency response team - a position that supplements his original duties with emergency response and safety responsibilities for the employees and facilities associated with the PSR. Wes is able to help people and keep them safe. The dream happened for somebody committed to hard work and who never lost sight of his end goal.

When asked about any advice he'd give to Skagit Valley College students, his message was clear—keep working because there is no set path to where you want to go. "Figure out what you want to do and keep working towards it...keep going and don't give up on it. It took me eight years to get what I wanted. It'll happen."

Shell's commitment to Skagit Valley College extends well beyond hiring our graduates. For more than 20 years, SVC has enjoyed a strong relationship with Shell PSR and their employees. "We are so appreciative to Shell for joining the College's commitment to higher education and service to the community," said Anne Clark, Vice President of College Advancement. "Since 1999 alone, they have contributed over \$215,000 in support of student success! They continue to greatly impact the lives of students and we are so grateful for their leadership and vision."



# FIRE SCIENCES @SVC

Training the next generation of exceptional first responders

**W**hether they're responding to a motor vehicle accident, a structure fire, or a community disaster, today's firefighting professionals must bring a broad set of exceptional skills with them to each incident. Our family, friends, and community depend on their service.

In addition to coursework that includes Firefighter Training, Hazardous Materials First Responder, Rescue Systems, and Emergency Medical Technician, SVC's Fire Sciences students learn soft skills that are also critical to their success. The values of leadership, teamwork, and community service are interwoven into the curriculum. "A lot of our effort is developing within our students a sense of team and a sense of giving so they are great contributors to our community," said Department Chair Patrick McVicker.



*"What drew me to the SVC Fire Sciences program was the long history and reputation it had of creating career firefighters."*

*~ Ben Donovan, Fire Sciences student*

For first-year Fire Sciences student Benjamin Donovan, that's exactly what drew him to the program. Ben's family maintains strong connections within the Skagit Valley, so it was natural for him to join a program that supported his values and commitment to community and family. "What drew me to the SVC Fire Sciences program was the long history and reputation it had of creating career firefighters," he said. "I also liked the idea of hands on training from past students and career firefighters."

As sophomores, the program focuses on academics and internships presented in a flexible format to support greater engagement in fire service membership. The result is a well-prepared student who is ready for employment in the fire service.

Christiane Finch illustrates that second-year program focus perfectly. She is already giving back in her chosen career field by working in a local fire department while she completes her second year. "The best part of the program has been the amount of hands-on experience we receive," she said. "It makes a huge difference to not only learn in the classroom, but to get out and actually practice what we've learned."



***"The best part of the program has been the amount of hands-on experience we receive."***

*~ Christiane Finch, Fire Sciences student*



*(L to R) FIRE students Becky Azure, Travis Boyd, Stephanie Salgado, and Reid Wilson.*

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**—Just in time for Fall, Fire Sciences students can apply for a full ride scholarship valued at \$16,000 each. In partnership with Skagit County Fire Districts 6, 13, 14, City of Burlington Fire Department, and City of Mount Vernon Fire Department, SVC will award six scholarships to students entering or currently enrolled in the program. This scholarship includes tuition, fees, books, program fees, uniforms, and testing fees. Visit: [www.skagit.edu/fire](http://www.skagit.edu/fire)

Sue Krienen with her grandson, Quinn

## Early Learning & Childcare:

### Sue Krienen Helps Shape a New Vision for Skagit County

Skagit Valley College is in the midst of raising money to build a brand new early learning and childcare center for Skagit County, a facility that demonstrates the perfect blend of community and campus. SVC gets a learning lab for Early Childhood Education students to gain practical, hands-on experience; the community gets additional childcare spaces and a location focused on parent education and support services. But how did we get here? Enter early learning advocate, Sue Krienen.

As a young engineer, Sue learned the value of philanthropy from her supervisor. His giving convinced Krienen to follow suit. “No matter where I went, I just kept giving to [the United Way],” in order to support their work. By the time she arrived in Anacortes in 2006, giving was a way of life. After many years of advocating for kindergarten readiness in the community, a relationship based on a shared vision for early learning connected Sue to SVC.

“Brad Tuininga, Director of Philanthropy for the SVC Foundation, reached out,” recalls Krienen. At the time, the Foundation was raising funds for student childcare vouchers, but she pressed SVC President, Dr. Tom Keegan, for something bigger and more sustainable.





This project is the answer Krienen was advocating for—something that addresses the root of the problem. Currently, only 35% of Skagit County children are ready for kindergarten when they enter, the lowest kindergarten readiness rate of the surrounding six counties. In part, this can be attributed to a lack of available early learning resources for parents and caregivers, who comprise 70% of childcare in Skagit County. Making the problem worse is the deficiency in available childcare space. For parents who would like to utilize childcare, it is very hard to come by - nearly 5,000 children in Skagit County don't even have the option to utilize childcare due to lack of space.

***Kindergarten readiness is a primary predictor for 3rd grade reading levels, which in turn is a predictor of high school completion rates and future dependence on social and health services.***

This center is just one step towards upward social mobility, but also improving our future workforce and reducing social costs. Statistically, every \$1 spent towards early childhood education can save \$7 in future criminal justice, welfare, and remedial education expenses.

But beyond financial savings, practicum labs, and expanded childcare capacity, Krienen points to a shift in project focus as the most exciting aspect of this center. It's also about helping parents.

Coaching them how to be great supporters and nurturers; normalizing the practice of asking for help; getting families connected to community resources and collaborating with organizations like Skagit Children's Council, United Way, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, and others. These are all points of emphasis for the facility. But it's not just parents and grandparents—this is about family, friends, and neighbors. It's about community working together.

Sue emphasizes that every community member can make a huge difference.

***"It's not just my kids, or your kids, these are all OUR kids."***



Skagit Valley College Foundation is currently raising funds to build the Early Learning & Childcare Center on the Mount Vernon Campus and we invite everyone to be a part of this county-wide effort.

For more information, or to donate, please contact Brad Tuininga at [brad.tuininga@skagit.edu](mailto:brad.tuininga@skagit.edu) or call 360.416.7870.



## *A bright spotlight on student success:* **Meet Jessica Lonergan, SVC student**



*Jessica (left) visits the Phillip Tarro Theatre with her mom, Joy.*

**"It was important to Jessica to attend college, just like her sisters. There's a huge sense of pride that comes with that."**

~ Joy Caldwell

**D**riving each day together to Skagit Valley College is a dream come true for Joy Caldwell and her daughter, Jessica Lonergan.

Joy is finishing her Nursing prerequisites and will enter the program next fall. "It was 31 years ago when I graduated from college the first time," said Joy. "Now, it's my turn to finish what I've dreamed of doing."

For Jessica, the doors to higher education at SVC are wide open, thanks to the College's Individualized, Next Step, Vocational Education, and Social Skills Training (INVEST) program. SVC's program is one of only three offered in Washington.

INVEST is a comprehensive transition program for individuals with intellectual disabilities who are 18 to 21 years of age. The program is a collaboration between SVC and the Anacortes, Burlington-Edison, Concrete, La Conner, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley school districts. Stanwood plans to join the partnership next fall.

Although Jessica was born with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and scoliosis, she doesn't let those challenges create a barrier to her success. "It was important to Jessica to attend college, just like her sisters," said Joy. "There's a huge sense of pride that comes with that."

With INVEST, each student's education is adjusted to fit their goals and career choice. Subjects include communication, independence, personal finance, and interview techniques to help them develop marketable employment skills. In addition, all INVEST students have access to an iPad to work on class assignments and presentations. Jessica used those skills when she co-presented a workshop during the annual statewide conference for Washington Developmental Disabilities Administration.

In addition to her classes, Jessica enjoys participating in extracurricular activities. This year, she played a role in the SVC Drama production, "Living Newspaper." On a recent visit to the Phillip Tarro Theatre, Jessica stepped onto the stage and her eyes lit up. "Drama is my favorite subject!" she said with a big smile.

At Commencement this year, Jessica will cheer on her seven INVEST classmates who will graduate. She's already excited to put on her own cap and gown next year when she graduates. Her mom sums it up this way: "I love this College and the environment that it offers to Jessica and all students. The diversity and richness that INVEST has brought to campus is pretty amazing. It's truly a win-win." **Visit: [www.skagit.edu/invest](http://www.skagit.edu/invest)**





With a focus on excellence, Skagit Valley College aligns its Workforce Education programs with regional and state economic development strategies. By maintaining strong connections with community leaders and key partnerships with business and industry, SVC provides training that responds to employer needs.

Designed for local employers and the community:

## SVC's Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management Degree

The world of work is evolving with a rapidly changing blend of perspectives, connections, and nuances. In addition to bringing together traditional skills and knowledge, including profit and loss, business law and ethics, and analysis, the work environment now includes the dynamics of power structures in the workplace, digital marketing, and multicultural perspectives. It reflects a heightened demand for highly skilled critical thinkers who can flourish and adapt to an ever-changing landscape.

In an effort to create an innovative pathway to meet these needs for the local community, Skagit Valley College launched its Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management (BASAM) degree. SVC's BASAM degree is a two-year, 90-credit career-oriented program that is designed for Professional/Technical students who have already completed an associate's degree (AAS-T, AAS or ATA). The program combines upper-level managerial and general education courses to provide students with occupationally contextualized workplace skills and knowledge for advancement to leadership positions or to operate an entrepreneurial venture.

The program design is rooted in the College's commitment to excellence and equity. Entry

requirements have been streamlined to make the program accessible for as broad an audience as possible. The learning model replicates an on-the-job learning experience with courses that are integrated to model a management perspective. Classes meet once a week and participants undertake the bulk of their learning independently or in groups, again replicating the workplace learning environment. The program, which starts each fall, is full for the second consecutive year, reflecting the community demand for this type of educational opportunity.

"Skagit Valley College's Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management degree is flexible, affordable, and is designed for motivated working adults who want to build or reshape their management skills and advance professionally," said Sunaina Virendra, Applied Management Instructor and Program Chair of SVC's BASAM program. "Our curriculum is centered around practical application within the workplace to prepare participants to address the opportunities, challenges, and nuances of operating in an increasingly diverse, interconnected, and complex global community."

Visit: [www.skagit.edu/basam](http://www.skagit.edu/basam)



P.E.O. Chapter GB



Lucy Kesterson

## A tradition of helping women achieve their highest aspirations:

### P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) International

**T**hanks to the philanthropy of many generous individuals and organizations, deserving and talented Skagit Valley College students are achieving their dreams.

P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) International is a philanthropic organization where women celebrate the advancement of women through scholarships, grants, awards, loans and ownership of Cottey College. P.E.O. motivates women to achieve their highest aspirations.

All chapters are divided into regional reciprocities. The Skagit/San Juan Reciprocity includes nine chapters; Chapter GB was the designation given to one of the Mount Vernon Chapters in 1973.

In 2012, GB member Bobbie Jensen presented the idea of providing a scholarship to help support and provide financial assistance to a deserving woman student at Skagit Valley College. Since 2012, Chapter GB has awarded \$14,250 to 15 students.

Last year, Skagit Valley College student Lucy Kesterson received a P.E.O. scholarship to support her educational journey. Lucy is a Human Services Generalist major with a 3.97 GPA. She will graduate this spring with an Associate's degree in Human Services and serves as President of her Phi Theta Kappa Chapter. After graduating from SVC, Lucy plans to pursue a Bachelor's and a

Master's degree in Public Policy. In all of her work, Lucy Kesterson has a commitment to social justice, equity, supporting and advancing marginalized groups, and promoting human rights. She is a first-generation college student, a widow, and mother of three. In March, she was named to the 2019 All-Washington Academic Team. During the awards ceremony, Lucy received a medallion from SVC President Dr. Thomas Keegan and Washington State Representative Dr. Dave Paul (10th District) to honor her accomplishment.

"P.E.O. International has been helping women reach for the stars since 1869," said Edie Diver, GB Chapter member, "We feel a great sense of pride by providing scholarships for continuing education women students, just like Lucy."

About P.E.O. — P.E.O. International was founded in 1869 by seven students at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. This circle of kindred spirits – bonded by their enthusiasm for women's opportunities – eventually expanded to include women off campus as well. Today, P.E.O. has grown from that tiny membership of seven to more than 225,000 members throughout the U.S. and Canada, with headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Visit:** <https://www.peointernational.org/about-peo>

## Event Highlights



**9.29.18**

Wally Sigmar Soccer Field Rededication with new turf and lights! THANKS to our partners: Associated Students of Skagit Valley College, Northwest United FC, and Skagit County.

**12.11.18**

SVC Foundation Holiday Reception celebrated our 40th birthday with 130 of our community friends! JOIN US for next year's event 12.10.19!



**10.4.18**

3rd Annual Oktoberfest with live music, tasty culinary samplings, and Cardinal Craft Brew.

**10.20.18**

16th Annual Sports Auction has helped over 3,000 student athletes during the past 16 years! JOIN US for next year's event 11.9.19!

**1.19.19**

Northwest Athletic Conference (NWAC) Hall of Fame and Recognition celebrated SVC receiving the NWAC President's Cup, which honored student athletes for their academic performance. In addition, we celebrated SVC's NWAC Hall of Fame members with a special banner unveiling.

**2.28.19**

President's Reception on San Juan Island was hosted at the San Juan Island Brewing Company. SVC President Dr. Tom Keegan and San Juan Center Director Randy Martin shared College updates and the impact that SVC makes throughout the San Juans.



**11.28.18**

19th Annual Evening with Champions/ Champions of Diversity Awards Ceremony recognized young multicultural leaders from Skagit, Island and San Juan counties. JOIN US for our 20th celebration 12.4.19!

**5.10.19**

Underwritten by



Puget Sound Refinery

31st Annual Ford Golf Classic continues to reflect the legacy and spirit of Dr. James Ford's vision to support student excellence at SVC. JOIN US for our 32nd tournament on 5.8.20!

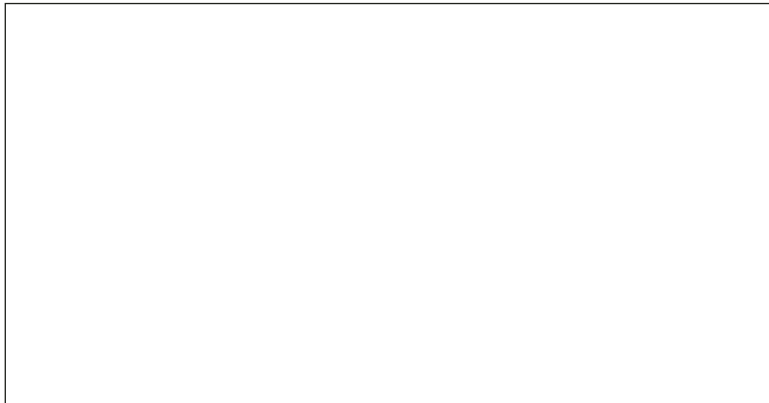
**5.20.19**

Whidbey Island Campus Art Stroll and President's Reception with the Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce. Visitors strolled and viewed the campus and art collection. THANKS to our sponsors: SVC Whidbey Student Government and SVC Foundation!



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## Road Scholar Program

### *Exploring the San Juan Islands & the Pacific Northwest*

Adult lifelong learners from across the United States continue to explore the many facets of the San Juan Islands and the Northwest with Road Scholar, a program offered through Skagit Valley College's San Juan Center. A true university of the world, Road Scholar's meaningful – often transformational – educational experiences engage people for whom learning is the journey of a lifetime.

San Juan Center celebrates

**31 years**

of partnership with Road Scholar, the nation's largest not-for-profit educational travel program.

Skagit Valley College is the only college or university in Washington to offer Road Scholar programs and both organizations are proud to be celebrating 31 years of partnership.

Each year, the San Juan Center hosts more than 40 Road Scholar adventures, with themes ranging from regional studies (history and culture), to active programs (hiking and birding), to multi-generational excursions (grandparents with grandchildren). Passionate expert presenters, unique field trips, uncommon natural beauty, knowledgeable local group leaders, and engaged lifelong learners are woven together to make a memorable learning experience. "The grandparent and grandchild programs are particularly rewarding," said Randy Martin, San Juan Center

and Road Scholar Director. "We have the opportunity to impact lifetime memories for each family by sharing the gift of travel and education."

The San Juan Center is very proud that Road Scholar treads lightly on the environment. The program connects participants with local experts in places that are off the beaten path or need special access. "Hidden Anchorages: San Juan Islands by Land and Sea uses the vessel, Chinook, as a floating classroom," said Martin. "Over the course of three days, learners explore a number of islands in the Salish Sea and visit a nationally recognized salmon rearing site on Orcas Island, as well as historical ports of call, like Roche Harbor. It is rated nationally in the top five large programs, based on participant evaluations."

[skagit.edu/road-scholar](http://skagit.edu/road-scholar)

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