



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025



**Connections** is a collaboration between Roosevelt Alumni for Racial Equality (RARE) and the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (ULMS) to tackle the urgent challenge of belonging at two Seattle Public Schools: Roosevelt and Garfield.



# The Need for Connection

Feeling like you belong—being accepted and valued by others at school—is a fundamental human need that must be in place for students to do well. Research shows that when students feel a strong sense of belonging, they’re more likely to attend school regularly, feel better mentally, and succeed in class. After the disruptions of COVID-19, that sense of connection has become even more important, especially for students from marginalized backgrounds.

## MISSION

Connections empowers diverse high-school students to build a culture of belonging through peer-led activities, leadership training, and community collaboration.

## CONNECTIONS IN A NUTSHELL

**Purpose** – Build a culture of belonging in school through student-led activities that earn service-learning credit.

**Who** – One cohort of 14 “Connections Crew” students per semester at each school (Garfield & Roosevelt High Schools).

**Year-Round Impact** – Staggered cohorts ensure student-led events every term, plus summer/fall projects for spring starters.

### STUDENT VOICE:

“**I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I BELONG, IT MAKES ME FEEL COMFORTABLE.**”

- CONNECTIONS CREW MEMBER

### LEARN

#### Semester 1

Interactive workshops & field trips on belonging, leadership, allyship, antiracism.

### DO

#### Semester 2

Students plan and run inclusive activities for their peers while completing the service-learning hours required for credit.



# Who Is Behind Connections?



**RARE** *Roosevelt Alumni  
for Racial Equity*

**Founded 2020 by multi-ethnic  
Roosevelt HS alumni**

Scholarships • Student films •  
Anti-racism projects



**Urban League of  
Metropolitan Seattle**

**Nearly a century of civil-rights  
leadership in Seattle**

Youth programs • Community networks  
Professional staffing

## WHY THE PARTNERSHIP WORKS

Grass-roots alumni passion + deep community infrastructure = the resources and credibility students need to build a culture of belonging from the ground up.

## STAFFING OVERVIEW

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

#### Role & Purpose

- Advance Connections' vision through student-centered, experiential learning
- Contribute as a core member of the ULMS Education team

#### Core Responsibilities

- Design and facilitate workshops and activities
- Cultivate community partnerships
- Recruit, lead, and support 14-student Crew cohorts
- Implement feedback and evaluation systems
- Coordinate educators, volunteers, and community partners.
- Manage program budgets and learning outcomes

### STUDENT VOICE:

“**THANK YOU SO MUCH, MS. AMBER ... BECAUSE YOU SUPPORT ME AND GIVE ME THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE.**”

**CONNECTIONS CREW MEMBER**



### MEET THE COORDINATOR

#### Amber Inwood

in role since April 2024

- M.S. Science Education & Free-Choice Learning
- Certified Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor
- Built youth programs at Hawai'i's Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum and NPS Fort Monroe National Monument
- Managed King County's STEM Paths Innovation (SPIN) Network Fellows Program
- Earned overwhelmingly positive first-year feedback from students and educators

# Impact Highlights

## INDEPENDENT EVALUATION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



### TIMELINE

**SUMMER 2024** – UW College of Education researchers observed sessions, reviewed materials, and surveyed every participant.

**SPRING 2025** – Findings published in an independent report.

### TOP TAKE-AWAYS

**FRIENDSHIP & COMMUNITY** — Every student reported making new friends.

**BELONGING** — Most said they could be their authentic selves and “belonged here.”

**INSTRUCTOR IMPACT** — Nearly all praised facilitators for an inclusive, positive vibe.

**ENGAGING LEARNING** — Field trips and community interviews were standout moments.

**RECOMMENDATION RATE** — Almost everyone would tell a friend to join.

## UW’S ACTION STEPS FOR US

Define “belonging” in student-friendly terms

Set measurable goals for leadership growth and community impact

Enrich the curriculum with culturally sustaining content

### STUDENT VOICE:

“GOOD, I FELT LIKE I BELONGED.”

CONNECTIONS CREW MEMBER



## EXIT-TICKET SNAPSHOT

**97%** said they felt included

**93%** formed stronger peer relationships

**89%** felt engaged by facilitators

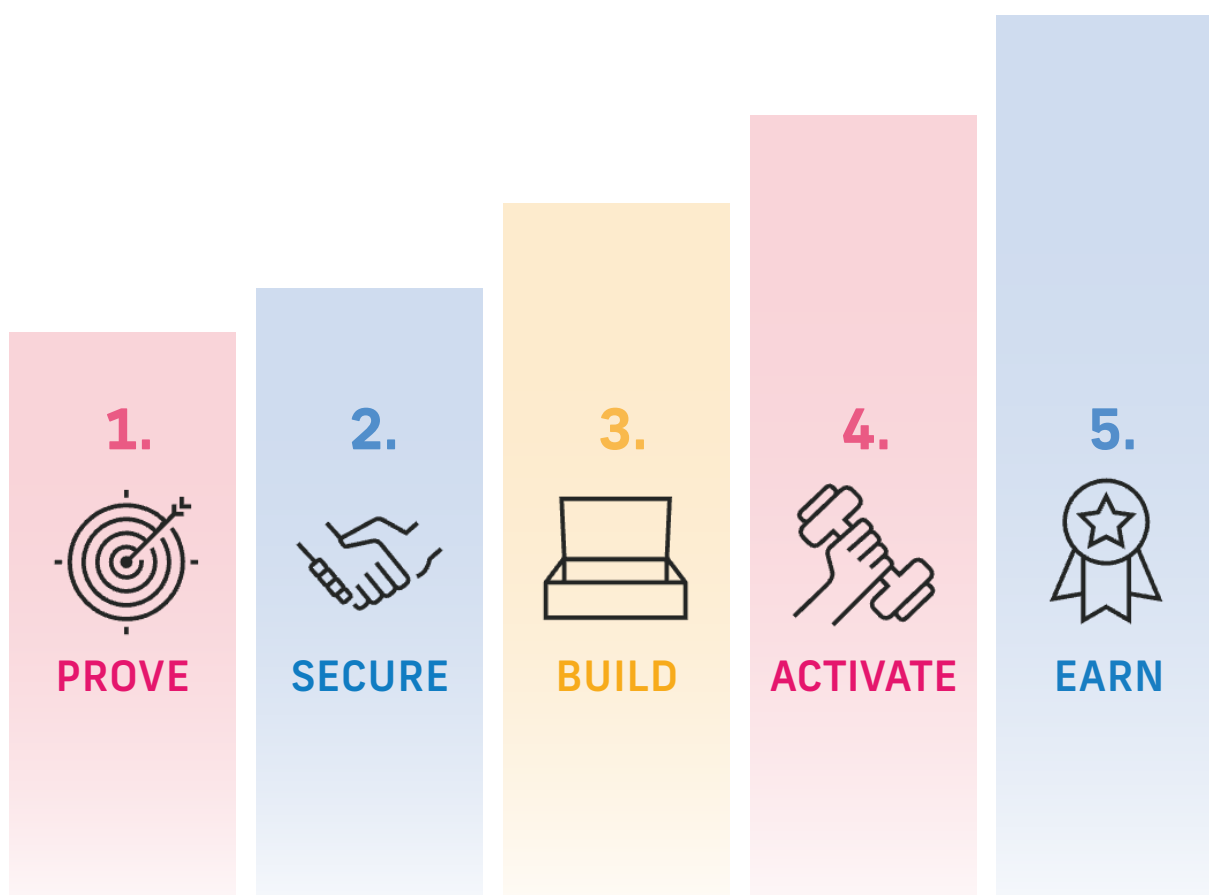
**84%** overcame a personal challenge

Oct 2024 – Apr 2025, n = 308

These in-house results echo the UW findings—confirming that Connections consistently builds friendship, belonging, and meaningful engagement.

# 2025-26 Objectives

- 1. PROVE IMPACT ON BELONGING** – Document that > 50 % of participants—especially marginalized students—report a stronger sense of belonging by year-end through pre-/post-program surveys.
- 2. SECURE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS** – Develop and successfully demonstrate a process to engage recurring partners (businesses, nonprofits, individuals) that contribute funding or in-kind resources to support student-run activities.
- 3. BUILD A REPLICABLE PROGRAM TOOLKIT** – Publish a turnkey curriculum, facilitator guide, and open-source planning dashboard, ready to support two additional high schools in 2026-27.
- 4. ACTIVATE ADULT ALLIES** – Recruit and qualify 40 adult volunteers so every activity maintains at least a 3:1 student-to-adult support ratio.
- 5. EARN EXTERNAL VALIDATION & RESEARCH COLLABORATION** – Continue working with the UW College of Education or another qualified institution to complete and publish an independent evaluation of program outcomes.



# SUMMER 2025

## DATES & LOCATION

**July 8 – August 15, 2025 (six weeks)**

Hosted at Garfield High School

## WHO IS INVOLVED

14 students — half Garfield, half Roosevelt

Guided by 7 returning “Crew 2” leaders who co-plan sessions and mentor peers

## WEEKLY RHYTHM

**TUESDAYS:** Project planning & cohort check-ins

**WEDNESDAYS:** Skill-building workshops (leadership, allyship, facilitation)

**THURSDAYS:** Field experiences that bring learning to life

- including YES Farm, MoPOP, Museum of Flight, Wing Luke Museum, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial

**SPECIAL FRIDAYS (2):** Mid-program event + Graduation on August 15

## GET INVOLVED

We welcome 1–2 adult chaperones per field trip and a cheering section at graduation.

Let us know if you can join a Thursday excursion or celebrate with us on August 15!

“**EVERY SPS  
SCHOOL WOULD  
LIKE TO HAVE A  
CONNECTIONS  
PROGRAM**”

DR. BEATRICE BUTLER, EDUCATOR  
AND RACIAL-EQUITY COACH FOR  
22 SEATTLE SCHOOLS





# Community & Volunteer Involvement

We are deeply grateful to an extraordinary team of **more than 20 volunteers**—seasoned professionals with decades of experience and an unwavering commitment to racial equity, youth empowerment, and civic engagement. Their expertise and passion power Connections and ensure we can scale responsibly. Their contributions span:

- Evaluation & Analysis
- Field Support & Chaperoning
- Grant Prospecting & Writing
- Curriculum Development
- Graphic Design & Storytelling
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Technology Development
- Program & Financial Management
- Legal & Community Relations

If you're interested in joining us, reach out at [connections4equity@gmail.com](mailto:connections4equity@gmail.com)

## STUDENT VOICE:

“**OVERCOMING  
FEAR AND  
JUST TALKING  
TO PEOPLE  
BOOSTS MY  
CONFIDENCE.**”

CONNECTIONS  
CREW MEMBER



## Provider & Sponsor Engagement

### WHY PARTNERS MATTER

**FUNDING STABILITY** — Shift from one-off grants to recurring sponsorship keeps programs running year-round.

**RICHER EXPERIENCES** — Community-based activity providers (cultural, recreation, and community-service organizations) deliver the hands-on sessions students love.

### HOW WE COLLABORATE

**SPONSORS UNDERWRITE ESSENTIALS:** transportation, materials, and fair stipends for guest facilitators.

**ACTIVITY PROVIDERS**—design inclusive, youth-centered workshops, outings, and service projects.

We commit to clear communication, co-branding, and feedback loops that strengthen every cycle.

### JOIN US

Whether you can fund a semester or lead a single workshop, your partnership expands Connections to more students, in more schools, every year.

Reach out to explore the best fit for your organization or personal philanthropy.

# Digital Platform

## WHY WE NEED IT

Two schools today, more on the horizon—manual spreadsheets can't keep up.

Modern cloud tools, mobile-first design, and AI-assisted development now make an enterprise-grade (and privacy-minded) system realistic for a nonprofit.

Seasoned tech volunteers are ready to lead the build.

## WHAT WE ARE BUILDING

A single web + mobile app that adapts to each user's role—student, educator, provider, sponsor, volunteer, admin.

Secure, role-based dashboards ensure everyone sees only what they need while protecting student data.

## KEY FUNCTIONS

**STUDENTS** - plan activities, log reflections, track leadership goals.

**EDUCATORS** - monitor engagement & learning evidence in real time.

**ACTIVITY PROVIDERS** - manage logistics, dates, and resource needs.

**SPONSORS** - view impact reports and stay connected to events they fund.

**PROGRAM LEADS** - oversee budgets, contracts, scheduling, and insights—all in one place.

## IMPACT

This unified, security-aware platform lets Connections scale responsibly—expanding to new schools without sacrificing the privacy, insight, or coordination that power the program's success.

## Hear It From Our Students

**REAL VOICES:** Crew members share how Connections boosted belonging, leadership, and friendships.

**QUICK GLIMPSE:** Workshop clips and field-trip moments—all in three minutes.

**AUTHENTIC ENDORSEMENT:** Students explain why they would recommend Connections to a friend.

## WATCH NOW:



Or visit:

[https://youtu.be/\\_oKqAHVMz2c](https://youtu.be/_oKqAHVMz2c)

REACH OUT TO [connections4equity@gmail.com](mailto:connections4equity@gmail.com)  
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<https://urbanleague.org/connections-program/>

