

College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc.

COLLEGE FUND NEWSLETTER

October 2011



WE'RE A 100% CHARITY!

The College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. is a very different organization. We have no employees, no salaries, no brick and mortar, no phone bills, and no rents except for our P.O. Box. We use public library facilities for our meetings. All of the administrative functions and activities of the organization are handled by the Directors who are all volunteers.

Approximately one-fifth of the funds donated by College Fund's directors and advisors cover all the operating expenses of the organization, the balance going toward student grants. Therefore, **100% of the funds donated by individuals and organizations receiving this newsletter goes directly to support students from Pinellas County.** We believe ours is a unique example of a very committed non-profit organization devoted to improving our community.

Our objective is to help highly qualified and very deserving **Pinellas County students**, who are significantly disadvantaged financially, to obtain their undergraduate college degree or their RN from fully certified and accredited colleges or universities of their choice in this country. A large number of students attend the colleges in this county and in other parts of Florida. We believe these students will make an important difference in their communities and many remain in Pinellas County after graduation to serve as role

models for achievement through individual effort.

Once we start financial support to a student, we continue that support for up to four years as long as the student remains qualified. We review each student's grades, finances and course load each term before providing the funds for the next term.

An important part of our operation is the mentoring of students, as needed. Good advice is sometimes unavailable from their families or peer groups. Many students have said our support and belief in them has made a big difference in their lives.

Over the past 45 years the College Fund has helped 630 Pinellas County residents achieve their goal of a college education. We're very proud of our local history and hope that you will support our effort to develop responsible, committed adults in our community.

*Additional details can be found our website:
www.collegefundpinellas.org*

36 STUDENTS RECEIVING GRANTS THIS YEAR

Shortly after the August 26, 2011 Board of Directors meeting of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. at the Largo Public Library, Assistant Treasurer Sherry Rankine of Clearwater began sending \$500 checks to fifteen newly-selected Pinellas County college students. These fifteen new recipients joined 21 others who had been selected in previous years and been through

the same rigorous selection process involving a review of grades and finances and a personal interview. Grants are typically \$1,000 per year in \$500 increments before each fall and spring semester.

This summer we received 203 requests for applications from students seeking grants. After screening those we sent out 155 applications to students who appeared eligible and competitive. Only 93 applications were returned and the most promising 48 of those were chosen for a personal interview by the Board of Directors. After careful consideration the fifteen with the best grades, greatest need and best interview score were selected to receive grants, the most our funding would permit.

The fifteen newly-chosen students live throughout Pinellas County – six are from St. Petersburg, three are from Clearwater, two each are from Largo and Tarpon Springs, and one each from Palm Harbor and Gulfport. Twelve are attending schools located in Florida plus one each in Georgia, New York and California. Four are freshmen, two are sophomores, seven are juniors and two are seniors.

The academic prowess of the new selectees is outstanding. One 18-year-old junior just graduated from high school and received an Associate of Arts Degree from St. Petersburg College at the same time. Two 19-year-old juniors had already completed one year of college courses when they graduated from high school. The eleven sophomores, juniors and seniors collectively have a 3.72 college grade point average. The four new freshmen collectively have a high school grade point average of 3.63 unweighted and 4.31 weighted.

Unfortunately, there are another thirteen exceptionally well-qualified candidates on a waiting list, hoping that additional funds become available. If you would like to help them, **please send your tax-exempt donation to the College Fund of Pinellas**

County, Inc., P.O. Box 673, Clearwater, FL 33757 in the enclosed envelope.

IRA GIFT OPPORTUNITY RENEWED THROUGH 2011

The Tax Act passed last December extended through 2011 the law permitting persons over age 70½ to arrange direct gifts from their IRAs to College Fund of Pinellas County up to \$100,000. To make an IRA gift, contact the custodian or trustee of your account. Donors must be age 70½ or older and own a traditional or Roth IRA. Other retirement plans, such as pensions, 401(k) plans and others are not eligible. If donors withdraw funds and then contribute them separately, amounts withdrawn will be included in the donor's gross income. It's vital that the IRA custodian or trustee make the transfer directly. IRA gifts are most advantageous to the individual donor when they count toward the minimum distributions required of individuals over age 70½, thereby reducing their amounts of taxable income.

COLLEGES ATTENDED

Over the past 46 years College Fund recipients have attended 136 different colleges and universities in 32 states and the District of Columbia. If you attended college, chances are your school is on the list which you can view on our website (www.collegefundpinellas.org). At the present time our 36 students are attending the following schools studying a variety of subjects ranging from Business, Nursing, Economics, Psychology, Engineering, Criminal Justice, and many others:

- University of Tampa (2)
- Florida State University (6)
- University of South Florida (4)
- St. Petersburg College (1)
- University of Florida (6)
- Florida A&M University (1)
- Eckerd College (2)
- Johnson & Wales University, FL (1)

- Southeastern University (1)
- University of Central Florida (3)
- Emory University, GA (1)
- Georgia Institute of Technology (1)
- University of Tennessee (1)
- University of Miami (1)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1)
- Pace University, NY (1)
- Bethune-Cookman University (1)
- University of North Florida (1)
- California State University-L.B. (1)

STUDENT RESPONSES

College expenses are increasing and our students are very appreciative of the financial support we provide. Here are several typical responses from current students:

“This scholarship is truly a blessing for my education at the University of Central Florida. I have received the \$500 check for this fall semester. Thank you again for your generosity.”

“I did receive the 1st semester check for \$500. THANK YOU SO MUCH! I really needed the help! I used the money for my Anatomy & Physiology II Online Primal Learning program and the book. It also went towards part of the purchase of my Microbiology book. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I appreciate it very much.”

“I have received the check for \$500.00 for the Fall 2011 semester. I cannot thank you enough for your consideration and ultimately your decision to award this grant to me. Please know that I will do all that I can to keep up with my studies and good grades. I will continue to challenge myself and am looking forward to my pursuit of a Doctorate in Optometry.”

“I am so grateful, and this money will help in more ways than you can imagine. I will continue to do well in school, and I will keep you updated on how

everything is going. Thanks again, there aren't any words I could use to explain how thankful I am.”

RECENT GRADUATES

We also keep in touch with a number of our students that we've supported in the past who are grateful that we were able to help them reach their goals.

Ashley Gaw graduated from the University of Florida in 2009 with a BS in Audiology and with our support attained a MS in Brain Injury Rehabilitation from UF. She interned at the VA Hospital in Tampa and is currently working for Health South in Sarasota.

We supported **Jay Stiffler** as he worked toward his degree in Economics from the University of Chicago. He later gained his JP Law degree from Case-Western Reserve in Cleveland. He now works in Houston, TX and along with a generous contribution he writes, *“I am currently an energy, oil and gas attorney in the Houston office of an international law firm specializing in the acquisition, disposition, development and operation of oil and gas interests (exploration and production activities) and the development of power projects. Good luck with the selection of scholarship recipients for the coming year!”*

Author **Ramona Bethke** received her AA from St. Petersburg College in 2000, her BA in Creative Writing from the University of Tampa in 2002, and her MAS in Film and Popular Culture from Arizona State University in 2012. Writing under the pseudonym R. MonaLeza, she has published three books in the trilogy, "Into A Life...Unbound," two books of poetry, and a novel titled "Silent Retribution." She also has appeared at various venues as a performance poet, and is currently working on several book, play and poetry projects.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR NEWS

This past year four of our Directors retired from the Board and were instated on our Advisory Board: Bill and Doris Breuning, Panchitta Carwise, and James Feazell. Our advisors provide us guidance and advice in their areas of expertise.

Currently we have 17 members on the Board of Directors who are directly involved in the selection and monitoring of the students we support, record keeping, and fund raising. Our bylaws allow up to 25 Directors to be members of our Board. While we are fully capable of conducting the regular business of the College Fund, we would like to offer the opportunity to other interested individuals living in Pinellas County to consider applying for a Board member position, particularly if you are familiar with computer programs such as Excel or with website creation. It is a wonderful experience to participate in the selection of qualified students and to follow their progress toward their life goals! If you are interested in working for a great local charity please contact us at info@collegefundpinellas.org. or drop us a line at **P.O. Box 673, Clearwater, FL 33757**. We'll arrange to have you attend one of our monthly meetings to see if you are interested. You won't be disappointed!

ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

We're sorry to have to report the passing of **Pat Seibert** (1924-2011), a long time member of our Board of Directors and recently the Advisory Board, in May. Pat became director in 1967, soon after the College Fund of Pinellas County was founded. She was very active in our community and initiated a tutoring program to prepare students for their SATs at Largo High. In later years she became a member of our Advisory Board and provided recommendations to the College Fund as it grew. She represents a life-long dedication to the growth and success of young students in Pinellas County. We shall miss her.

SPECIAL DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, December 27, 2011: Student Holiday Party and celebration of 46 years of College Fund financial aid to underprivileged students. College Fund supporters are invited to attend and meet our directors, advisors, current students and some of our past recipients from 10:00 AM to 12 noon at the **Clearwater Main Library**, 100 N Osceola Avenue in downtown Clearwater.

Friday, February 25, 2012: Annual Meeting of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. College Fund supporters are invited to attend and observe the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board as they review the annual report and elect new officers from 10:00 AM to 12 noon at the **Largo Public Library**, 120 Central Park Drive, Largo.

STATEMENTS REQUIRED BY FLORIDA STATUTES 496.411(3) & (6)

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