

# Farmers National Bank gives \$17K to BC3 programs

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Kyle Hilfiger, center, branch manager of Farmers National Bank of Emlenton's Bon Aire office, presents a \$17,000 check to Butler County Community College's Ruth Purcell and Dr. Nick Neupauer in December. Purcell retired Dec. 31 as executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation, and Neupauer is BC3's president. Farmers National Bank of Emlenton's gift to the BC3 Education Foundation through Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program will support BC3 programs that educate fourth-graders through seniors in western Pennsylvania schools.

(Butler, PA) For the ninth time since 2012, Farmers National Bank of Emlenton has contributed funds to support Butler County Community College programs that educate fourth-graders through seniors in western Pennsylvania schools.

Farmers National Bank of Emlenton's \$17,000 gift to the BC3 Education Foundation through Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program will benefit a BC3 Stock Market Game that attracted 1,650 fourth-graders through seniors in the 2019-2020 academic year.

The contribution will also aid a BC3 College Within the High School program that enrolled a 23-year-high of 455 sophomores through seniors in the spring 2020 semester, to be eclipsed by drawing 507 in the fall.

Farmers National Bank of Emlenton has also served for the past decade as the title sponsor of the BC3 Education Foundation golf outing, which has raised more than \$1 million in unrestricted funds that support BC3's mission, goals, initiatives and programs.

## “A great partnership” for years

“There are a lot of similarities, with our being the community's college and Farmers doing a wonderful job of reaching out to serve as a great community partner,” BC3 President Dr. Nick Neupauer said. “Although we are in very different sectors, there are similarities in terms of that community connection. It's been a great partnership and fit for all these years.”

“A very similar mindset between the two,” Kyle Hilfiger said of BC3 and Farmers National Bank of Emlenton, where he serves as branch manager of its Bon Aire office. “Very different in what we do, education and finance, but ultimately community oriented. The college is always looking for ways to better the community, and we are always looking for ways to better the community.”

The college's Stock Market Game, administered by the BC3 Center for Economic Education, introduces students to concepts in financial literacy and investing, and BC3's College Within the High School program provides an opportunity for students to earn transferrable college credits while in high school.

“The more students can learn up front, the more of a head start they get, the better they are going to be,” Hilfiger said, “and the better leaders they are going to become in our communities.”

The BC3 Center for Economic Education's Stock Market Game is offered in spring and fall sessions, and in a yearlong session to students attending schools in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Elk, Jefferson, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

BC3's College Within the High School program is offered within schools or learning centers in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Clearfield, Jefferson, Lawrence and Mercer counties, or through remote instruction or online.

## “An invaluable experience for students”

The Stock Market Game “is an invaluable experience for students,” said Ruth Purcell, who retired Dec. 31 as executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation. “Financial literacy is so very beneficial. Students really do receive an introduction to the basics.”

In BC3's College Within the High School program, "Students get all the educational benefits," Purcell said. "They're learning how to study and about time management. With the financial literacy program and the college high school program, you really get a leg up."

More than 530 teams composed of two to five students participated in BC3's Stock Market Game in 2019-2020, according to David Huseman, director of BC3's Center for Economic Education and a professor of humanities and social science. During the competition, students receive a hypothetical \$100,000, make buy-and-trade decisions and track how those decisions would have played out in the market had they been real.

Four teams in BC3's Stock Market Game finished first against all western Pennsylvania squads in divisional competitions in the spring and fall 2020 sessions, and in the yearlong 2019-2020 session, Huseman said.

A squad from St. John Paul II Elementary School, Hermitage, won in the spring; a team from Butler Intermediate High School, in the fall; and squads representing Seneca Valley middle and high schools, Harmony, in the 2019-2020 session.

## More than 3,600 transferrable credits earned

Students enrolled in BC3's College Within the High School program can apply credits earned toward associate degrees at BC3 or toward bachelor's degrees at public, private and online four-year colleges and universities.

High school students in 2020 earned 3,607 transferrable credits, according to Erin Cioffi, BC3's assistant director of high school programming.

The spring and fall 2020 semesters were the sixth and seventh in a row in which BC3's College Within the High School program enrolled at least 400 students. Courses include American national government, business math, college writing, general psychology, marketing and speech.

Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program provides tax credits to eligible businesses that contribute financially to a scholarship, to educational improvement or to a prekindergarten scholarship organization.

"Part of our mission statement," Hilfiger said, "is really being able to support the communities that we are in. Being in western Pennsylvania, and being able to support western Pennsylvania any way we can through these EITC donations, is a great opportunity for us."

Farmers National Bank of Emlenton has branches in Allegheny, Butler, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Jefferson, Mercer and Venango counties.