

## News release



Everett Public Schools

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### **United Way and Everett Public Schools introduce varsity letter in community service**

Student volunteers at high schools in the Everett School District, through a new partnership between Everett School District and United Way of Snohomish County, will be recognized in much the same way that student athletes in baseball, football, soccer and other sports are recognized – with a varsity letter.

The Varsity Letter in Community Service, a program that is new to Snohomish County, will recognize students who make a significant commitment of time and energy improving our community.

“Many of our district’s high school students commit their time and energy to a variety of projects that improve our community and we believe they should be rewarded for their work,” said Dr. Gary Cohn, Everett Schools Superintendent and member of United Way’s Board of Directors.

“These students are the leaders of tomorrow. This is one more way we can honor the contributions of our young people and expand their learning opportunities in partnership with our community.” he added.

Supporters of the program believe that offering a Varsity Letter will also encourage students to increase their volunteer work in the community.

“If the Varsity Letter had been available when I was starting high school, I probably would have started volunteering much earlier than I actually did,” said Ivan Simon, a recent graduate of Everett high school. Ivan started volunteering in the middle of his junior year and has volunteered at over 20 events with United Way’s Youth United program. This summer, Ivan will be an intern with United Way’s student group, Youth United.

In addition to the Everett School District, Snohomish High School has also signed up to participate in the program.

“We are excited about this opportunity to recognize and honor student volunteers,” said Dennis G. Smith, president and CEO of United Way of Snohomish County. “Eventually, we want every teen volunteer to know their contribution to our community is valued and respected.”

Over the past year, over 400 teen volunteers spent a total of 2,145 hours doing various volunteer projects with Youth United throughout Snohomish County. They worked at local food banks, helped at

elementary schools and senior centers, and participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

Although the Varsity Letter in Community Service is new to Snohomish County, it is modeled after a successful program started in Pierce County 10 years ago – the first in the nation. This past school year United Way of Pierce County awarded over 550 varsity letters to deserving students in Pierce County.

Students in Snohomish County will earn a Varsity Letter in Community Service by:

1. Completing and submitting the Varsity Letter in Community Service 2012-13 application on or before May 1, 2013
2. Being a student in a Snohomish County high school that offers a Varsity Letter in Community Service
3. Completing at least 145 hours of community service (which cannot include hours used to fulfill graduation or class credit requirements) between May 1, 2012 and April 30, 2013
4. Completing at least 50 of the 145 hours of community service in non-school-related volunteering opportunities (i.e. 50 hours should be at a nonprofit or civic service setting)
5. Participating in at least one school-related activity (no hours requirement)
6. Securing verification of volunteer hours from United Way of Snohomish County (United Way verifies 100% of submitted volunteer hours)
7. Meeting the 2.0 GPA requirement

For more information on the program, please visit <http://www.uwsc.org/varsityletter.php>. School administrators interested in offering the Varsity Letter in Community Service should contact Amy Franklin, Youth United Coordinator at [youthunited@uwsc.org](mailto:youthunited@uwsc.org) or 425.374.5526.

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United Way is a community impact organization serving Snohomish County for more than 70 years. In addition to funding 102 programs through 39 agencies with a special focus on local health and human services, United Way of Snohomish County supports a number of initiatives focusing on early learning and education, financial stability for families, a youth program, North Sound 211 and an emerging initiative in survival English.

To find out more about United Way of Snohomish County, including how you can find help, how to volunteer and how United Way serves our community, please visit [uwsc.org](http://uwsc.org).