ON MAY 9, 2015, more than 1,000 participants will be laser focused on the finish line at UW Bothell’s 10th annual Husky 5K Run/Walk. The scholarship funds raised by this exciting event have allowed a number of students to remain laser focused on their academics rather than how they will pay for their education.

A decade ago, the finish line was a little less crowded. Just over 100 participants were registered for the first annual 5K Run/Walk, which was founded by the UW Bothell Alumni Council in coordination with School of Business lecturer Kim O’Neill and her project management class.

What a difference ten years makes. The number of participants has increased and so have the activities. Participants in the first run looked forward to a wonderful pancake breakfast. Last year, we saw a record number of more than 700 participants, many who brought their families and looked forward to breakfast, the UW Pep Band, the cheer team, bouncy houses, face paint and a very popular silent auction. This year will be even bigger.

“The Husky 5K will be the kickoff for the 25th Anniversary Celebration and Alumni Weekend,” says Alumni Council Fundraising Chair and 5K Event Director Michelle Huynh. “In addition to drawing 1,000 race participants, we are expecting another 500 guests who will come to watch the race, participate in other activities and celebrate this amazing university.”

The Husky 5K has been organized by UW Bothell’s Alumni Council for the past six years. Its growth and success is getting attention from the big dawgs.

“UW Seattle noticed how well we’re doing with our Husky 5K fundraising here at UW Bothell,” says Alumni Council member and past chair Mary Howisey. “They invited us to combine the event with the Dawg Dash Series, which includes Seattle, Tacoma and now Bothell.”

Scholarships have always been an important aspect for UW Bothell. Sean Marsh, director of alumni engagement and philanthropy, says fundraising needs to keep pace with scholarship needs, “With tuition rates across the nation rising, every dollar helps,” he says. “The Alumni Council wants to help meet students’ financial needs so they can thrive academically.”

Over the last nine years, the UW Bothell Husky 5K has raised more than $100,000 for scholarships. One of the many students who have benefitted from these efforts is Marlene Manzo (IAS ’14). “Receiving this scholarship made me believe I can take chances,” she says. “I held a leadership position in UW Bothell’s student government and I’ve pursued other opportunities, because I gained the courage and confidence to do so. UW Bothell has done so much for me and I look forward to the day I can give back.”