A flair for fashion & A HEART FOR SUCCESS

Your gifts helped this young mother realize her dream of becoming a college graduate.
Pursuing a college degree as a young parent is a journey of sacrifice, courage, and unfailing hope. You have to believe in what you cannot see and what at times seems impossible. Along the way, there are setbacks, missteps, and disappointments. You may want to give up, but your little one reminds you of why you must keep going.

In March, Generation Hope reached its five year anniversary, and when I think about the past five years, the stories of struggle and triumph are what stick out the most. Our Scholars have overcome insurmountable obstacles to sit in a college classroom. They have faced ridicule, isolation, and certainly naysayers. Yet, they are committed to their education.

Their stories — their determination — are what make these years so memorable. And I have had the distinct honor of being a part of their college journeys. When they walk across the graduation stage, it is an amazing moment. Their lives — and their children’s lives — will never be the same.

When a young parent enters our program, the first experience that they have with Generation Hope is a pair of welcoming arms. We hug. We let them know that here at Generation Hope, we are focused on the future and the endless possibilities that a college degree can bring.

Now, I am thinking about the next five years, the many inspiring stories, the many important hugs, and the many walks across the graduation stage (like Jamila’s cover story). You will make all of this possible.

Thank you so much for your support over the past five years. It is changing our community. I invite you to please join us in giving hope as we look to the future.
Erika Layne Salazar

GENERATION HOPE
in my own words

“Learning is an integral part of becoming the best you can be.”

While most of us would like to see our lives play out the way we planned, that is almost never the case. As an artist, my plans of becoming a painter and selling my creations in a gallery quickly changed when I found out I was going to have a child in my senior year of college. I was determined to finish no matter what.

Having a college degree enabled me to find a steady job teaching photography and eventually gain enough financial independence to raise a family. I have learned to successfully merge my passion for creating with having a family. I firmly believe that learning is an integral part of becoming the best you can be, and for parents, it is the most valuable thing you can pass on to your child. An education will enable young parents to better provide for their kids and help break the cycle of just surviving so that they can thrive.

My actions in life are led by my heart. Generation Hope is providing young families with a chance to knock down stereotypes and prove that they do not have to be a statistic. That is why I choose to help Generation Hope in any way I can. When we come together and make strides as a community, giving what we can of our talents, time, or money, we make the world a better place for everyone.

ERIKA LAYNE SALAZAR is a free-spirited wife and mother of two with a longstanding passion for photography and art. For the past five years, she has been immersing herself in the wedding and events industry. Erika frequently donates her photography services to Generation Hope.

2015 “HOPE STROLL” RAISES $22,000

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STAY TUNED FOR THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR’S “HOPE STROLL”!

David & Abi DeLeon
When it was time to apply for college, Jamila knew exactly what she wanted to study – fashion merchandising with a minor in jewelry design. It did not matter that she would be far from friends, family and her boyfriend. Jamila – a Fort Washington, Md., native – was intrigued by the idea of being on her own in a place she had never been and going the distance to pursue her dream.

A poster promoting a design school in Georgia hanging on the wall in her high school photography classroom and a thumbs up from her teacher inspired Jamila to learn more about the Savannah College for Art and Design (SCAD). Everything fell into place, and Jamila enrolled as a freshman at SCAD in the fall of 2010, but by the summer of 2011, she was pregnant.

Jamila was stunned, but not discouraged. Her plans changed dramatically. The most immediate change was her future at SCAD. She had worked in her dorm as a resident assistant (R.A.). But now that she was expecting a baby, her job as R.A. and the income that came with it was no longer available to her. Jamila needed a new plan and fast.

Jamila’s mother had promised to support her through all four years of college, but with the impending birth of her daughter, Skye, it would likely take her more than four years to graduate.

Determined, Jamila returned to SCAD for her
sophomore year, and by the spring of 2012, she was back in Fort Washington, Md., where she completed her sophomore year at SCAD online. Skye was born in April 2012.

“I definitely had a big support system,” Jamila explained. “My mom and sister helped out a lot. Skye’s father and I were working crazy hours. My aunt was very supportive and sent me texts pushing me to find a local school to continue my education.”

Jamila was offered a job at the Naval base fitness center and began working five weeks after Skye was born. By the summer of 2012, Jamila was making plans to transfer to Marymount University in Arlington, Va., for the fall semester.

Because so few of her credits from SCAD were accepted at Marymount, Jamila would not graduate in four years as planned. That meant she would need another source of income to pay for the extra year of college. Jamila had applied for at least 20 scholarships and had not heard back from any of them.

But there was hope – Generation Hope. “My mom saw Nicole on the Steve Harvey Show,” Jamila recalled. “I was trying to figure out how I was going to pay for school, and my mom told me about Generation Hope. I pulled up their website and applied.”

Jamila was counting on the financial support Generation Hope would provide, but she got so much more. “I figured they were just going to give me money,” Jamila recalled. “I have a Sponsor and an emergency fund, and I know that I am not alone. I’ve developed networking skills, and I’m inspired by the other Scholars’ stories.”

Jamila married Skye’s father in December 2014. She will graduate from Marymount University on May 17, 2015, with a bachelor’s degree in Fashion Merchandising. Her plan is to enter the fashion world as a retail buyer and eventually own her own boutique.

But no matter where life takes her, Jamila says she will always make time to give back to Generation Hope. “I’ve only been with Generation Hope for a year,” she said. “The program has really helped me, and I want to help them.”

Written by VICTORIA VICKERS
Megan Fitzmaurice’s love for working with young people started long before she came to Generation Hope. In fact, it was during her time serving as a volunteer for CASA, where she cared and advocated for children in foster care, that a CASA client told her about Generation Hope. After doing a little bit of research, she fell in love with the mission.

Megan was inspired by the idea that education is the key to empowerment, but she also felt a personal connection to Generation Hope’s mission. As a first-generation college student, she knew firsthand how important it was to make college possible for all young people, including teen parents. “I love how dedicated Generation Hope is to doing this work,” she said, “and I really identify with the support and resources that they offer to Scholars. I faced challenges because my parents were not as familiar with college. Many of the Scholars are struggling with the same type of thing.”

Megan’s passion for young people and her personal connection to Generation Hope’s work made it a great fit for getting involved. In 2013, she came in for an interview and discussed some ideas for academic supports and interventions with Generation Hope’s Program Manager, Caroline Griswold Short. Through their conversations, the concept of a tutoring program for Generation Hope Scholars was born.

Generation Hope’s tutoring program is meant to support and empower Scholars in their academic journey. It is designed to help Scholars navigate the complexities of college coursework and provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

“Every aspect of a person’s life pours into another’s,” says Megan. “I knew I wanted to become involved.”

“My experience with CASA and my personal connection to Generation Hope’s mission motivated me to get involved,” she said. “I wanted to have a direct impact on young people’s lives and see them succeed.”

While the tutoring program is a crucial part of Generation Hope’s mission, it is just one of many ways that the organization supports Scholars. From academic coaching to career development, Generation Hope provides a holistic approach to helping young people reach their full potential.

“Generations of young people have been deeply impacted by Generation Hope,” said Caroline Griswold Short. “We are grateful for Megan’s dedication and the positive impact she has had on our Scholars.”

Megan’s story is just one example of the many inspiring stories within Generation Hope. The organization is committed to empowering young people to reach their full potential and open doors to a brighter future.
to meet the specific needs of young parenting students. It is often difficult for Scholars to take advantage of traditional tutoring programs at their schools because of their schedules, which are dictated by parenting responsibilities. Generation Hope recognized that Scholars needed extra help in their classes, but they needed that help during times and in locations that were convenient for them.

Megan became the Volunteer Tutoring Coordinator and helped to pilot the tutoring program in 2013. Through posting on volunteer websites, enlisting friends, and recruiting students from area universities, the program has grown to 102 tutors in just a year and a half and has resulted in more than 35 tutoring matches for Generation Hope Scholars.

“The most rewarding part is when a Scholar specifically tells me how tutoring has changed their educational experience,” says Megan. “At a recent training, a Scholar said that her tutor not only helped her improve in the classroom, but she also helped her gain confidence in herself.”

Megan, who also benefited from a great mentor when she was in college, believes Generation Hope’s model of providing tuition, mentoring, and academic supports really works because it ensures that Scholars have everything they need to succeed academically and in every part of their life.

“I remember when a Scholar showed me her perfect 4.0 GPA on her report card and said tutoring was instrumental to her success,” says Megan. “It was inspiring.”

Now a PhD student at the University of Maryland, Megan is proof that the sky is the limit, and she is helping Generation Hope Scholars realize their own success.

“I LOVE HOW DEDICATED GENERATION HOPE IS TO DOING THIS WORK, AND I REALLY IDENTIFY WITH THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES THAT THEY OFFER TO SCHOLARS.”
5TH BIRTHDAY
WISH LIST

YOU CAN MAKE COLLEGE POSSIBLE

Your generosity has allowed Generation Hope to celebrate five years of making college dreams possible for young parents across the D.C. metro region. We are so grateful for your support! Please help us create brighter futures for more Scholars and their children. We will once again double our numbers — supporting 60-65 teen parents in college by July — and we need your help.

☐ 30-35 caring individuals to match with the incoming class of Scholars

☐ $50 provides a pack of diapers and a pack of baby wipes to a Scholar, easing the financial burden of being a parenting college student

☐ $100 provides three expecting or parenting high school students with a college-readiness workshop that encourages them to go to college

☐ $150 provides a one-night hotel stay for a Scholar and their child during our annual Hope Conference

☐ $250 provides 10 Scholars with gas cards to help them make it to class each day for one week

☐ $500 provides a training to 20 Scholars and Sponsors to ensure that their mentoring relationships are successful

☐ $1,200 provides a one-year sponsorship for a two-year college student in our program

☐ $2,400 provides a one-year sponsorship for a four-year college student in our program

☐ $5,000 helps us ensure crisis situations do not prevent Scholars from finishing school by contributing to our Scholar Emergency Fund

☑ GENERATION HOPE
415 Michigan Avenue, NE
Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20017
(202) 656-8705
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