April 2020

Greetings!

First, let me thank you for all your past support for these terrific students. I hope this letter finds you and your families healthy and doing well during this difficult time in our country. Please know that we as a board have continued to work even though our last meeting together was the annual meeting February 22nd. We are now doing the board’s business from our homes. We are communicating by text, scanning, e-mail and even talking on the phone!

Thanks to your help, we are currently supporting 58 students of which 19 were added in 2019. I can’t begin to imagine how they are feeling today and the anxiety they must have. Are they doing classes remotely? Were some classes just cancelled? How do you replace lab experiences? What are the seniors dealing with? Will I graduate? If so when? I won’t get to celebrate with classmates, friends and family. What about walking across that stage to receive my diploma after years of work?

I have a friend who several years ago said, “The older I get the less I know for sure”. Well, one thing I know for sure, these students need our support now more than ever. We will continue mentoring them and supporting them financially. I hope you will see a way to continue your support and help us help them!

Sincere Thanks,

Britt Hart
What is the College Fund?
The College Fund of Pinellas County is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization run entirely by volunteers. Money is raised to help financially disadvantaged Pinellas County residents who have excellent scholastic potential but insufficient funds to obtain a bachelor’s degree and thereby improve themselves, their family’s living standard, and their role in the community.

The College Fund has no paid employees. The financial contributions from its Directors and Advisors exceed its administrative costs; therefore, 100% of the donations from the public are used to support students. Since its founding in 1965 the College Fund has awarded over $1.2 million to over 800 Pinellas County residents. More information about the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. can be found on our website:  
www.collegefundpinellas.org

Save the Date!
Mark Saturday, October 17, 2020 on your calendar to remind you to attend a luncheon in support of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. to be held starting at noon at the Countryside Country Club.

$12,000 Awarded to Pinellas County Students
On December 19, 2019 twenty-four college students from Pinellas County were presented $500 checks at the holiday luncheon. The luncheon, held in a hall provided by Anona United Methodist Church, is an annual event that continues the semester-by-semester scholarship support provided by the College Fund. Our students are selected based on scholastic achievement, financial need and a personal interview. Each student’s grades were reviewed by College Fund directors Sheila Keller, Shirley Lorenzo and Regan Musgrove. Treasurers Sherry Rankine and Timothy Owens distributed the checks.

In addition to the students and the College Fund board of directors, the luncheon was attended by family members of the students and several of the College Fund’s donors. The program, which included the introduction of each student, gave donors the opportunity to meet the students they are supporting.

Several students were asked to take a microphone and offer advice to their fellow students from the lessons they had learned. Our featured student speaker was Gezime Christian, a former program examiner at the White House Office of Management & Budget and a former College Fund grant recipient. Musical entertainment was provided by Dylan Armstrong, a freshman at Florida Gulf Coast University, who played a violin solo.

Students who were unable to attend the holiday party received their checks by mail. The College Fund awarded $57,000 in student grants for the fall 2019 – spring 2020 school year.

Scholarships Available Now
Pinellas County high school graduates and college students who are receiving a Pell Grant can apply now for one of over twenty $1,000/year college scholarships from the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. Details and an application form are available on the College Fund’s website www.collegefundpinellas.org. Deadline for receipt of applications is July 17, 2020. The College Fund charity has been helping Pinellas County residents earn bachelor’s degrees for 55 years.

Thanks to Pinellas Community Foundation
The Pinellas Community Foundation awarded a $10,000 operating grant to the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. in January 2020. Pinellas Community Foundation (PCF) seeks innovative and effective solutions for Pinellas County’s most challenging social, environmental and educational issues. PCF is the only charitable foundation of its kind solely dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all Pinellas County residents. The Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the College Fund and we are dependent upon its financial assistance.

Thanks to the Clearwater Community Woman’s Club
The College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. received a $2,000 Daisy Grant from the Clearwater Community Woman’s Club in March 2020. Since 1972 the GFWC Clearwater Community Woman’s Club has presented thousands of dollars through the Daisy Grants Program to non-profit organizations chosen for their outstanding service to the community. The award will enable the College Fund to support four additional college students for the fall 2020 semester.
College Fund Elects Officers

The Board of Directors of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. elected officers at their Annual Meeting on February 22, 2020. The officers are Britt Hart, President; Karen Moseley, Vice President; Kay Thompson, Recording Secretary; Tim Owens, Treasurer and Sherry Rankine, Assistant Treasurer. They will lead the College Fund Board in activities related to student recruitment, student selection and fund raising for our fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

The guest speaker at the Annual Meeting was Michelle Shimberg of Starting Right, Now, a charity that seeks to end homelessness for youth by providing one-on-one mentoring, a stable home, assisting with employment opportunities, teaching financial literacy/life skills and promoting educational achievement. The College Fund has partnered with Starting Right, Now and is currently providing scholarships to three homeless youths.

In Recognition

Many thanks to the following people who have given a gift in memory of (IMO) or in honor of (IHO) a relative, friend or colleague:

- Ms. Cecilia Tucker IMO Marvin Ivey
- Mr. Frank Lavalla Jr. IHO Britt Hart
- Mr. Robert W. Orlopp IMO Marvin Ivey
- Mrs. Bette Ra Ivey IMO Marvin Ivey
- Mrs. Geri-Kay Lumbard IMO David Lumbard
- Ms. Pamela Blanchard IMO Don Blanchard
- Ms. Suzanne Caddell IMO Patrick Caddell
- Mr. Douglas Harrell IHO Karen Moseley
- Ms. Eileen Cohn IMO Dr. Regina Fitzgerald
- Mr. & Mrs. David Rogers IMO Alex Hartman

December Graduates

Stewart Diffenderfer graduated from St. Petersburg College with a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and certification to teach K-12 mathematics.

Bryce Nichols graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology.

New Board Members

Three talented individuals joined the Board of Directors at our January 2020 Board meeting bringing needed experience. Two of them were previous College Fund grant recipients who have chosen to “give back” by joining our all-volunteer Board of Directors.

Gezime Christian, a former College Fund grant recipient, received her MA in International and Development Economics in 2013 from Yale University and is a former program examiner at the White House Office of Management & Budget. Before that she was an analyst at the U.S. Export-Import Bank. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at St. Petersburg College.

David Rogers has been a Realtor in Pinellas County for 20 years. He received his BA in History from Duke University in 1975, then began working for Carl Albert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, until Albert’s retirement. Rogers stayed on Capitol Hill until joining a small startup weekly newspaper in Savannah, GA, The Georgia Gazette, where they earned a Pulitzer Prize in 1984. He then joined the St. Petersburg Times and enjoyed working in Florida environmental, political and redevelopment issues at the paper for 17 years.

Heaven Taylor-Wynn, a former College Fund grant recipient, graduated with a BS in Telecommunication News from the University of Florida in May 2019 and now works at the Poynter Institute as a reporter on their digital media literacy project.

Career Success

Sharon Tong writes: “I was a College Fund recipient who graduated with my bachelor’s degree in Business Analytics & Information Systems in December 2018 [from USF Tampa]. I am excited to share that I recently secured my first job out of college at the Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation, a global financial services company. I’ll be working as an entry-level IT Business Analyst in their Tampa office and will start mid-July. Thank you all again for financially supporting me in my undergrad years that helped enable me to earn my degree.”

College Fund Student Receives Research Grant

Lindsey Vandermeir, a junior in Animal Science at the University of Connecticut, is currently working on her own project which is funded in part by a UConn IDEA Grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research. The goal of this project is to determine which probiotic
Strains have cholesterol-lowering and anti-inflammatory potential. The liver is responsible for producing cholesterol, in which high cholesterol levels are one of the leading components to cardiovascular diseases, one of the leading causes of death in the world. If something as simple as a probiotic could be taken in order to help and/or prevent this, it would be a huge success in the medical world.

After finishing her research and graduating from UConn, Lindsey plans to attend veterinary school to attain a DVM and pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

**Students Express Appreciation**

College expenses are increasing, and our students are very appreciative of the financial support our donors provide. Every one of our current grant recipients has a bona fide financial need and several have written us a thank you note. Here are some excerpts from a few of them:

*From a junior majoring in Nursing at the University of South Florida:* “I just wanted to say thank you for being one of this year’s recipients for the scholarship. Due to the generosity of this fund I will be able to continue my education at the University of South Florida. Thank you for this opportunity to reach my fullest potential and professional potential.”

*From a senior at the University of Tampa:* “Thank you so much for your continued support. My family and I are so very grateful for you. We appreciate you more than words can express. I absolutely love UT and I have had so many opportunities as a student there to grow and develop. My experience at UT is amazing, and I have you to thank for helping me attend this school!”

*From a senior majoring in chemistry at the University of Florida:* “I am writing to let you know I received the check in the mail. Thank you all so much for everything that you do! It is beyond generous and means so much to me. Thanks to help from you guys I will be achieving my dreams of graduation in just one semester!! Thank you again!!”

*From a senior majoring in Animal Science at the University of Florida:* “Just wanted to update you all on my experience abroad. My semester in Australia has been incredible so far. I have had the chance to ... visit Steve Irwin’s Australia Zoo and settle into life at an international university. I have made new friends and while the first few weeks I definitely felt out of my comfort zone, I am so grateful to be here. ... I am so thankful for the support from College Fund of Pinellas in allowing me to see the world, expand my horizons, and diversify my education. ... I am looking forward to the rest of the semester and can’t wait to see how much I learn.”

*From a sophomore majoring in Biomedical Engineering at the University of South Florida:* “Thank you guys so much for continuing to sponsor me and believing in my career path. I look forward to this next year as I dive deeper into my major.”

**A Final Word from a Donor**

“Each year when I donate to College Fund of Pinellas County I am buoyed by its mission and results. Here’s to more deserving young adults achieving their goals.”

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