

June 29, 2012

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation  
PO Box 23350  
Seattle, WA 98102

To Whom It May Concern:

Without question, I support the Rotary Club of Everett's *Next Generation Project*.

This project leverages community resources and talents in a strategic partnership on behalf of students. It aligns with our district's focus on the success of *each* student and supports our belief that *our students will lead and shape the future*.

As in other school districts, many students in Everett Public Schools have no family members who have ever attended college, do not necessarily have a "college-going" home culture or view college as a post-high school possibility.

The AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) program has successfully changed that cycle for many students. By setting high standards and giving quality support, AVID students take college-qualifying, rigorous high school classes and earn college credit in high school. They engage with community adult mentors who further inspire students to careers and community involvement and who help transform the mystery of college from "off the radar," to a dream, to a plan and a reality. Students get help securing financial support for college costs, nibbling away at another barrier.

The *Next Generation Project* builds upon the success of AVID and makes the program possible for more students. The *Next Generation Project*, as a signature project of the Rotary Club of Everett, broadens the number of adult mentors available for our students. That human capital of the *Next Generation Project* is further enriched with \$50,000 to expand the AVID program into more classrooms, train more teachers in the AVID instructional way and involve students and families in a life-changing process to aspire to higher education – and thus become productive, responsible members of our society, leading and shaping the future.

Everett Public Schools already has an impressive graduation rate and rate of students who attend post-secondary education, be that military, community college, apprenticeship, four-year institution or trade school. For the remaining 15-20 percent to graduate and continue their educations, we believe programs like AVID and the community support of the *Next Generation Project* are essential, and we welcome the possibility that the Gates Foundation will also be involved.

Sincerely,