



YAKIMA

January 26, 2017

Contact: Susan Joseph Nielsen, M.S., APR

Regional Executive Director, College Success Foundation | Spokane and Yakima

509.991.9151, snielsen@collegesuccessfoundation.org

College Success Foundation-Yakima Receives Grant Funding from Yakima Valley Community Foundation and U.S. Bank Foundation for College and Career Exploration and College Ready Packs

(Yakima, WA): Right now, 100 College Success Foundation-Yakima Achievers Scholars (high school seniors) are preparing for college by completing all the usual tasks, including completing the FAFSA, meeting with mentors, writing personal statements and applying to at least three colleges or universities. CSF-Yakima Achievers Scholars from Davis and Eisenhower High Schools will visit college campuses this winter, spring and summer thanks to a grant from the Yakima Valley Community Foundation and U.S. Bank Foundation – Yakima Region.

Through a major grant and local donor support, CSF-Yakima Achievers Schools will evaluate colleges and universities first-hand with added perspective and tools. CSF Achievers Scholars will visit college campuses including Western Washington University, University of Washington, Eastern Washington University, Washington State University and other public and private institutions. Half of a \$10,000 **Yakima Valley Community Foundation** grant will fund college campus visits, while \$5,000 will fund College Ready Packs for the 100 CSF Achievers Scholars from Davis and Eisenhower High School. The College Ready Packs will be distributed at a year-end celebration and recognition event to be held in the spring. College Ready Packs are similar to a college care package filled with essential items every college freshman needs while living on campus.

The **U.S. Bank Foundation** (Yakima region) awarded CSF-Yakima a \$2,500 grant this fall to fund college and career exploration activities, which includes college campus visits. This is the second year that U.S. Bank's Yakima region has supported college and career exploration activities for CSF-Yakima Achievers Scholars.

Visiting a college campus helps students find the right college and the right fit for them. They evaluate factors such as size, location, public, private, campus life, on campus supports and overall cost. "College campus visits are essential in selecting the right college and the right fit for each student," said CSF-Yakima Program Manager Shannon Demant. "Students need to see the campus, tour dorms and lecture halls, meet with admissions and financial aid representatives and envision themselves being a student on that campus. It makes the possibility of attending that college tangible and real."

The College Success Foundation provides a unique integrated system of supports and scholarships to inspire underserved, low-income students to finish high school, graduate from college and succeed in

life. The CSF model is predicated on a continuum of student supports beginning in middle school, continuing through high school and college and into their post-college lives. In 2015-16, CSF-Yakima provided scholarships and/or direct service to more than 1,000 students in the Yakima School District's middle and high schools. Ninety percent (90%) of CSF-Yakima Achievers Scholars are first-generation college students, meaning they are the first in their family to attend college.

In partnership with the Yakima School District, CSF College Preparatory Advisors provide students with the academic, financial, social and emotional resources they need to achieve success on their path to and through college. CSF College and Career Coaches engage with students in three Yakima middle schools (Franklin, Lewis & Clark and Washington), to begin building a college going mindset before students enter high school.

The **College Ready Packs**, funded by a portion of the Yakima Valley Community Foundation grant, will be filled with basic necessities every college freshman needs. The theme for the packs will determine which items are included. For instance, a dorm room essentials pack might include a book crate, desk lamp, extra-long twin sheet set, multi-plug electrical strip, college desk supplies and a battery operated clock.

"Many (90%) of our Achievers Scholars are the first in their family to attend college. Providing each student with basic items they will need during their first semester of college is part of setting them up for success," said CSF Regional Executive Director Susan Joseph Nielsen. "The College Ready Pack project fills a portion of the emotional and social readiness to attend college."

CSF offers proactive academic advising, college planning information, college readiness support, summer programming, college campus visits, financial aid and scholarship search assistance, and high school-to-college transition support. CSF's school-based College Preparatory Advisors work to instill an attitude of possibility and persistence to college completion. As college champions for their students, they do everything in their power to help their students succeed.

For information about the College Success Foundation - Yakima, visit www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/yakima.

###

About the Yakima Valley Community Foundation:

Yakima Valley Community Foundation has awarded grants in the Yakima Valley since 2004. The Yakima Valley Community Foundation's mission is to connect people, resources and ideas for thriving people and vibrant places. For more information please visit the Foundation's website at www.yakimavalleycf.org.

About the College Success Foundation:

The College Success Foundation provides a unique integrated system of supports and scholarships to inspire underserved, low-income students to finish high school, graduate from college and succeed in life. Since 2000, CSF has awarded more than \$225 million in scholarships to students nationally. More than 8,000 students have graduated from college with scholarship support from CSF. For more information about the College Success Foundation, please visit www.collegesuccessfoundation.org.

CSF - Yakima began providing the integrated system of supports and programs for middle and high school students within Yakima School District in 2000. Students apply to the program at the beginning of

their junior year and up to 50 students per high school are accepted into the program each year. Through a partnership with the Yakima School District, CSF-Yakima provides direct college and career exploration services to more than 1,000 middle and high school students annually. For more information about CSF-Yakima, visit www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/Yakima.