



## BDCC Pipelines and Pathways Program Activity Update Summer 2024

Dear P3 Partners,

Thanks to your financial support, our educational partnerships, and the reputation of success we've built over the past 5 years, P3 programming has become an integral component of career education offerings at each of the Windham County high schools. P3's classroom curriculum, along with big events like the Reality Fair and Fearless Futures are increasingly sought after. Thankfully, due to increased capacity, our upcoming school year's offerings will be even more ambitious and include educator training, an apprenticeship summit, a small business competition, and so much more.

Thank you for investing in and supporting P3. Please enjoy this overview of what has happened this spring and summer, and what's taking shape for the fall.

### Spring and Summer 2024 Events:

#### Fearless Futures

This past May marked the second year of Fearless Futures, a career/college fair on steroids. We held two events – one at Twin Valley Middle/High School and one at Bellows Falls Union High School, where students from Leland & Gray also attended. Both events were, once again, a triumph with over sixty presenters at each location who represented the many facets of nontraditional and traditional pathways to postsecondary success.

Students met with presenters representing large and small businesses and learned about entrepreneurship and developing a business plan with the nonprofit organization, SCORE. Reps from 2- and 4-year colleges and certification programs brought awareness to a variety of *free* training programs designed to fill high-need positions throughout the state in the trades, healthcare, manufacturing, and other sectors. Students learned about opportunities with the Army National Guard as well as other national service organizations like Americorps and the Peace Corps. They explored how to structure a gap year with internships and other learning experiences to help hone their interests and take more intentional steps toward their goals without wasting money or time.

The whole point of Fearless is to ensure that students understand there's no "right" pathway to success. The key is to find one that resonates with them and connects to their passions and aptitudes. They don't have to have it all figured out. They don't need to be afraid of or daunted by the dreaded question, "what are your plans after high school?" They just need to

have a plan in place before they graduate that includes the next step toward reaching their goals. Those Fearless connections help pave the way for their plans.

At Fearless Futures events, students also have a chance to prepare for their futures with Job Readiness stations which provide a mini-snapshot of the larger P3 curriculum. For instance, students practice and deliver “elevator pitches,” create business cards, learn about building social capital, get professional headshots, or learn to assemble a job interview outfit on a budget. Fearless Futures is special because middle school students participate and get a taste of the career education experiences that await them in high school. It gives high school students who take more in-depth P3 courses during the school year a chance to put what they’ve learned into practice with real, live job and college recruiters! This experience always builds confidence in our students and often leads to job offers and mentorship connections.

The “secret” to these positive interactions between students and organizational leaders is in the preparation. Some career fairs feel haphazard to students, but not P3 events. Faculty are prepared in advance. Students receive multiple video and interactive training sessions designed by P3 instructors and implemented by their teachers during Advisory periods. Everyone who attends understands the expectations and is prepared for an event-day assignment that promotes authentic conversation between presenters and students. No one is allowed to collect candy and swag until they’ve made eye contact and spoken with an adult. BDCC staff and volunteers help students who need extra support to navigate the event, and hold students accountable for completing the learning activities.

Follow up is also important. Reflection activities during Advisory periods ensure students have time to ponder upon their own interactions with organizational leaders. Students can then receive support with job, training or college applications and/or schedule future networking opportunities such as informational interviews or job shadows.

Please check out this article from The Brattleboro Reformer about the events <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/fearless-futures-fairs-return-to-show-career-options-starting-in-twin-valley/>

In the coming school year, in addition to TV and BFUHS, Leland & Gray Middle High School will add a Fearless Futures event next spring with a special focus on college pathways!

## Youth Career Bootcamp

This summer, we were able to bring back the Youth Career Bootcamp pioneered a few years ago. The one-week intensive is designed to help rising juniors, seniors, and recent high school graduates, primarily from Brattleboro Union High School, prepare for their next steps, whether they want to go directly to work, college, or aren’t sure yet. We had 29 students who participated in a week of career learning, with a focus on participatory activities to learn job readiness skills including lessons on body language - eye contact, smiling, having good posture and exuding an appropriate energy level. Students explored how to answer common interview

questions as well as the tricky behavioral questions many recruiters utilize. Then they participated in small group peer practice to polish their answers.

Students met representatives from local employers GS Precision, GPI Construction, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance. Students prepared for Q&A with the employers by researching each organization and coming up with questions. The group also did a morning worksite tour of the Brattleboro Food Co-op. Students learned about the obvious front-facing positions available at these organizations like produce manager and cashier, but were surprised to learn about jobs behind-the-scenes such as accounting, graphic design, and human resources. Teaching young people about those hidden jobs, how to find about them, and how to become qualified, is a key element of P3 programs. Students spent one of the days at the Community College of Vermont and got the chance to take a college-level course in Ethics, prompting some great conversations about morality in life and in the workplace.

On the final day, students had the opportunity to start a professional resume, continue practicing their interview skills, and learn how to “decode” and fill out a job application. We hope to make Career Bootcamps a part of our regular summer programming!

Please check out the article in the Brattleboro Reformer (July 20-21, 2024) or this blog post to learn more about the Youth Career Bootcamp: <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/bdcc-youth-summer-bootcamp-launches-july-8th/>

## P3 in the Classroom

Senior Survival at Leland & Gray and Professional Communications at WRCC have reached “Lather, Rinse, Repeat Level,” in the best way possible. Both courses have been key in developing and refining the P3 curriculum through collaboration and massive contributions from Terry Davison Berger and Sarah Grasso (L&G) and Rachel Fox (WRCC). We are grateful to these teacher champions who ensure every student graduates with a plan.

As for new classroom developments, Twin Valley students are now lucky to have dynamo instructor Erin Lovett-Sherman at the helm of their P3 and Entrepreneurship courses. With support from the well-established “Wings” after school and summer community programs, the P3 students were able to attend a variety of field trips this past spring. They toured the Cotton Mill in Brattleboro and learned about entrepreneurship from four small business owners who have space there including W.R. Metalarts, Old Timey Piano Craft, Two One Ceramics, and True North Granola. They also came to visit the BDCC office to learn about what we do to support the regional economy through workforce development, small business lending and real estate operations (like the Cotton Mill and the Business Park on Putney Road which are owned and operated by BDCC).

Students had the opportunity to attend the College & Career Pathways Fair at Landmark College which was organized by VSAC and spend a day at Community College of Vermont. At CCV they took classes in Japanese painting as well as an Ethics class. In addition, students visited Brattleboro Memorial Hospital where they received a comprehensive tour which emphasized the many clinical and nonclinical entry level positions available along with the more

commonly thought of positions that require schooling. Tours wrapped up at Mount Snow where students were surprised to learn about great apprenticeship opportunities in the trades and entry level positions that start at \$20 per hour. They also learned that, after working for the mountain for a year, they could transfer and work at other Vail Resorts throughout the world. Students liked the idea of traveling while earning money, as well as knowing they could return to their job in the Deerfield Valley if living abroad wasn't for them.

## Partner of the Year

This spring, four Windham County educators received the Pipelines and Pathways (P3) Partner of the Year Award. The awards are presented to outstanding educators who support career education for all students, whether college or workforce bound. They are leaders, community builders and student champions at their respective schools. This year's winners are Sarah Grasso, High School Counselor at Leland & Gray; Heather Waryas, Work Based Learning Coordinator at Bellows Falls Union High School; Erin Lovett-Sherman, Business and Entrepreneurship Instructor at Twin Valley Middle/High School; and Linda Alvarez, Business and Entrepreneurship Instructor at the Windham Regional Career Center. They join Terry Davidson Berger, Multiple Pathways Coordinator at Leland & Gray, and Mark Gebo, Dean of Students at Bellows Falls Union High School. All serve on the P3 Advisory Board and collaborate on P3's annual Reality Fair and Fearless Futures as well as worksite tours, employer career panels, job shadows, and professionalism classes throughout each school year.

To celebrate, BDCC convened our educator partners for a wonderful event this spring which included informal sharing of best practices and inspiration across the four Supervisory Unions. This fall, we will reconvene the group to continue this community of practice, both for professional development and to generate advice and guidance for BDCC's P3 Team.

## What's Up Next?

We'll kick off the 2024-2025 school year on August 28 with the 2nd Annual Crash Course Carnival at L&G designed by the ever-creative Sarah Grasso. The event, designed to give Freshmen an interactive overview of classes, extracurriculars, and the inside scoop from upperclassmen, was so well-received that BUHS is adopting the model and will collaborate with P3 to host a similar event led by their guidance department and Holly Hammond from VSAC. Thanks to Sarah for sharing her resources!

Mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Reality Fair on October 3<sup>rd</sup> hosted, once again, at L&G. L&G students, along with TVHS and BFUHS students, will attend. (A separate Reality Fair for BUHS students will take place in January through a collaboration with WRCC Business and Entrepreneurship Instructor, Linda Alvarez. Stay tuned...)

BDCC's P3 will have an opportunity to reach high school faculty, beyond the career and guidance team, at October Professional Development Day at BUHS in partnership with VSAC.

We'll discuss the local economy as well as career opportunities connected to a variety of core content areas. The goal is to pilot teacher training at BUHS throughout the coming school year to promote the integration of more career education content in the traditional classroom. A successful pilot will be brought to all Windham County schools.

We will also be doing these (and probably other) events:

- 3 separate Fearless Futures at TVHS, BFUHS, and L&G
- 1 Apprenticeship Summit at BUHS (in collaboration with WRCC Guidance Team, VT Adult Learning and the Department of Labor)
- 1 County-Wide Small Business Competition (with WRCC Entrepreneurship and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance)
- More classes! More teacher training! More worksite tours!

## Special Thanks

Once again I want to say a special thank you to the P3 Windham team including Linda Alvarez, Rachel Fox, Nicole Awwad, and Anne Doran from WRCC; Rhonda Winegarner from WRCC and BUHS and Holly Hammond from VSAC and BUHS; Terry Davidson Berger and Sarah Grasso from L&G; Heather Waryas, Mark Gebo, and Andrea Carlson from BFUHS; and Erin Lovett-Sherman and Denise Piffard from TVHS. Without their passion for helping students reach their full potential and their boots on the ground tenacity, P3 would not exist. We could not implement this program without these talented and committed educational partners.

And, thank you. We couldn't do this work without you. We encourage you to participate in our fall Reality Fair, or visit a classroom and serve as a mock interviewer or career panelist. Whatever career sector you come from, we know you have wisdom to impart. We're so proud of the work that we do and the students will inspire you. Please reach out if you'd like to see P3 in action.

Sincerely,

Christy A. Betit, BDCC Pipelines and Pathways Program Manager

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## About Pipelines & Pathways

*BDCC's Pipelines and Pathways Program (P3) provides career education within the five southeastern Vermont public high schools. P3 helps students develop their personalized learning plans (PLP) through learning experiences to develop knowledge about career opportunities, and achieve their goals after graduation. Students develop soft skills, financial literacy, knowledge about economic sectors and skills in-demand through hands-on activities, work-based learning, and mentorships. Pipelines & Pathways is a BDCC Workforce Center of Excellence program based on SeVEDS strategies to increase the size and quality of the region's workforce. For more information please visit <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/engaging-with-high-school-students/>*

*P3 was launched as a five year pilot, thanks to historic investment from the Vermont Community Foundation and McClure Foundation, the Vermont Training Program, WCEDP Vermont Yankee closure funds, and municipal contributions to SeVEDS. In 2023 P3 reached a major program milestone by commitments from the private sector. M&T Bank, whose support was matched by local employers G.S. Precision and C&S Wholesale Grocers joins funding partners McClure Foundation, the George W. Mergens Foundation, the Windham Regional Career Center, the West River Education District, and the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union, in supporting P3 across southeastern Vermont.*



*P3 Partners of the Year*



*Twin Valley Students at Landmark College*



*Students at Fearless Futures Speaking with Representative from Lactalis*



*WRCC students at Building Bright Futures Job Fair*



*Christy Teaches Youth Career Bootcamp Students*



*Youth Bootcamp Students Interact with Tracy Treadwell and Peter Blackmer from BMH*



*Twin Valley Students Tour the Cotton Mill*



*Fearless Futures at BFUHS*