

News release



Everett Public Schools

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Gates Foundation adds \$50,000 to Rotary's \$200,000 commitment to AVID

Everett Rotary's July financial pledge to help students get to college earns support this month from Gates Foundation

"It is a pleasure to inform you that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has approved a grant in the amount of \$50,000 to Everett Rotary Youth Foundation to support the Next Generation Project that is underwriting 240 AVID students within Everett Public Schools."

That was the opening paragraph of the Oct. 25, 2012 letter that Everett Rotary members have been waiting for since submitting a Gates Foundation grant application last summer. And it certainly was good news to Superintendent Gary Cohn who greeted the announcement by pointing out, "... the significance of the Rotary's original commitment to students' college-going success and the impact that comes from so many people, including the Gates Foundation and the Everett Public Schools Foundation, working together to support our community's young people."

AVID, which stands for [Advancement Via Individual Determination](#), was launched in the district six years ago with a small program at North Middle School and Everett High. Over those six years, it has expanded to other schools in the district as a way of closing the achievement gap by preparing students for college readiness and success in a global society.

AVID's success caught the attention of Everett Rotary at the time the group was looking for a multi-year project that could incorporate its members' dedication to service, community and student support. In the Rotary grant proposal to the Gates Foundation, members committed time and money to the AVID students, vouching to provide job-shadowing for students, to serve as student mentors, to support college visits for AVID students, to sponsor events and to include students in Rotary events and meetings over at least the next four years.

Among the goals outlined in Everett Rotary's *Next Generation Project*, is helping high school AVID students pay for *College in the High School* (CiHS) course credit. CiHS courses, offered at all district high schools, enable a student to simultaneously earn high school and college credit.

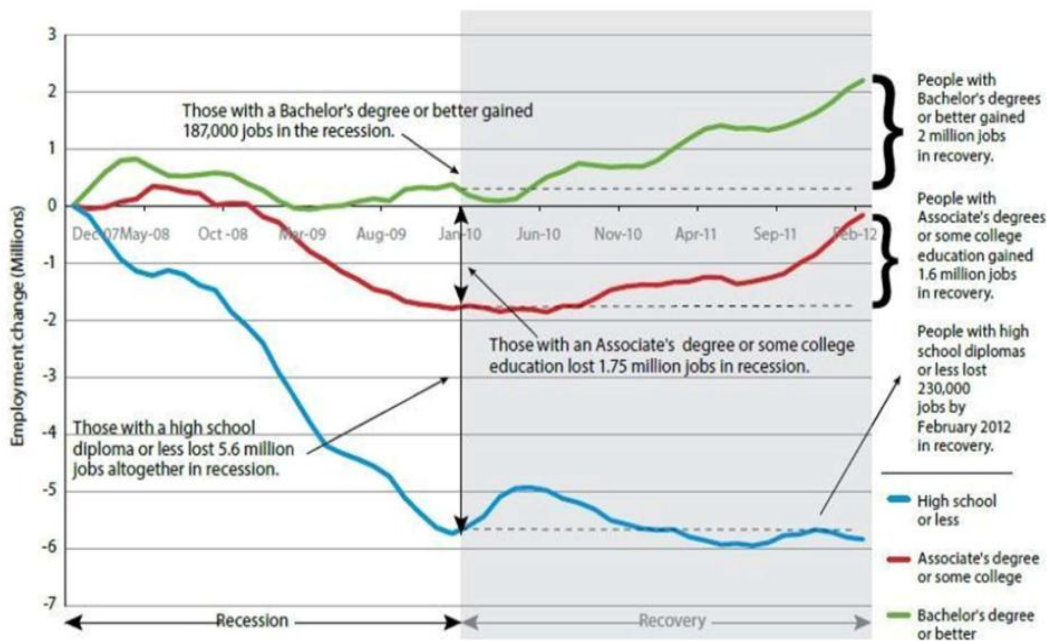
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In late October, even before the Gates award, Everett High School AVID student Nicholas Pena benefitted from the Rotary Next Generation Project and the Everett Public Schools Foundation's commitment to students. Pena was enrolled in Everett High School classes for which he could simultaneously earn high school and college credit. The only thing preventing his getting college credit while in high school was \$449 in tuition. Because Everett Rotary and the Foundation have agreed to partner to support AVID students, Pena's University of Washington credits are covered, and he has a jump start at college success even before he graduates from high school.

More information about opportunities to earn college credit in high school and the lost-cost options of doing so are outlined on the [district website](#). As Associate Superintendent Terry Edwards explains, "Paying for college classes in high school is a lot less expensive than paying for those same classes in college. These high school classes giving college credit save families money and save students time."

"With the Gates Foundation's additional \$50,000, we will be able to help even more students like Nicholas," explained Ted Wentz, YMCA Vice President of Operations and one of the Rotarians who lead the search to find a project that matched Rotary's mission and would have real-life impacts. His partner in that effort, Dr. Amy Norman, DDS, summed up her feelings about the Gates Foundation support with, "This is the kind of community project that will change so many lives! A rising tide raises all ships, right?"

Evidence of just how much a college degree matters was demonstrated by the Lumina Foundation of Indianapolis during a college preparation conference attended by Everett Public Schools representatives and about 100 other districts in the country. The conference brought together districts focused on getting each student college-ready. The chart below shows the national rate of job loss during the recent recession compared to the rate of job recovery as the economy recovers.



Those with high school diplomas or less bore the brunt of recession job losses. Job gains in the recovery are confined to those with education beyond HS.

This data from the Indianapolis Lumina Foundation incorporates current population survey data from 2007-12. Employment includes all workers aged 18+. The graph represents the total employment losses by education since the beginning of the recession in December 2007 to January 2010 and employment gains in recovery from January 2010 to February 2012.