

Media Advisory



Innovative Program Aims to Help Elementary Students Prepare & Save for College

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What: Boys & Girls Clubs of Washington State and the Washington Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program have formed a strategic partnership to help Kindergarten through third grade students across the state save and prepare for their future college education. The Bright Futures program is designed to have young students develop and set personal, academic and career goals by identifying champions in their lives that can help them pursue and achieve their dreams. This program was established because adults must hold high expectations for student success and students must have hope and be academically and financially prepared beginning at an early age.

Why: In 2013 the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis came out with a study that showed children with a college savings account are seven times more likely to finish high school and continue on with some form of post-secondary education. According to the study, the amount saved in the account does not really matter; what's more important is the message to the child that someone important in their life believes in them and that college is going to be a part of their future. Gallup research also found that hope is a better predictor of future success than attendance or test scores. The GET Bright Futures program plants the seeds of hope in youth and provides an avenue for champions to respond and support the dreams and aspirations of our youngest community members.

Where & When: Throughout the year GET staff will visit Boys & Girls Clubs across Washington State and all K-3 members will have the opportunity to participate in a college and career discovery program. Lessons include: "What do I want to be when I grow up?" "Who are the champions in my life who will help support me along the way?" and "What does college look like?" **The first series of classes will be offered at Clubs in King, Thurston, Snohomish and Whatcom counties during the first two weeks of April during school spring breaks.**

Who: Champions (parents, coaches, teachers, Club staff, family members, friends, etc.) can make an investment by encouraging students to pursue their dreams and/or by contributing financially to a student's college savings account. As part of this program, champions who decide to open a GET college savings account for their student will receive a \$50 enrollment fee waiver to encourage participation.

How: Only a holistic approach to creating college-going culture will increase the number of students achieving certification or a degree beyond high school. By 2018, 70% of jobs in Washington State will require some form of higher education. With third grade being the half way point to college, we felt it was important to reach students at an early age so that they and their families have time to prepare and be proactive in preparing for a future that includes higher education.