

Institute for Work and Learning

Bridge to Employment

PREPARING YOUTH FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

In 1992, Johnson & Johnson launched the Bridge to Employment (BTE) initiative to inspire young people (ages 14-18) from underserved communities to stay in school, excel academically, and elevate their career aspirations. Today, BTE empowers young people to build brighter futures by introducing them to a variety of STEM and health-related careers through mentorship, skill-building workshops, and real-world experiences.

The program's goals are to increase youth who:

- Have human and technical skills to successfully transition to the workforce;
- Pursue professional opportunities within Johnson & Johnson;
- Engage in industry-aligned work-based learning experiences or certifications;
- Plan to enroll in post-secondary education or training;
- Pursue a career in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Manufacturing, & Design

Through pre-apprenticeship, career exploration and readiness opportunities, post-secondary exploration and preparation, and community engagement and leadership, BTE students learn about various careers, gain the knowledge they need to pursue higher levels



BTE Trenton students speak with Site Coordinator and Mentor Destiny de la Rosa Santos. Photo Credit Edwin Torres

of education, and feel empowered to take the steps necessary to achieve their full potential.

Reach

34 years since BTE launched in New Brunswick, NJ.

100+ communities across 27 countries and 6 continents, including 69 U.S. locations.

5,500 students have graduated from BTE.

70% of BTE sites sustain at least one program activity after their pilot program ends.

GLOBAL REACH. LOCAL SOLUTIONS.

Bridge to Employment runs two-year college & career readiness programs at the community level. BTE values local leadership, so each site tailors the program to the particular needs of their community, while the BTE program model ensures common pillars are included across sites.



Partnership is critical to BTE's success. Therefore, each site includes a local Johnson & Johnson operating company, a secondary school, an institution of post-secondary education, and a community-based organization. FHI 360 facilitates a comprehensive strategic planning session with each new site to develop a customized approach that will best meet the needs of local students and school systems. Together, the partners provide 40-50 participants in their last three years of secondary school significant out-of-school support, targeting four key areas:

- **Career Exploration and Readiness:** Activities that introduce participants to the world of work, prepare them for professional environments, and show them a variety of career options.
- **Post-Secondary Exploration and Preparation:** Activities that enhance participants' understanding of subjects and educational pathways that align with their learning strengths and interests, and ultimately prepare them to explore, apply for, pay for, and thrive in post-secondary education.
- **Community Engagement and Leadership:** Activities that encourage participants to lead locally and globally, and that promote the value of giving back and becoming champions for change.
- **Pre-Apprenticeship:** A structured, 40-hour STEM-based experience designed to give youth hands-on learning, professional competencies, and foundational workplace readiness skills. Aligned to local industry needs, it provides youth with real-world exposure to STEM environments while strengthening both technical and employability skills.

LESSONS LEARNED

After more than 30 years of impacting lives, a successful BTE partnership — one that is transforming to all partners — embraces several key elements:

- Strong collaboration
- Effective management and leadership
- Structured work-based learning opportunities
- High expectations and accountability
- Evaluation and continuous improvement
- Institutionalization and sustainability



*BTE Trenton students work together on a STEM activity.
Photo Credit Edwin Torres*

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

We measure the impact of BTE both at the local and global levels. The program has proven to support the success of students, volunteers, and the broader community.

MORE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- 71% of BTE participants completed the BTE program.
- 92% of BTE graduates are aware of postsecondary education opportunities (vs. 88% of comparison group).

INCREASED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AWARENESS

- 84% of BTE graduates plan to attend an institute of postsecondary education (up from 76% at baseline).

BETTER PREPARED and PURSUING STEM²D CAREERS

- 88% of BTE graduates are confident in key college- and career-readiness skills (up from 84% at baseline).
- 52% of BTE graduates plan to pursue a career in the STEM²D/health sectors (vs. 36% of comparison group).
- 75% of BTE graduates indicate key knowledge of skills needed in STEM²D/health careers (up from 58% at baseline).

IMPROVED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION & SKILLS

- 97% of volunteers feel more connected to the local operating company.
- 81% of volunteers are more likely to stay at J&J because of the BTE opportunities.
- 91% of volunteers report improved leadership skills after working with young people.
- 91% of volunteers report that the program increased their ability to work with others.
- 100% of volunteers plan to volunteer again in the future.

“If it were not for BTE, I would have no clue how to even apply to college. I am thankful for the opportunities from BTE.”
– BTE participant

LEARN MORE

We invite you to join us on the journey to open up pathways to lifelong opportunities for young people. Visit bridge2employment.org to learn more about Bridge to Employment.

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