# 2016 Dream Award Recipients

Latinos Embracing Education (L.E.E) was started in 2014 by four students (Deysi Martinez, Joann Elvin, Itzchel Bazan, and Elsa Aguilar). The goal of this organization was to form an educational organization, rather than a social club. An observation was made that starting freshman year there are a good amount of Latinos on campus but as they take more advanced (upper level) classes there is a decline in the Latino population. The organization was formed to provide support to the Latinos on campus and the community through resources, social and emotional support in order to achieve recruitment and retention of Latinos in higher education. Since L.E.E. is very passionate about the Latino population they wanted to bring their activist side and help the undocumented population as well.

Now, L.E.E involves more than a dozen people, including officers and members who have been consistent since spring quarter 2015. There are other members that assist to events when they have time.

Inspired to take action upon learning of the experiences of Mexican and Central American migrants detained locally, L.E.E. helped to facilitate the November 2015 panel on Immigration in the Age of Mass Incarceration and participated in the March to Stop Deportations to bring awareness to immigration policy and detention conditions during the National Week of Action. They have also established a relationship with nearby Selma

R. Carson Home, a detention facility for undocumented youth awaiting deportation hearings. Not only have they facilitated bringing these youth to UWT for special events, but they have conducted on-site workshops for the youth and organized donation of arts and crafts supplies, hygiene items, and winter clothing for the detained teens.

L.E.E. also organized, in collaboration with SAB and SAFC, fun-filled and informative events for Día de los Muertos like sugar-skull decoration, traditional face-painting, and Dr. Ramírez's lecture on the origins, characteristics, and elements of the celebration.

As a group, L.E.E. is dedicated to educating high school and community college students about opportunities for higher education, and has offered bilingual assistance at workshops for financial aid, the Beyond HB 1079 Conference, and more.

Accomplishing so much as an organization in the brief time it has existed is a tremendous feat, particularly given the students' dedication to their studies, employment, and other responsibilities.
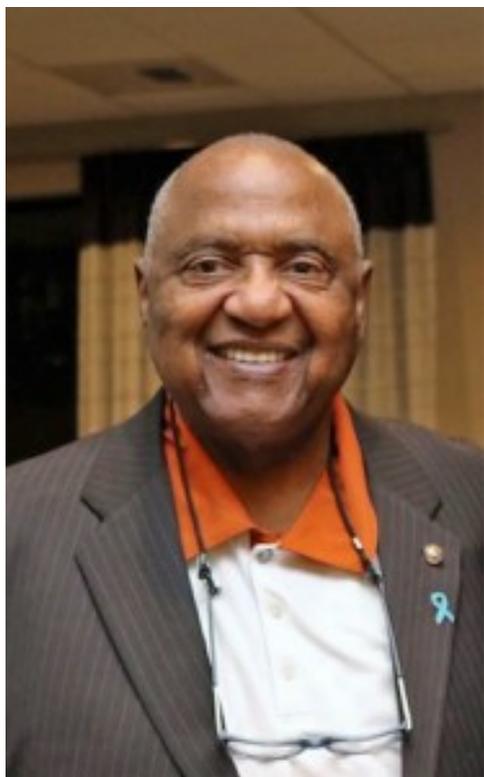
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## 2016 Student Dream Award - Chuck Messinger



Chuck is currently a senior at UWT. He is majoring in psychology. He is also a member of Global Honors and Co-Chair of the Global Honors Student Leadership Council at the University of Washington Tacoma. Outside of UWT, he holds an Officer position at Doc

Maynard Historical Preservation Society. Chuck also arranges volunteer opportunities for the Global Honors cohort.

These opportunities have included preparing and serving meals at Tacoma Rescue Mission Adams Street Shelter, volunteering at Mary Bridge's Festival of Trees, cleaning up the beach at Point Defiance, and volunteering during the annual Bonfire and Bogeyman event at Ft. Nisqually in Point Defiance. Chuck provides students with opportunities to attend special guest lecture events that he knows about in the community, including study abroad presentations at Annie Wright private school. Chuck is also currently performing researching and making preparations to perform additional research in Austria with Professor Jennifer Harris during the summer. Chuck returned to school to represent under represented demographics and fight for true equality.

He studied abroad this past summer which helped provide additional information and real-life experience for his research. Chuck also provides guidance and advice for juniors and sophomores who are in the Global Honors program and helps connects current students with graduated students so that the younger students can get additional advice regarding Global Honors and applying for the Bamford Fellowship.

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## 2016 Legacy Dream Award - Willie Stewart



Willie is a 1957 Graduate of Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas and a 1969 Graduate of Pacific Lutheran University.  He retired as a Colonel from the United States Army Reserves. After serving in the military, Willie stayed in the Army Reserves and began his teaching career as a math and science instructor at Gault Middle School. In 1970, Willie was appointed Tacoma's first African-American principal at Lincoln High School, which made newspaper headlines at the time.

Since that time, Mr. Stewart's volunteerism extends beyond educational settings. Willie has spearheaded community efforts to educate, support and advocate for others impacted by prostate cancer by facilitating a support group. He helps coordinate a Relay for Life team each year, and participates in the American Diabetes

Walk. A scholarship has been established in his name that is administered by the United Way of Pierce County known as the Willie Stewart Community Scholarship.

Willie is active with the Kiwanis Club of Tacoma and The Boys and Girls Clubs since 1972. He is the Founding Member of Alpha Phi Alpha, serves on the board of Palmers Scholars, Foundation for Tacoma Students, Goodwill Foundation, Tacoma South Sound Sports Commission, Buffalo Soldiers Museum, Tacoma Athletic Commission and Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound where he has served for over 40 years.  He is active with First Baptist and Urban Grace Church since 1963 and is program chair for the Downtown Kiwanis Club. He is a member of the First Tacoma Human Rights Commission and a former member and president of the Tacoma School Board.

Willie is married to Faye Stewart and has one son (Willie Jr.) and one daughter (Collette Stewart).  Willie is also a prostate cancer survivor since 1991.

Most importantly to this award, Mr. Stewart has been a very strong financial supporter and advocate for students in Tacoma Public Schools seeking to attend UW Tacoma.

## 2016 Legacy Dream Award - Jaleesa Trapp

Jaleesa Trapp grew up in Tacoma, WA. At an early age, her parents taught her the importance of learning her history, having integrity, and standing up for what she believes in. When she was in the 7th grade she joined the newly opened Intel Computer Clubhouse. The director at the time, Luversa Sullivan, inspired Jaleesa to learn how to use technology as a tool to tell her own story, and taught her the importance of being a global citizen.

In the 8th grade, she wrote her first computer program, an interactive CD-ROM titled "What if There Were No Black People?" based on a play she had seen. Conducting research about Black inventors while learning how to write code from a Black woman was an empowering experience for Jaleesa. After that project she decided she would use technology as a tool of empowerment. Being a part of the Computer Clubhouse afforded Jaleesa many opportunities including two high school internships at Microsoft, several scholarships, and participation in two international teen summits.

After high school Jaleesa went to the University of Washington and received her Bachelor of Science in Human Centered Design and Engineering, with a concentration in Human-Computer Interactions. Upon graduating, Jaleesa decided to move back to Tacoma to be

an AmeriCorps member at Peace Community Center, where she was an academic coach and tutor.

Currently, Jaleesa is the director at the Computer Clubhouse, as well as a computer science teacher at the Science and Math Institute. Jaleesa is dedicated to helping Black youth and other underrepresented minorities gain an interest in and realize the difference they can make in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. At the Computer Clubhouse she re-launched Girls' Day, which is a program geared towards engaging girls ages 8-18 in STEM activities.

Jaleesa is dedicated to the Tacoma community, and is involved in many community organizations and projects. She serves on the Board of Directors at Peace Community Center, is on the redesign team for the Hilltop Urban Garden that is addressing food sovereignty, is on the team to develop and build the Black Lives Memorial Garden in Tacoma, and works with the Tacoma Action Collective to address systemic issues in the community through direct action. With the Tacoma Action Collective, Jaleesa has brought attention to issues such as police brutality/racial profiling, the way in which the media portrays Black people, the lack of Black representation in art museums, and the erasure of Black people in the narrative around the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Although Tacoma Action Collective is not an official Black Lives Matter chapter, their missions are similar, and they are in alignment with the 12 guiding principles.

Jaleesa plans to continue to work in the Tacoma community for as long as she can. Although she plans on going away to get her PhD, she knows that she will always return home.

## 2016 Legacy Dream Award - Ben Warner

By combining his love of skating and love for the City of Tacoma, UW Tacoma alumnus Ben Warner, M.A. exemplifies the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. through his work to increase the cultural inclusion of Tacoma's skateboarding youth.

Using the medium of skateboarding—of play—Warner teaches resilience, discipline, athleticism, creativity, and a unique understanding of city space, with an emphasis on active nonviolence.

Earning his bachelor of arts in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences ('09) and his masters in Interdisciplinary Arts ('11) at UW Tacoma, Warner studied nonprofit management and

conflict between diverse sub-cultures and the dominant culture in an urban environment.

In 2009, Warner skated across America on his longboard—increasing national awareness of skating through demonstrations—while raising $20,000 for the Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound.

He returned to create the now annual Go Skate Tacoma Festival in downtown's Tollefson Plaza in 2010, an event which allows more experienced skaters to serve as mentors, instilling a sense of responsibility and community.

Thanks to Warner's efforts, the Tacoma City Council decriminalized skateboarding in downtown Tacoma in 2011, recognizing skateboarding as an active mode of transportation. Go Skate Tacoma was even nominated for the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber's 2014 Public Places award, recognizing the best activation of a public park, open space, or right-of-way.

Drawing on his education and experience to offer Tacoma youth a safe space and education within a culture of inclusion, Warner created Alchemy Skateboarding in 2013, which became a

501(c)3 registered charity in 2014. Alchemy Skateboarding includes a skate school, an indoor skate park, the Go Skate Tacoma event and a leadership development program.

"Civic engagement is a big part of our leadership program," Warner said in a recent interview. "The more people we can get to roll on a board, the more people we can get to cross cultural barriers."

Warner explains how these kids are able to take a space that is essentially useless to other people in the city and create something living within that same space. He explains that when a skater can do that, they can become the kind of leader that will change the future.

Warner's program teaches active nonviolence. He explains how today's youth needs to learn to infiltrate systems from inside to make necessary changes. "It's about finding ways to win without forcing somebody to lose."

"We are a tribalistic society—when people are forced to the outside it is a punishment on the same level even as death. Being forced to the outside—ostracized, excommunicated even—is psychologically damaging, an attack on our dignity—an act of violence."

"We want kids to know that they have great value and great potential for cultivating the City of Tacoma scene," Warner says.

Warner wants to expand Alchemy's reach to Tacoma's adults. He sees play as a means to bring cultures—whether age-based or not—together. "When you play you risk making yourself vulnerable. When you can play together you can adapt together, bringing communities together."