

FIGHT AGAINST CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS

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On Wednesday, May 4, 2022 members of the Saint Paul Police Department, headed by Sr. Commander K. Hallstrom, organized three lines in Allianz Field's parking lot to help fight the rash of catalytic converter thefts. About 750 car owners registered for the event.

Sr. Commander Hallstrom explains the operation to a news crew while a "pit crew" paints a converter and installs anti-theft license plate screws.



Teams resembling race-way pit stop crews, spray-painted converters to make it much more difficult for thieves to sell stolen converters. Auto salvage companies are on the alert and will refuse to buy painted converters.

If a vehicle were high off the road, an SPPD stencil would be used to more clearly mark a converter. In addition, anti-theft screws were installed on license plates, making plate theft very difficult. This year between January and May, 1,204 converters have been stolen in St. Paul. For information on future SPPD converter painting events and how to register, check SPPD's Facebook site: <https://bit.ly/3wd7yEE>

Tools of the event: SPPD stencils were placed against converters before painting when vehicles had high ground clearance. A variety of screw bits were used for the drills to replace existing license plate fasteners with anti-theft screws.



Bryan Giang (left) and Melissa Joly replace conventional license plate fasteners with anti-theft screws. For information on future SPPD converter painting events and how to register, check SPPD's Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/3wd7yEE>

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Wallin Education Partners President and CEO Susan Basil King remarked, "It's a wonderful, hands-on approach." (Photo submitted)

By JAN WILLMS

"A Minnesota story" is the description president and CEO Susan Basil King uses when she tells about the beginnings of Wallin Education Partners, an organization that makes college possible for those in financial need.

"It reflects my experience with leadership in Minnesota," King stated in a recent interview. "It begins with Win Wallin spending about 35 years as an executive at Pillsbury, then a CEO at Medtronic. He had found himself as a person who could help others."

King said Wallin, like many of his generation, went to school on the GI bill. He attended the University of Minnesota, where he met his wife, Maxine. "During his time at Pillsbury, he became very involved with the U of M as a booster," King said, "and he had really powerful philanthropic goals." Those goals were to assist students with high potential but lower finances, making sure they had access to a

WALLIN HELPS STUDENTS RISE

college degree.

"He started working with one high school, South High, that he had attended," King recalled. "Today that partnership has grown to 58 schools." She said Wallin came from a modest background, growing up on a farm in Hastings. "He was a person who just had a strong view of what he could give back, and he made it happen. That's why I call it a Minnesota story."

The foundation's high record of college graduates is based on its three-pronged system, according to King. That consists of one-on-one as well as group advising, financial help and access to internships and networking. "We're successful because we don't offer just financial aid, but also support," she said.

Career counselors with master degrees are assigned by the Wallin Education Partners to work with each scholar throughout their college experience. King said the counselors stick with the students in an advisory capacity, and the youth get help with resumes and internship pipelines. The scholars are also encouraged to get to know fellow Wallin recipients.

Another reason for Wallin's success with its scholars is the partnership between the organization and the 58 high schools. High school student counselors are made aware of the scholarships and get a weekly report on which of their recommended students have applied and how close they are to finishing the application. "It's a wonderful, hands-on approach," King said.

"We have a graduation rate of 91 percent," said Jean Carlos Diaz, manager of marketing and alumni relations at Wallin Education Partners. He said that typically a graduation rate for students with barriers can be as low as 11 percent. "At Wallin, when donors give, they can see the impact.



When students in our community lack the support they need to pursue an education, we all lose. When students are seen, supported, and set up to succeed, we all win."

wallinpartners.org

We are committed to see our scholars not only get to college, but graduate."

King said Wallin's basic program supports students attending four-year colleges. A few years ago the foundation started working with students planning to attend community colleges. "St. Paul College is one of



"We are committed to see our scholars not only get to college, but graduate," stated Jean Carlos Diaz, manager of marketing and alumni relations at Wallin Education Partners. (Photo submitted)

the original three schools we used to pilot that program."

She added that Wallin is looking at a program this year with 171 students attending community college for two years and then transferring to a four-year university. It is called the Two Plus Two program.

Diaz said Wallin currently has 269 students in St. Paul, with 34 of them at St. Paul College. "We also have a great relationship with Dunwoody. Wherever a student may go, there are many pathways, and we are here to provide that," he said.

EQUITABLE AND NEEDS-BASED

Wallin Education Partners has just completed its 30th year and last August moved its offices from Minneapolis to 451 Lexington Parkway in St. Paul. King said that at its inception, the program was funded by Wallin himself. But others wanted to help. "In 2007, the program became a foundation," King explained. She said many might ask why the public would want to give to a wealthy organiza-

tion, but she said that although the Wallin family supports 50 scholars every year, this year there are 300 students being funded just in the freshman class.

"Wallin Education Partners is funded by all sorts of donors," King said. "We are exclusively funded by donations and receive no public money."

King reflected that the pandemic has affected Wallin in the same ways it has affected other service organizations, although she said the staff was able to move from in-person meetings to remote meetings pretty easily.

"A signature of Wallin is the in-person meetings, but we had to change that and for the past two years almost all connections with students have been remote. But our retention remains strong." King said statistics have shown one million fewer students in college from the fall of 2020 to the fall of 2021. "We were anticipating that, but have not seen it. We really stuck

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