The Cost of College

I’m often asked my opinions on the cost of college. Is the cost too high? Should it be free?

I can unequivocally say that college costs are out of whack. Since 1978, the cost of college has risen more than any other commodity. Housing has increased 200 percent. Healthcare has gone up 500 percent. Neither of those is probably a surprise to you because we hear about them in the news with relative frequency. But when was the last time you heard about the cost of college tuition? You should be shocked to know that since 1978 it’s gone up a whopping 1100 percent.

But does that mean college should be free?

I don’t know. It would be great if our students didn’t need to worry about cost when it came to attending college. I certainly believe it should be more affordable. However, I worry that to pay for free college the government might end up gutting a different area that would impact our students even more.

I don’t know where the free college debate will end up going, if anywhere. I’d rather people focused on the dramatic decrease in need-based aid that is available. Over the past eight years, I’ve seen need-based aid turned into merit-based aid at an alarming rate. Funds that had been reserved for students from low-income backgrounds have turned into funds reserved for students with high GPAs and ACT scores.

Because we serve students in the academic middle, that change means there is significantly less financial aid available to average students from low-income backgrounds. Given the sad state of K-12 education in Milwaukee, we have a lot more average students graduating from high school than high achievers. These students can succeed in college, and as a community, we need them to earn college degrees, but as available funds shrink that becomes less likely.

Our students need more financial options for college. Should free college be one of them? Maybe. But let’s broaden the discussion to decreasing the cost of college and rising the financial aid tide so all student boats are lifted.
MISSION
College Possible is a national nonprofit organization making college admission and success possible for students from low-income backgrounds, the majority of whom are students of color, through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support.

Our services include:
- Extensive ACT test preparation
- College search and application guidance
- Enrollment and high school-to-college transition coaching
- Financial literacy and financial aid consulting
- Connection to campus resources and opportunities
- Study skills and self-advocacy coaching

LET’S CONNECT
414-220-9450
MKEinfo@CollegePossible.org
CollegePossible.org/Milwaukee

Facebook.com/CollegePossible
Twitter.com/CollPossibleMKE
Instagram.com/CollegePossible
Snapchat: CollegePossible
We are pleased to announce the addition of our seventh site, College Possible Washington—formerly College Access Now (CAN).

Founded in 2006, CAN is also a member of the AmeriCorps National Service Program and designed its program based on College Possible’s nationally-recognized and rigorously-evaluated model of near-peer mentoring and coaching. In May 2019, the Board of Directors for both College Possible and CAN voted unanimously to merge into one organization.

“This partnership will enable us to change the odds for thousands of students and help them achieve their full potential in college,” said Jim McCorkell, founder and CEO of College Possible.

“The Washington team shares a deep commitment to equity and our mission of helping students from low-income backgrounds access and thrive in college. We’re excited to welcome them to the team.”

CAN Executive Director Guadalupe Torres—a highly experienced nonprofit leader skilled in organizational growth, program excellence and community engagement—joined the organization in 2017 and will continue to serve as executive director of College Possible Washington. While Washington’s educational attainment exceeds the national average, there are large achievement gaps in the Seattle region and across the state.

“Despite Seattle’s thriving economy, there is a growing population of underrepresented students who need support. As the daughter of an immigrant from a farm-working family and a first-generation college graduate, I know the challenges. I am honored to lead an organization that promotes the opportunity for students to reach their full potential and creates a talent pipeline that is reflective of the rich diversity of our local communities,” Torres said. “Joining College Possible will enable us to scale a proven model to serve more students in Washington and draw on the expertise and reach of partners across the United States.”

The merger brings together two mission-aligned organizations focused on improving higher education access and outcomes, strengthening support for low-income students and expanding College Possible’s presence in the Pacific Northwest.

By aligning efforts and leveraging a national infrastructure, College Possible Washington will be able to serve more students effectively and efficiently reaching 650 high school and 1,600 college students in the Seattle and South King County area.

With the addition of the Washington site, College Possible will reach 25,000 students during the 2019-20 school year.
NATIONAL NEWS
Craig Robinson Joins College Possible as its First President

In August 2019, Craig Robinson, a nonprofit executive with more than twenty years of experience in education leadership and practice, started in his role as the first-ever president of College Possible.

“College Possible is building on 20 years of experience, expanding into new communities, and partnering with institutions in ways that enable us to extend our reach and impact,” said Jim McCorkell, founder and chief executive officer of College Possible. “Craig’s leadership, passion for service, and familiarity with the unique challenges that low-income students face will ensure that we continue to scale with intentionality and purpose.”

Prior to joining College Possible, Robinson served as the chief strategy officer at Henderson Collegiate Charter Network and as the chief program officer at the National College Advising Corps. For nearly a decade, he was the national director of KIPP Through College, which has helped 20,000 high school graduates navigate the academic, social and financial challenges of applying to and attending college.

A longtime advocate for equity and access in K-12 and higher education, Robinson said:

“This opportunity reflects the culmination of a career dedicated to eliminating poverty by helping students realize the life changing benefits of higher education. In many ways, this role feels like a homecoming and I am excited about the opportunities and challenges ahead.”

Founder and CEO Jim McCorkell will continue to provide overarching management and leadership of the organization, while Robinson will oversee the day-to-day work of running and growing College Possible.

Change a Life

We are grateful for your continued financial support and investment in our student’s futures and their ability to succeed.

Together we can help educate the next generation of leaders. Thank you for believing in their bright futures!

“ The unconditional support that College Possible gave me throughout the years helped me beat the odds.”

Maria
Mount Mary University, Class of 2019
South Division High School, Class of 2014

Give online at CollegePossible.org/ChangingLives
2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Your generosity supported College Possible Milwaukee, serving 2,409 students on their path to college graduation.

- **856** High School Students Served
- **1,553** College Students Served
- **16** Partner High Schools
- **25** Connects College Partners in Wisconsin
- **228** Degrees Earned Since 2008

Visit CollegePossibleThrives.org to learn more.
MILWAUKEE FINANCIAL HEALTH
For the year ended June 30, 2019

UNRESTRICTED REVENUE & SUPPORT
$2,654,358
vs. FY 18 — $2,670,505

TOTAL EXPENSES
$2,628,965
vs. FY 18 — $2,365,057

IMPACT & RESULTS

18% average ACT score increase

91% earned admission to college

4x more likely to graduate from college than their low-income peers

$4.7M total scholarship dollars earned

79% enrolled in college following high school graduation

30% more likely to enroll in college immediately after high school

REVENUE

16% Foundations

33% Government

Corporations 25%

Individuals 10%

AmeriCorps 16%

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

10% General & Administrative

13% Fundraising

77% Program Services
DONORS

Thanks to contributions from a broad base of supporters, we help make college possible for greater numbers of students from low-income backgrounds. Gifts are from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

MILWAUKEE MULTI-YEAR LEADERSHIP GIFTS

Ascendium Education Group
$1,097,000 over 2 years
State of Wisconsin
$1 million over 2 years
Siebert Lutheran Foundation
$60,000 over 2 years
Stimac Family Foundation
$60,000 over 2 years
Gene and Ruth Posner Foundation
$45,000 over 3 years
Real Estate Alliance for Charity
$37,500 over 3 years

CORPORATIONS & FOUNDATIONS

$500,000 and above
State of Wisconsin
$250,000-$499,999
Ascendium Education Group
Serve Wisconsin
$100,000-$249,999
Herb Kohl Philanthropies
$50,000-$99,999
The Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
Ray and Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust
$25,000-$49,999
Siebert Lutheran Foundation
Stimac Family Foundation
$10,000-$24,999
Anon Charitable Trust
Bader Philanthropies, Inc.
Gene and Ruth Posner Foundation
Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation
$5,000-$9,999
Ascendium Education Group
WEF
$2,500-$4,999
Herb Kohl Philanthropies
$1,000-$2,499
The Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation
$500-$999
The Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
Ray and Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust
$25,000-$49,999
Siebert Lutheran Foundation
Stimac Family Foundation
$10,000-$24,999
Anon Charitable Trust
Bader Philanthropies, Inc.
Gene and Ruth Posner Foundation
Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation
Milwaukee Bucks Foundation
Real Estate Alliance for Charity
The Travelers Companies, Inc.
$5,000-$9,999
Cedar Street Charitable Foundation
Crowd Foundation, Inc.
Elizabeth Elser Doolittle Charitable Trust
EY - Milwaukee Office
Four-Four Foundation
Hauske Family Foundation
ManpowerGroup
Marjorie L. Christiansen Foundation
Mary Martha & Emmett J. Doerr Charitable Trust
Melissa S. and Joan M. Pick Charitable Trust
Stella Jones Foundation
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Weiss Family Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
Wisconsin WeGo Group Charitable Trust
$2,500-$4,999
Artisan Partners
BonCopp
Foley and Lardner, LLP
The Gardner Foundation
Green Bay Packers Foundation
Gruber Law Offices LLC
HSA Bank
$1,000-$2,499
A.O. Smith Foundation, Inc.
Association of Realtors Youth Foundation
Husch Blackwell LLP
Mount Mary University
MPF Foundation, Inc.
Reuberer Foundation, Inc.
TKO Miller, Inc.
University School of Milwaukee
Watermark Insights
We Energies Foundation
Women's Club of Wisconsin Foundation
$500-$999
Associated Bank
Concordia University Wisconsin
Marcus Corporation Foundation
Marquette University
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design
Silver Lake College
$250-$499
Alverno College
Blue's Egg
Cardinal Stritch University
Froedtert Health
Lakeland University
Milwaukee Area Technical College
Schlitz Park
$250-$499
Carthage College
Forti Chiropractic
The Brookby Foundation
INDIVIDUAL, HONOR & MEMORIAL GIFTS

$25,000-$49,999
Thomas and Nancy Florshiem Family Foundation
Jennifer and Tom Florshiem United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County
$10,000-$24,999
Marianne Arpe (in honor of Mary and Ted Kellner)
Kimberly and Rick Dillon
Marsha Ernst Krueger
Jackie and David* Gay
Sue and Peter Hitler
Kellken Foundation
The Michael and Billie Kubly Family
Camille and David* Kundert
Madeleine and David Lubar
Susan* and Robert Mikulay
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's William J. Murgas Fund
$5,000-$9,999
Helen Ambuel
Donald C. and Laura M. Harrison Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Joanne and Gary Grunau
Christine* and Barry Holloway
Cheryl and Blake Moret
Shelly and Dick* Seesel
Joshua Smith
Madison Community Foundation's Sally Wilmeth and Terry Geurkink Family Fund (in memory of Pat and Harvey Wilmeth)
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Patricia Smith Wilmeth Fund
Ellen and Robert Venable
Indy Yeager* and John Florshiem
$2,500-$4,999
Heather and Patrick Finger
James Gleason
Nancy and David Gruber
Kim* and David Irwin
Barbara and Louis* Johnson
Meg and Matt* Kurlinski
Candy and Bruce Pindyck
Nancy and Michael Roos
Mary Staudenmaier
$1,000-$2,499
Jacob and Gay Alberts Ruby
Marianne and Bill Arpe
Anne and Jon Butt
Paige and Dan Conley
Chris and Lori Didier
Draeger Family Charitable Fund (in honor of Christine Halloway*)
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Judith A. Keyes Family Fund
Nick Kozik
Krause Family Foundation
Nancy and Arthur Laskin
Peter Layde and Family
Marcy Lichterman and Paul Florshiem
Megan and James Madsen
Laura* and Philip Malugade
George and Julie Mosher
Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Rhonda and Gregory Oberland
Marcus and Connie Perry
Melanie and Frank Popa
Craig Shuler
Cheryl and Andrew Seter
Francie Shea
Mary Sprague (in honor of Susan* and Bob Mikulay)
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Kopmeier Family Fund
Sara Swanson and Mark Mone
Denise and Steven Trinkl
Eddie+ and Andy Turnbull
$500-$999
Mayra Alamin*
Mark and Barb Bolens
Tomás Clasen
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Colton Charitable Fund
Michael Dunst
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Thomas C. and Sandra K. Dunst Fund
Juliana Ebert and Frank Daily
Jane Frank
Barbara N. Fuldner
Dan and Frank Janzow (in memory of W. Th. Janzow)
Laura Liu+ and Kenneth Pomerantz
Debbie and Jay Mackman
Jamy Malatesa
The David and Donna Marks Stewardship Fund
Kate Martin
Jeff Morin and Brian Borchart
Carol Motzel and Robert Schwartz
Karen Nelson
Kris and Mark O'Meara
Wendy and Andrew Petzold
Laurie and Matthew Piette
Ramona Rogers-Windor
and Thomas Windsor
Kelly Rourke and Andrew Hargarten
Julia Rymut
Shikhar and Laura Sane
Nancy Seidl Nelson
M.J. and Andy Smith
$250-$499
Sofija and Jonathan Anderson
Susie Apple
David Bartelme*
Johannes Britz
Steven J. Carini
Susie Apple
David Bartelme*
Johannes Britz
Steven J. Carini
Cathy Carlson and Michael Bausch
Dawn and Brad Christianson*
Julie and Andrew Coppes
Gwynn and John Crow
Yolanda and Cyauthur Deacon (in honor of Catherine Thomas)

KEY: *National or Local Board Member +Staff Member –Current or Former AmeriCorps Member
°Current Student or Program Alumni •Pledged Commitment #AmeriCorps Alumni Council Member
Anne and Dean Fitzgerald
Susanse and Bill Gay (in honor of David Gay*)
Julia and Josh Gimbel
Heidi and Bob Hanley
Angela Harden and Elizabeth Haws
Marge and Jim Hartwig (in honor of David Kundert*)
Patricia Hoben and Charles Carter*
Spring- and Nick Holz
Houston
Ashlie Jones- and Tom Dulaney*
Elisabeth Koerner
Jan Lennon
Emily Lissantire
Amanda Lowney and Adam Tuzzi
Dan and Kate Meyer
Darren Miller
Katie Miota
Meredith and Lucas Murray
Abigail & David Nash Donor
Advised Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Milwaukee
Jane and Mike Nichols
Amy and Sara Nolan
Kelly and Rick Oleniczak
Janet and Rick Padway
Reene Pasciak+ Suzanne M. Possell
Mara and Samuel Poulette
Mary and Fred Rewoldt
Neal Riutta
Marianne and Basil Salaymeh
Kelly Schaefer* and Wendel Hruska
David Simon
Brenda Skelton and Jim Bendtsen (in honor of our parents)
Susan and Oyvind Solvang L. William Staudenmaier
Jennifer and Charles Stearns
Karen Steggall (in honor of Courtney Steggall-)
Richard & Susan Strait 2018 Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
Leigh and Fred Tabak
Tiffany Tardy
Mary and Tim Van
Volkzburg
Katy and Dave Vetta (in honor of Camille and David* Kundert)
Thomas and Karen Watson (in honor of Erin Watson)
Bill Whitaker (in honor of Susan* and Bob Mikulay)
Kaivan Yazdani+
Up to $2,493
Amanda Albert+
Kathy and Tom Alpern
Rachael Amick
Anonymous (3)
JoAnne Anton
Sarah and Richard Aster
Steve Baas
Leigh Barker-Cheesebro
Ty Bauschke+
Suzan Ben-Poorat and Richard Hack
Brant Bergeron
Marcia Blankman
Somkhit Boonheuan+ Jackie Butzler
Shannon Carallo and Andy Komisar
Siri Carpenter
Pam and Mike Carroll
Dave Celata
Craig Cerbins+ Asia Connor-
Suzie Considnez+ and Kevin Laye-
Emily Constantine
Jayne Czajkowski-
Rebecca Danner and Barry Holloway
Julie Delilies
Mark Edmond
Charles Egan+
Kay Elers
Emily and Avraham Eisbruch (in honor of Gilad Eisbruch-)
Megan Gliebe
Gwen and Joseph Graboyes
Beth Graham
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Sarah Greenberg (in honor of Renee Pasciak+)
Elaine Griffin
Paolo Guttaudauro
Kelly Haag
Dorrie and Greg Hagge
Kyle Hagge-
Seth Haines
Megan and Ryan Harried (in honor of Rebecca Danner and Barry Holloway’s wedding)
Brittany Hartl-
Hartman-Wolff Family (in honor of Gilad Eisbruch-)
Jake Heinemeier
Katie and Tom Heinen
Dennis Hendley
Mara Hennen+
Chris Her-Xiong
Dan Holzhauer
Joanne Ihling
Nancy Jacobs
Kari and Derek Johnson (in honor of Rebecca Danner and Barry Holloway’s wedding)
Sangeeta* and Raman Khanna
Marina and Frank Krejci
Frederique Le Blanc-Schansman
Avis Leverett
Elizabeth and Scott Lingen
Brett Lipshutz+
Laura and Brent Lueck
Alberto Maldonado
Sherry & Norm Malmon
Donor Advised Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
Josh March
Lorna and Michael March
Ann Margolis
Amy Marshall
Jeffrey and Sue Ann Masnick
Suzanne McCoy+ Kelly Michel-
Jennifer Mielke
Ariel Milton
Martha Moore
Sam Mott+
Kong Moua-
Neighbors of 5010 Kent
Bryan Ott
Linda and Larry Pasciak
Stephanie Pasciak
Tina and Mike Pasciak
Linda and Nish Patel
Kirk Pelikan
Randle Pollard
Ben Precourt+
Izzy Ramirez+
Jessica Rardin- (in honor of the South Division High School Class of 2015)
Miriam Reading and Dick Miller
Patricia and Allen Rieselbach
Staci Rosciszewski-
Marina and John Rosenberg
Thomas Rosenthal
Joyce Rubenstein and Paul Haubert*
Jerry Rubin
Nancy and Scott Rudd (in honor of Rebecca Danner and Barry Holloway’s wedding)
The William Rudd Family
Matt Runquist
Molly Schuld
Trisha Schumaker
John Seesel and Joanne Grossman and Family (in honor of Dick* and Shelly Seesel)
Jane and Johan Segerdahl
Dennis Sell
Judy and Don Shane
Philip and Reva Shoovers
Ronald and Dorothy Siemens
April Sikafy
Kirsten and John Simononok
Liz Smith+
Kate and Fred Smith
Mary Ellen Spiegel
Chris- and Willow- Stewart
Emily Sue and Gene Medford
Morgan+ and Adam Sweet
Sibyle and Harold Tasker
Jaimie and Maurice Thomas
Marilyn Tripodi
Janet Ugochina (in honor of Rebecca Danner and Barry Holloway’s wedding)
Lisa and James Valentine-Jordan
Carolyn Vidmar-
Dawn Vogel
Renee Weber+
Dave Wegener*
Susan and James Weichselbaum (in honor of Courtney Steggall-)
Sue Weslow
Pat Wesner and James Hoffman
Jackie Wilcox
George Wilkins-
Hannah Yaritz-
Sara Yashar (in honor of Gilad Eisbruch-)
Michael Yellin
Dr. Chia Youyee Vang and Tong Mabyias Yang
Susan and Ben Zarwell
MATCHING GIFT COMPANIES
Charter Manufacturing Company, Inc.
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
We Energies Foundation
IN-KIND SUPPORTERS
AMF Lanes
Beans & Barley
Big Apple Bagels - Hales Corners
Bruegger’s Bagels - Whitefish Bay
Bunzel’s Milwaukee Meat Market
Discovery World
Domino’s Pizza - Milwaukee
DreamBikes
Einstein Bros Bagels - 27th St
Einstein Bros Bagels - Brookfield
Einstein Bros Bagels - Ogden Ave
Einstein Bros Bagels - Shorewood
Fazoli’s Fresh Thyme
Fuel Cafe
Green Kitchen
Ian’s Pizza - Milwaukee
Jet’s Pizza - Milwaukee
Jimmy Johns - Greenfield
Krispy Kreme - West Allis
Kwik Trip
Milwaukee Art Museum
Mount Mary University
Olive Garden
Outback Steakhouse
Pizza Shuttle
Red Lobster - Greenfield
Roundy’s Supermarkets
Schlitz Nature Center
Starbucks - Ogden
Starbucks
Steny’s Tavern & Grill
Target - Brookfield
Target - Chase Ave
Target - Franklin
Target - Grafton
Target - New Berlin
Target - Oak Creek
Target - Wauwatosa
Target - West Allis
TGI Fridays - Greenfield
Toppers - Milwaukee
Kenilworth
Toppers Pizza - Waukesha
Toppers Pizza - West Allis
Transfer Pizzeria Cafe
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Ward’s House of Prime
COLLEGE POSSIBLE CONNECTS BRIDGE PARTNERS
Alverno College
Lakeland University
Lawrence University
Mount Mary University
Northland College

KEY: *National or Local Board Member +Staff Member -Current or Former AmeriCorps Member
©Current Student or Program Alumni •Pledged Commitment #AmeriCorps Alumni Council Member
When asked what brought him to Milwaukee, Bridge the City co-founder and Minnesota native, Kyle Hagge said his initial plan was to volunteer a year of service with AmeriCorps, and then move elsewhere.

That plan changed after meeting fellow Corps member and Bridge the City co-founder, Ben Rangel, who was also serving as a coach with College Possible Milwaukee.

“One year quickly turned to two years,” Kyle said. “Because once you have that experience serving, you want to see it through, especially with your students.”

“During my second year, I realized I actually love Milwaukee and there are a lot of issues I can contribute a positive impact on.”

After completing their terms of service with College Possible, Kyle and Ben decided they wanted to have a more direct impact on their community. “There are so many issues in our society that affect our students and community that you can’t directly affect and don’t really understand the extent of.” This led them to start Bridge the City, a podcast that seeks to close the gap between ideas and concrete action as they bridge together Milwaukee’s people, resources and ideas.

The co-founders wanted to create a podcast that examines the different issues that affect our community in Milwaukee. “We wanted to amplify voices in organizations we thought were really important but didn’t get enough attention,” Kyle said.

But what differentiates Bridge the City from other podcasts?

“We wanted a podcast that was centered around action.”

This is what is unique about Bridge the City. It has moved from a podcast to become a platform. “It’s great to listen to a podcast or read the news and be informed, but it’s really what you do with that information that matters,” Kyle said.
So how do you create a community of people that want to be informed, but more importantly want to take action in their community and make Milwaukee a better place to live? In each episode, Bridge the City includes steps you can take to build community and make a difference for Milwaukee.

“We started the podcast with no experience just to see what happens because we love Milwaukee,” said Kyle. The first episode of Bridge the City debuted in December 2017. Since then, Bridge the City has not only produced podcasts, but collaborated with local organizations and hosted events. The podcast now has 53 episodes and features guests from the Milwaukee community like Mayor Tom Barrett, Executive Director of BLOC Angela Lang, author Deanna Singh and many more.

In 2020, Bridge the City plans on hosting more live events. One Saturday every month will be known as Solution Saturday.

“We end every episode with an action step but there isn’t a way to know if people are actually doing them. How do we create programming where we can see people taking part in action, building a community, a sense of belonging and hopefully making a positive impact on Milwaukee?”

On Solution Saturday, Bridge the City will pick a Milwaukee place that people should know more about, and then, “pick a speaker from Milwaukee who is doing great work and give them a platform to talk about an issue and suggest an action step that people will do at the end of the event,” said Kyle.

Being so focused on action, Kyle smiled when he was asked what action readers could take to create a positive impact in our community. His response: Call your representatives and encourage more funding for programs like AmeriCorps and College Possible because there are so many young, driven and passionate adults graduating from college who are looking for something fulfilling like a year of service.

“If we want to have a vibrant economy that has a lot of young people who are the future of the workforce, we want to make sure that workforce had an experience with a program like AmeriCorps and College Possible. A workforce that cares about social justice and that wants to make a positive impact in the community to see how the city transforms for the better.”

When asked what he loved most about his time with College Possible, Kyle said, “I felt like there was always good discussion about whether we were achieving the mission we set out to do. We always asked ourselves, ‘Are we best serving our students?’

“College Possible really cared about student success and they always put that first.”

And that truly sums up the core of College Possible’s mission and underscores the reason why College Possible Milwaukee students have earned more than 220 college degrees. Kyle and Ben are just two examples of the way that service is transforming communities, not just for a year, but for a lifetime.

Bridge the City can be found on all major podcast streaming platforms as well as BridgeTheCityPodcast.com
When Jerry Rideout was in high school he never gave a lot of thought to attending college. “Growing up, going to college was never really in the conversation; I never considered it as an actual possibility,” Jerry explained. Now a graduate from Minnesota State University, Mankato, with a degree in communications, Jerry has his eyes set on attending graduate school and earning his master’s degree.

Jerry’s career path and track to college was not always clear, even after he joined College Possible at Casimir Pulaski High School on Milwaukee’s south side. During his junior year he completed all the ACT prep and exams but only because his friends were doing it. Jerry was assigned to a new coach, Matt, during his senior year, but he missed his coach from his junior year, so he stopped going to sessions. That all changed one day, while Jerry was waiting at the bus stop, after skipping another session. “Matt walked up to the bus stop and said I forgot my bus pass as he handed it to me,” Jerry said. “He asked me about my life, if there were any personal problems I wanted to talk about and that he was there for me if I ever needed anything.” This got Jerry thinking during what turned out to be the longest bus ride home of his life.

Matt’s gesture inspired Jerry and he began to utilize the resources offered by College Possible. From that day forward, Jerry attended sessions and worked closely with Matt. “It was different having someone go almost to the edge for you just to reach out a hand. It’s up to you to accept it or not, but just to have someone make that move for me was inspiring.”

Little did Jerry know, this was the beginning of a great friendship for him and Matt. “He was in my office more hours than I could count,” Matt recalled. He assisted Jerry with applying for financial aid, scholarships and colleges, and Jerry became one of a group of students who saw their coach daily. “Once I figured out Matt was here to help me and only here to help me, it opened my eyes; the process went from being bumpy to smoothing out real nice,” said Jerry.
When it came time to apply to schools, Jerry insisted on attending a large, out-of-state school. While Matt was not certain it would be financially viable, he still helped Jerry apply. “I don’t think he would have responded well to me putting limits on him and telling him he’s not going to get in a certain place,” Matt said. “I had to let him go by trial and error.” This helped Jerry contextualize his desires and imagination of what college would be like for him. Matt’s personalized approach with Jerry helped to establish trust between them and nurtured their relationship.

When Jerry did not receive admittance to the large out-of-state schools he applied to, Matt was prepared and suggested Minnesota State University, Mankato, as a school he believed would be a great fit for Jerry. “I’d never even heard of Mankato,” Jerry said, “but Matt researched schools based on my grades, ACT and my financial capabilities... Since he did all this research for me, I figured the least I could do was apply.” Not only did Jerry apply to Mankato, but he was admitted and earned a Bachelor of Science degree as a double major in mass media and communications in the spring of 2019.

When asked how his perception of college changed since starting with College Possible, Jerry said: “My friends said college wasn’t for us but they didn’t realize we had a resource to help bridge the gap. I didn’t think college was for me either, but I was still going to do it. It’s about opportunity and I’m always going to take advantage.”

“College Possible not only showed me I could get into college, it showed me the resources I needed for me to get in.”

College helped Jerry hone and refine his skills, such as his natural ability to network and build meaningful relationships, as well as apply them to his professional ambitions.

Currently, Jerry serves as an AmeriCorps coach for College Possible college students out of the St. Paul, Minnesota site. College coaches support students as they transition from high school into college and persist to graduation. They also help link students to student services already available on campus, and plan on- and off-campus events.

“When I was going over my plan after graduation, I pondered where I would be today without my College Possible coaches. That’s when I knew I wanted to help someone who is in a similar situation to the one I was in.”

My coach, Matt, helped me realize that college was possible for me. Now I want to help out students and show people that college is possible for everyone.

“...when I was going over my plan after [college] graduation, I pondered where I would be today without my College Possible coaches. That’s when I knew I wanted to help someone who is in a similar situation to the one I was in.”

— Jerry Rideout, Casimir Pulaski High School ’15, Minnesota State University, Mankato ’19. Currently serving as a College Possible college coach through AmeriCorps
PARTNER PROFILE

Constant Support from Orientation to Graduation

Mount Mary University, Milwaukee, WI

College Possible’s success in Milwaukee relies on strong collaboration with like-minded partners. Mount Mary University has always been a great destination for College Possible students.

The partnership between Mount Mary University and College Possible has strengthened over the years because of a shared goal of providing steady support for students through college graduation.

Thanks to the financial aid programs, such as the Grace Scholars Program, 63 College Possible students are currently studying at Mount Mary to earn their degrees. Generously funded by the Burke Foundation, the Grace Scholars Program covers 85 percent of tuition for four years for incoming first-year undergraduate students from the Milwaukee area. These scholarship programs help explain how more than 90 percent of all Mount Mary undergraduate students receive some type of financial aid, allowing students from low-income backgrounds to attend college and work toward earning their bachelor’s degrees.

Stephanie Osei, a College Possible student and Mount Mary senior, is just one of the many students who benefits from Mount Mary’s continuous financial support. However, financial aid is not the only way Mount Mary provides assistance. When chatting with Stephanie, she explained how the culture on campus is welcoming and accepting of everyone. As an all-female school, Stephanie mentioned how the campus encourages and empowers women by fostering a community where they feel comfortable and can rely on each other.

This welcoming, diverse community is a big reason why College Possible students are so successful at Mount Mary in comparison to other colleges. The first to second-year persistence rate for College Possible students at Mount Mary is 82 percent, compared to the average rate of 69 percent. In addition to the individualized support Mount Mary provides their students, the academic, social and personal support provided to students by College Possible is another reason for the high persistence rate at Mount Mary.

In 2019, Mount Mary launched the Compass Year program for first-year students who are undecided, to help them identify their vocation and stay on track to graduate on time.
Dave Wegener, Mount Mary University’s vice president for enrollment services, touched on why College Possible students have such success at Mount Mary. “Being a smaller institution allows us to focus on the individual student, so it’s hard to go unnoticed...There is so much support and attention, faculty will notice if a student is having trouble and step in to help.”

Mount Mary’s staff includes a large number of advisors who are regularly asking students about themselves and whether they can be of assistance. When you combine this support along with the coaching students receive from College Possible, it is clear why this partnership is special.

“When we talk about community-based organizations, College Possible is our most synergetic partner because they’re all about the complete college process. We are one of the best-aligned partners because we share a lot of similarities in what we are both trying to accomplish,” said Wegener.

“College Possible coaches are really earnest in their search for the best possible fit for their students for college,” said Wegener. “We work really closely with coaches and students to share resources and information to know the needs of our students and what Mount Mary can do to be more accessible to College Possible students.”

The individualized support provided to students by Mount Mary and College Possible enables students to overcome barriers created by a complex educational system, providing an easier path to graduation for students and a brighter future for them and our community.

Founded in 1913 and sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mount Mary is a four-year, nonprofit Catholic college for women in Milwaukee, WI that champions social justice, creativity, and a curriculum that focuses not only on professional skills, but also on development of the whole person. The university is located on a beautiful, 80-acre campus in metropolitan Milwaukee, and welcomes students of all faiths and beliefs. Mount Mary serves more than 1,400 students, from over 750 traditional undergraduates to nearly 625 graduate students.

Learn more at mtmary.edu

MOUNT MARY STATS:

#1
Recognized in U.S. News and World Report for ethnic diversity in the Midwest; top-rated private institution in Wisconsin for social mobility.

73%
of full-time faculty hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in their field

100%
of full-time undergraduate students receive an academic scholarship or reduced tuition

1:12
faculty to student ratio
MEET AN AMERICORPS MEMBER

Gladys Mora
High School Coach

Hometown: Milwaukee
College attended: Alverno College
Major: Psychology

What made you want to serve with College Possible?
My experience as a College Possible student is ultimately why I decided to serve as a coach. As a College Possible student, my coach never hesitated to support me and I knew my coach believed in me. I realized I wanted to be the person who guides students, as I knew how important this guidance was in achieving my goals. Sometimes all a student needs is to have someone who truly believes in them and their potential, and I wanted to be that person.

Why did you decide to return for a second year of service?
I returned because of the impact my students had on me and the positive influence I had on them. I enjoy learning from my students and hearing about their successes. Every day, I look forward to seeing how my students are growing, as they pursue a college education.

What have you gained?
AmeriCorps has helped me prepare for the next steps in my career. Serving at two high schools (St. Anthony and St. Thomas More) has expanded my knowledge about the different occupations available in education. I learned about the roles of counselors, teachers and principals, which led me to consider different professions for my career and is something I hadn’t considered before joining AmeriCorps.

Apply to serve at CollegePossible.org/Serve