

# Currents

THE SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE PREMIER MAGAZINE • SUMMER 2017

..... SPECIAL CAMPAIGN EDITION .....



## REMOVING

A CAMPAIGN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & EXCELLENCE

## BARRIERS

Emergency Assistance | Childcare Assistance | Opportunity for Excellence

.....  
Focused on Excellence: Access • Achievement • Community



Skagit Valley College is proud to be part of a community that values higher education. Since the College's founding in 1926, countless generations have joined our commitment to supporting students in a spirit of civic-minded leadership, compassionate philanthropy, and enthusiastic dedication. It's a tradition of engagement that has been making a difference in our community for more than 90 years, and counting.

Throughout Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties, many individuals have joined our commitment to students. They are key leaders in business, agriculture, government, and economic development who help our region prosper. They are caring educators who mentor tomorrow's leaders. They are friends of the College who support student achievement. Collectively, they have all said, "Yes!" Yes to providing access to higher education. Yes to supporting student achievement. Yes to building a strong community. Together, we are transforming lives.

In this special edition of *Currents*, we will focus on the great work taking place in the SVC Foundation with the public launch of *Removing Barriers: A Campaign for Student Achievement and Excellence*. SVC Foundation is raising \$3 million to address challenges faced by many SVC students, with an impressive \$2.66 million raised so far. Unlike a traditional "brick and mortar" building campaign, this campaign is unique in that it's dynamic: the funds being raised are already making a big difference for students as they pursue their educational goals. In the pages that follow, you will have an opportunity to meet some of these students and the generous donors who said, Yes!

On behalf of the SVC Board of Trustees, the SVC Foundation Board of Governors, Campaign Cabinet, faculty, staff, and students, thank you for joining the SVC Foundation's *Removing Barriers* Campaign. The success we achieve reflects your dedication to students and our relationship with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas A. Keegan  
President

**SVC BOARD OF TRUSTEES**



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Cover Photos (clockwise, top left): Sandra Mulkey, Cory Ertel, Heather Hernandez, Dave Johnson, Bud & Mia Wallgren, Ken & Sue Christianson

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**Editors/Writers:**

Arden Ainley, Anne Clark, Pam Davis, Kelly Reep, Brad Tuininga, & Carl Young

**Design/Production:**

James Walters & Peter Goodrich



## Removing Barriers Campaign Changes the Way SVC Supports Students

Skagit Valley College students have unique barriers as they pursue their educational goals. The profile of the students that SVC serves is 56% female, 33% from diverse backgrounds, and the average age of our students is 29. Most illuminating are the challenges they report: 52% of students care for a dependent at home and 67% of degree-seeking students are the first in their family to attend college. In addition, the majority of students have financial need well beyond any financial aid or scholarships for which they qualify. This student snapshot is exactly why SVC Foundation began working on the **Removing Barriers Campaign** in January 2015.

Despite these barriers, SVC students are highly motivated but often returning to college in their 30s or 40s. While they have the potential to succeed, they sometimes lack the confidence needed to excel. They are determined, but burdened with many responsibilities beyond college.

The Campaign aims to raise money to serve SVC students immediately, as well as to invest in order to serve students in the future. So far, we are very proud that the accumulated gifts and pledges total

more than \$2.66 million of our \$3 million goal. Together, we can do it!

Perhaps most exciting about this Campaign is that we are not waiting to reach our goal. Campaign funds are already being put to work serving students with **Emergency** needs or **Childcare** costs, and other funds are supporting students with **Opportunity for Excellence** activities—unique activities that enhance and extend their classroom learning. To learn more about the pillars of the Campaign please visit [www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers](http://www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers).

Campaign fundraising is matched by efforts underway at SVC to create clear, efficient pathways for students to achieve their educational goals. The College is focused on using student success data to address obstacles that commonly limit student achievement. The most critical finding: helping students overcome a small, immediate challenge can make all the difference.

The individual grant awards from the Removing Barriers Campaign tend to be small, but can be the help that allows a student to stay in school and remain focused on success.



### Chris Skinner

*Attorney and SVC Trustee, Oak Harbor*

"I support Removing Barriers because my father was a community college president and he instilled in me, early on, the importance of community colleges as a means to provide high quality education to people who might not otherwise achieve it."

# BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES



## **Sandra Mulkey**

Community Ambassador,  
Regency on Whidbey Island

"I support Removing Barriers because as a single mom I returned to school with two teenage daughters. Others removed barriers for me and so I feel obligated to do the same for the next generation of students."

## **Dave Johnson**

Banker, Retired

"I support Removing Barriers because I believe the most important thing we can give the next generation is our faith and a great education."





## Ken and Sue Christianson: A Commitment to Community and Philanthropy

**“We hope our gift will help recipients fulfill their educational goals and inspire them to give back as well.”**

**T**his statement from Ken and Sue Christianson provides a key to understanding why they support Skagit Valley College Foundation’s Removing Barriers Campaign. They selected the Childcare and Emergency pillars of the campaign, reflecting their own beliefs about the challenges faced by SVC students.

The Christianson’s generosity—expressed through financial and volunteer contributions—has been a consistent theme for them. Their life together began (with a blind date!) at Washington State University and continued as they raised their family while Ken worked for 28 years at Alf Christianson Seed Company, including 18 years as president. Now, as owners of Chrishaven

Trees, they continue their involvement in both the economic and charitable vitality of our community.

Their support for higher education remains strong and unwavering. They have been involved with WSU since they graduated in the late 70’s. Their commitment was recognized by WSU Foundation with the Outstanding Service Award in 2005 and the Gibson Award in 2012, the highest honor given for volunteer service.

Ken and Sue are longtime supporters of Skagit Valley College and became strong contributors of the Campaign, Ken says, “because we saw it as a way to help others who are seeking to better themselves but

need a helping hand. We strongly feel that education is a stepping stone to self-improvement and building strong communities.”

And their connections don’t end there, many of their nieces and nephews have attended SVC and Ken improved his welding skills in night classes. Their support of countless SVC fundraisers, sports events, and International Program dinners is another wonderful testament to their commitment to higher education.

Philanthropy, as well as a deep and abiding commitment to our community, runs deep with Ken and Sue, and we are grateful for their commitment to Skagit Valley College and our students.

SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE FOUNDATION  
**REMOVING**  
A CAMPAIGN FOR STUDENT **ACHIEVEMENT & EXCELLENCE**  
**BARRIERS**

*Eat, Drink  
Be  
Charitable*  
Campaign Launch Event  
5 • 19 • 2017



*"One of those special evenings that makes you proud to live in the Skagit Valley."*

**T**hat comment perhaps best sums up the public launch of SVC Foundation's **Removing Barriers Campaign** held at Maplehurst Farm in Mount Vernon. Attendees had significant milestones to applaud and a generous community of donors with whom to celebrate.

With a focus on excellence, Skagit Valley College President Dr. Tom Keegan announced that the Campaign had reached \$2.55 million toward its \$3 million goal, thanks to the vision, generosity, and support of so many throughout the community. The 200+ guests, brought together by a shared desire to support SVC students,

enthusiastically stepped up, and, before the night was over, pledged an additional \$135,875, which includes a generous \$50,000 match from an anonymous donor.

The Removing Barriers Campaign provides funding for three critical areas of student need at SVC. **Childcare assistance, Emergency funds, and an Opportunity for Excellence fund** – a program to support exceptional learning opportunities. These funds have been created and will be sustained through current use and endowed gifts to the Campaign.

# SVC Foundation & Friends of the College Celebrate Campaign Launch



The evening's festivities also included three of SVC's innovative programs. Food was prepared by SVC Culinary Arts student chefs and some of the libations were created by students in the Craft Brew Academy. The Academy began in 2016, and is built on the availability of the unique malted grains produced in the Skagit Valley. The triad of programs—Culinary Arts, Cardinal Craft Brewing, and Sustainable Agriculture—work together to bring insights, shared principles, and integration into each curriculum.


Maplehurst Farm's rustic barn was transformed for the evening into a welcoming setting for friends of the College to gather, mingle, and show their appreciation for the amazing tradition of community leadership provided by SVC through its 90-year history. Many of those at the event have attended SVC for degrees or skills training over the years.

The success of the Removing Barriers Campaign reflects the generous philanthropic spirit of our communities. Thank you!

**A HEARTFELT  
THANK YOU**  
to our communities  
for making the  
evening a success!

Photos from the evening can be viewed online at: [www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers-campaign-galleries](http://www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers-campaign-galleries)

# OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCELLENCE

A photograph of two men smiling and standing in front of a background of vibrant red maple leaves. The man on the left is bald, wearing glasses and a dark grey zip-up hoodie. The man on the right has short dark hair, is wearing glasses and a light blue polo shirt.

Sustainable Agriculture student **Joshua Elliott** is receiving **Opportunity for Excellent funds** to research and document effective marketing strategies to establish a locally sourced artisan butter business.

Education Para Professional student **Jesse Robles** is enhancing his classroom education with **Opportunity for Excellence funds** to attend workshops and conferences related to his career goals.



# EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

MADI  
VANDERHOUWEN

Putting life's  
challenges  
behind her  
and giving  
back to the  
community

*Emergency funds are making a difference in the lives of students like Madi.*

Each year, we have the opportunity to meet many remarkable students who, through their journey, inspire others to reach higher, persevere, and achieve their own dreams and goals. They set the bar high with a standard of excellence that guides their journey. Their accomplishments create a richness that touches the College and the community.

One of these special students is Madi VanderHouwen, a student in SVC's Human Services program. With the help of the **Removing Barriers Campaign Emergency Assistance fund**, Madi has put life's challenges behind her so that she can give back to the community and create a bright future for her daughter.

"My name is Madi VanderHouwen and I'm a student here at Skagit Valley College. I'm in the Human Services program with an emphasis on substance abuse counseling. The reason I chose this degree was so that I could give back to my community the best

way that I know how. Growing up was a struggle. We lived in poverty, where drugs and alcohol abuse was an everyday normality. Nobody ever expected you to succeed, or said you were ever going to do anything great.

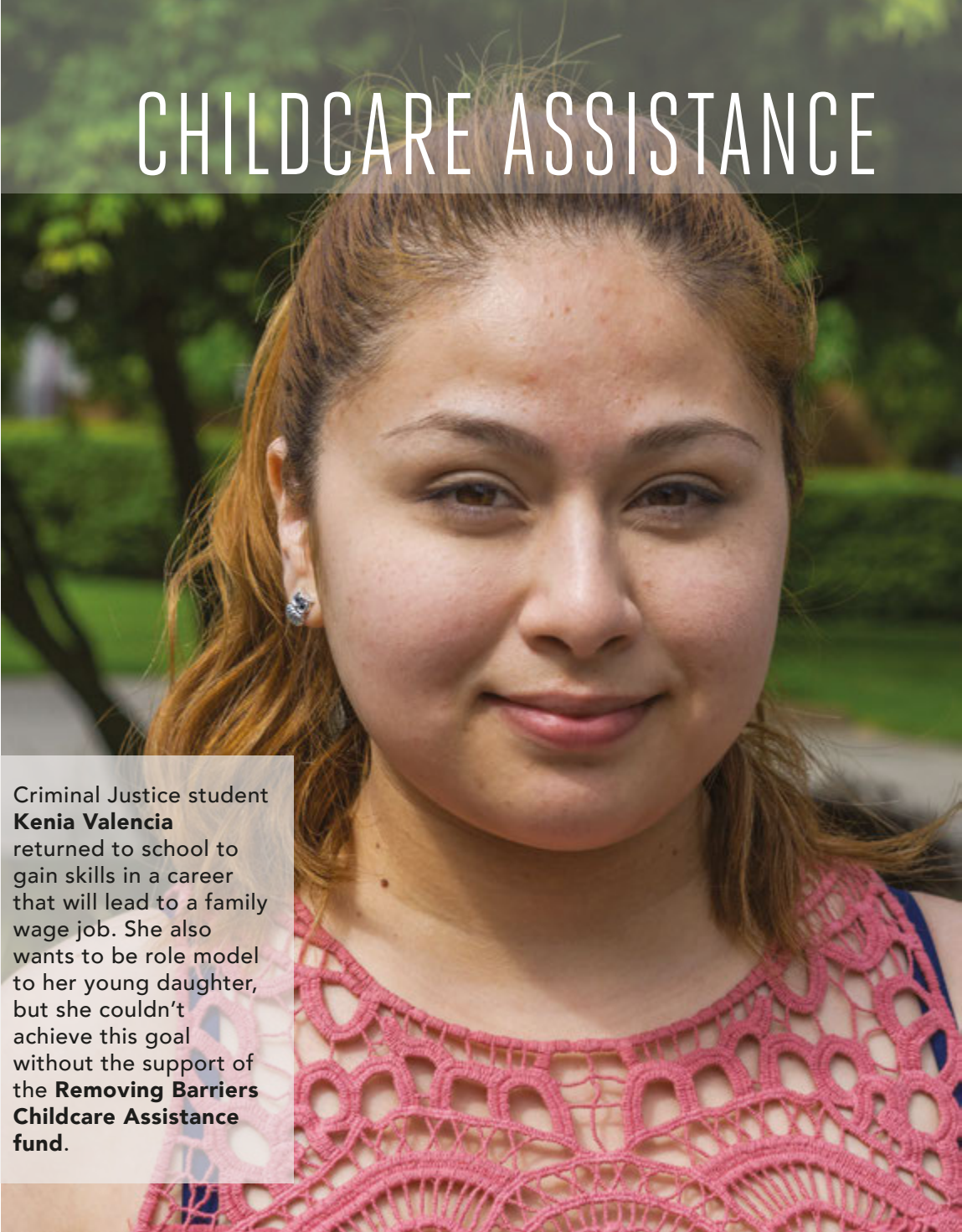
But, despite all of that, I sit here today as a student at Skagit Valley College, thriving on the student life and I absolutely love it! Unfortunately, you can't avoid your everyday disaster. Life happens. So, back in January, I had a roommate move out and we had new people lined up to move in and, last minute, they decided they weren't going to move in. So, that left us with the question of, 'How are we going to pay the rent?' Fortunately, Skagit Valley College has the Foundation and they provide emergency funding and they helped pay my rent for the month of January.

I'm a single mom, so life with a three-year-old is crazy, but I couldn't imagine where I would be if it wasn't for the SVC Foundation. If it wasn't for

them helping me with my rent, I wouldn't be able to provide for my daughter and continue going to school. With life disasters like that, who could focus on studies? But, I didn't have to worry about that because the Foundation stepped in and they helped me. And not only have they helped me, but they helped other students just like me who sometimes need help. It's so refreshing to know that when we ask for help, we can receive it.

And so, with that in mind, know that there are people who struggle and they need help. If you can consider supporting the Foundation and helping everyday students just like myself, please take the time out of your day to help us. Thank you."

# CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE

A close-up portrait of a young woman with long, wavy brown hair pulled back, wearing a pink lace top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Criminal Justice student **Kenia Valencia** returned to school to gain skills in a career that will lead to a family wage job. She also wants to be role model to her young daughter, but she couldn't achieve this goal without the support of the **Removing Barriers Childcare Assistance fund**.



## **Margaret Rojas**

*Former SVC Trustee*

"I support the Removing Barriers Campaign because I once was a single mother attending College at the Whidbey Island Campus, and I know that every bit of help can make a student succeed, as it did for me."

Please Join us!



# REMOVING

A CAMPAIGN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & EXCELLENCE

# BARRIERS

Emergency Assistance • Childcare Assistance  
Opportunity for Excellence

***Make Your Gift Today!***

.....  
**Give Online – Give by Check – Make a Pledge**

[www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers](http://www.skagitfoundation.org/removing-barriers)

**Campaign Cabinet Members**

Heather Hernandez, Chair	Jeff Pleet
Kate Bennett	Susan Ragan
Dave Johnson	Mary Scott
Tom Keegan	Jerry Willins
Sandra Mulkey	Carl Young

2405 East College Way, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 • 360-416-7870 • [brad.tuininga@skagit.edu](mailto:brad.tuininga@skagit.edu)



**John Sternlicht**

*CEO, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County*

“I support Removing Barriers because a well-trained and educated workforce is key to economic development. Also as a family, we support Removing Barriers because we’ve seen how education and training from a community college can lead to a lifetime of success and sustainability for this generation and the next.”

2405 East College Way  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 www.skagit.edu  
 www.skagitfoundation.org



# REMOVING BARRIERS

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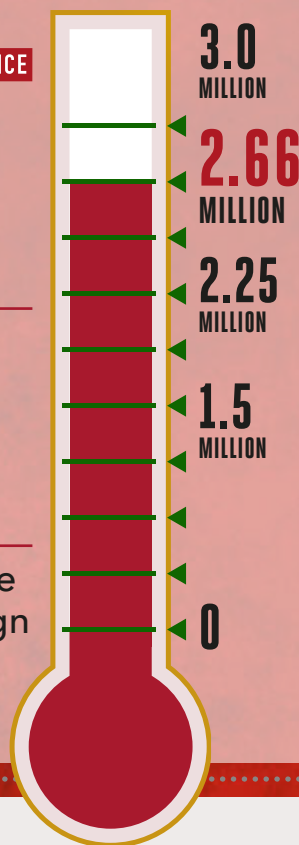
We are Removing Barriers for students like Madi, Joshua, Jesse, Kenia and many more.

We've already raised over  
**\$2.66 million**  
 toward our \$3 million goal.

With your help we will complete the Removing Barriers Campaign by December 2017.

**Please join us today!**

CAMPAIGN GOAL



## SVC ADVANCEMENT TEAM

**Anne Clark**  
 Executive Director  
 of College Advancement  
 & SVC Foundation

**SVC FOUNDATION**  
**Brad Tuininga**  
 Director of Philanthropy

**Pam Davis**  
 Development  
 & Donor Relations Manager

**Kelly Reep**  
 Community Relations  
 & Special Events Manager

**Karin Williams**  
 Fiscal Analyst

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**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**  
**James Walters**  
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**Marcus Badgley**  
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**Don Cairns**  
 Graphic Designer

**Peter Goodrich**  
 Multimedia Designer

Skagit Valley College provides a drug-free environment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or age in its programs and employment.



**Heather Hernandez**  
*President/Publisher, Skagit Publishing  
 President, SVC Foundation Board of Governors  
 Chair, Removing Barriers Campaign Cabinet*

"I am Removing Barriers so that students can stay enrolled and finish what they started."