



SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

BTE Success Stories

BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

Launched in 1992, Bridge to Employment (BTE) is a Johnson & Johnson initiative that prepares youth for brighter futures. For more information about BTE, visit www.bridge2employment.org

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Why BTE?

Herbert Hoover High School in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego serves a vibrantly diverse student population that is confronted by myriad challenges. Fewer than 50 percent of adults in City Heights have a high school education, and 35 percent live in poverty. All of Hoover High's more than 2,000 students are socio-economically disadvantaged, and one-third are English learners. According to the Center for Healthier Communities at Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego, Hoover High's students are ripe with promise but, "These students need to see hope for a bright future and need to be prepared to graduate high school and pursue post-secondary training and education that will lead them to rewarding careers and livable wages."

BTE is designed to do exactly that. Working together, Johnson & Johnson, secondary and postsecondary schools, and community organizations develop programs that feature academic enrichment, career readiness and exploration activities, and higher education preparation. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in higher education and pursuing careers in STEM²D (science, technology, engineering, math, manufacturing, and design) or health care.

Hoover High had a history of working with Rady Children's Hospital on community initiatives and in 2014, with the sponsorship of Johnson & Johnson local operating company Janssen, they seized the opportunity to join the BTE family. Joined by San Diego Unified School District and local colleges and universities, the partners designed a program that would "inspire the students, grow their hope and confidence, and facilitate their success."

BTE: A Catalyst for College and Career Aspirations

BTE-San Diego first reached out to students who had been at risk of not advancing from 8th to 9th grade and looked like they might be in danger of dropping out. After further recruitment efforts in 9th grade English and ESL (English as a second language) classes and after-school programs, BTE-San Diego accepted applications from 53 interested Hoover students. Only one of these students spoke English as a primary language at home; most students spoke Spanish, while some spoke Amharic, Burmese, Chinese, Korean, Marshallese, Swahili, and Vietnamese.

The program kicked off in the fall of 2015 with 46 incoming 10th graders. Looking to capitalize on their unique mix of expertise and

SITE PROFILE

Location

San Diego, California, USA

Grant Period

2014–2018

Sponsor

Janssen

Coordinator

Center for Healthier
Communities at Rady
Children's Hospital-San
Diego

Community Partners

Herbert Hoover High School
Southern California
Biotechnology Center
University of California, San
Diego (UCSD)

Volunteers

30

Students Directly Served

46

Completion Rate

74%

resources, BTE-San Diego partners designed a set of activities that would expose Hoover High students to the wider network of STEM²D and health care careers in San Diego.

To improve students' *academic achievement*, BTE-San Diego offered daily tutoring sessions in Hoover's library with local college students. Test prep helped BTE students pass the series of crucial exams for graduating high school and entering higher education, including the California High School Exit Exam and the ACT and SAT exams. During summer science camps at the Southern California Biotechnology Center, students learned new STEM²D skills and kept up with their studies even while out of school.

To help students *explore careers and develop professional skills*, Janssen experts hosted company tours, planned hands-on biology and chemistry experiments, and gave career talks. "I loved how people who were invited to our workshops explained their educational journey," reflected one BTE-San Diego student, "They really transmitted the passion they had for learning and gaining the knowledge that empowers." Janssen volunteers agreed about the value of career talks, explaining how exposing students to a variety of careers helps to "show the students what's possible."

To provide more in-depth career exploration, UCSD hosted BTE students for "Doc-for-a-Day," and Rady Children's Hospital partnered with UCSD to offer a summer medical academy. Both gave students hands-on opportunities to learn about careers in the medical field.

To support students' *transition to higher education*, BTE-San Diego gave students regular opportunities to build and revisit their own individualized college and career plans. In the early years of BTE-San Diego, the program focused on exposing students to higher education. Field trips to local colleges and universities—places like University of California, Irvine, San Diego State University, and University of San Diego—helped students learn about local campuses and the college experience. Some of these visits featured sessions with current college students from diverse backgrounds describing their own journeys into college. According to Janssen volunteers, these sessions were the "best thing" for BTE-San Diego students, many of whom would be first-generation college students.

In later years, BTE-San Diego offered students timely and practical support with college applications and decisions, from college advising and application assistance to sessions on resume building, writing personal statements, and applying for scholarships. The program walked students through financial aid applications line by line, including the federal FAFSA and, crucially for Hoover's student

*"It is so inspiring
how BTE is a
worldwide
program that so
many intellectual
students are part
of."*

-A BTE-San Diego student

population, the California Dream Act Application that allows students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents to apply for financial aid.

Each year, BTE-San Diego students carried out several *community service* projects, such as canyon clean ups and volunteering at a home for the elderly. According to one Janssen volunteer, the program emphasized service as a way to help students, “improve their lives and community beyond just education.”

Impact of BTE

Of the 46 students who started BTE in 10th grade, 34 completed the program in 12th grade. BTE-San Diego students started the program with high grades and maintained those high grades throughout their high school careers. Still, 100 percent of these students reported that BTE motivated them to work even harder. Reflecting on their time in BTE, one student recalled how, “I’ve grown to be more focused and consistent in my studies and I’ve also become... proud of my work. I am now more confident, and a stronger individual.”

Over 3 years in BTE, the program’s partners saw their students become more aware of college and career opportunities, more ambitious, and more focused. Graduating students from BTE-San Diego finished high school with “very different attitudes and intentions than year one,” explained one Janssen volunteer. All BTE graduates intended to enroll in higher education. By comparison, only three-quarters of their classmates planned to pursue higher education.

BTE-San Diego students completed individual portfolios to catalog their performance and progress. Yearly portfolio presentations also provided ready opportunities to demonstrate student growth. “In year one, most students were introverted, quiet, and shy,” reflected a Janssen employee, “[You saw them] gradually become more engaged over the life of the BTE program.” BTE leaves these Hoover students, mused another employee, with the “ability to see a new future for themselves.”

BTE contributed to that new future with competitive scholarships for students. In addition to the \$10,000 in scholarship funds awarded by Johnson & Johnson Corporate, Janssen held a giving competition among its employees to show its commitment to BTE and the students. In the end, the Janssen raised nearly \$3,000 in additional scholarship funds and were able to offer scholarships to every BTE-San Diego student who applied.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

100% graduated high school on time vs. **92%** of their classmates

85% graduated high school with a GPA of 3.0 or higher

52% graduated high school with at least 3 college credits

100% applied to higher education

100% enrolled in higher education

68% planned to study science or health

100% performed community service

100% were confident in their ability to plan and reach goals

88% felt BTE was an advantage in applying for college and jobs