

# BC3 programs get boost from NexTier Bank's \$20K gift

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(Butler, PA) NexTier Bank's \$20,000 gift to the Butler County Community College Education Foundation will benefit BC3 programs that enable high school students to earn transferable college credits and pupils as young as fifth-graders to learn about economic concepts.

NexTier Bank's donation, through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, will assist BC3's High School Programming, such as its College Within the High School opportunities, and a Stock Market Game administered by the BC3 Center for Economic Education.

NexTier Bank has contributed to the BC3 programs through Pennsylvania EITC gifts each year since 2013, said Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation. NexTier Bank supported BC3's capital campaign in 1999, when it was known as Citizens National Bank, and the college's capital campaign in 2013, Purcell added. Citizens National Bank also served as the title sponsor of the first BC3 Education Foundation golf outing in 1996.

"They've supported just every major initiative that we have had," Purcell said. "NexTier is definitely a community bank. Because they are so community-oriented, they know how community-oriented we are. And I think that has made a difference and kept their support."

NexTier Bank, said BC3 President Dr. Nick Neupauer, is "very community-minded and certainly understands our role not only in Butler, but also in being a regional institution. One of the longest-running partnerships that we have had with a community bank is with NexTier. This is just the latest in a long line of gifts from NexTier, and we are certainly appreciative."

As a community bank, NexTier's relationship with BC3 is "something that we highly value," said Maria Amoroso, NexTier Bank's senior vice president and chief marketing officer. "We're proud to support an organization that brings in local students, and students from outside the area, and helps them to prepare for the next phase of their life."

## BC3 program drew 465-plus in past 2 semesters

More than 465 students from seven western Pennsylvania counties prepared for the next phase of their life by enrolling in BC3's College Within the High School program in each of the fall and spring semesters of the 2019-2020 academic year, according to Erin Cioffi, BC3's assistant director of High School Programming.

BC3's High School Programming is specifically designed for college-bound sophomores through seniors who have demonstrated a strong academic performance by the end of their freshman year. Credits earned through BC3's High School Partnerships, College Within the High School, Pathways and College Now programs transfer to public, private and online colleges and universities.

High School Partnerships are held at sites where students can gain experience in areas such as aviation and entrepreneurship and in collaboration with businesses, chambers of commerce and other institutions of higher education.

College Within the High School, held in high schools or learning centers, features specific courses.

Pathways, held on BC3's main campus or online, offers courses in select career programs, such as business or health care.

College Now, held at BC3 locations or through remote instruction, enables students to pick from a wide variety of courses.

"It's important for students to enter college with several credits and having taken some of the basic courses they need to continue their education," Amoruso said. "That's a great opportunity."

## 1,600 played BC3's Stock Market Games

More than 1,600 students from 10 western Pennsylvania counties participated BC3's Stock Market Games in the 2019-2020 academic year, according to David Huseman, director of BC3's Center for Economic Education and a BC3 professor of humanities and social sciences.

Pupils playing the Stock Market Game learn about financial literacy by receiving a hypothetical \$100,000, making buy-and-trade decisions and tracking how those decisions would have played out in the markets had they been real.

"They're being educated," Amoruso said. "They're learning how to take care of themselves. This is not something that is ordinarily taught in high schools or elementary schools. Having the opportunity to learn and how to become more financially independent is extremely important."

Pennsylvania's EITC program, through the state Department of Community and Economic Development, provides tax credits to eligible businesses that contribute financially to a scholarship organization, to an educational improvement organization or to a pre-kindergarten scholarship organization.