The Curtis Fund needs your help to continue its mission. Whether you are a former grantee, a family member of a recipient, or a friend of the Fund, you can make a difference for a student just like Amie Schiller, Blaz Mihaljevic, or Brian Lynch.

Please consider making a donation to the Emma Eliza Curtis Fund today in whatever amount feels right to you. Every contribution—large or small—matters and you will be helping a student when help is needed most.

Thank you so much!

The Curtis Fund
General Education Fund Inc.
Merchants Trust Company
P.O. Box 8490
Burlington, VT 05402-8490

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
See how on page 4!

Welcome to all of our new and former CURTIS FUND GRANTEES, FRIENDS & FAMILY!

HELP US DO MORE!

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All contributions are tax deductible to the limit of the law. Please donate online at www.thecurtisfund.org/support/donate-now or send your check in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you!

The Numbers Behind the Stories

If you watch, read, or listen to the news, you are aware of the increase in student loan debt and the growing burden on lower and middle-class families to provide an education for college-bound young people. But what are the numbers behind the stories?

In the 1980s, the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) tried to allocate enough student support in its formula to provide enough money for a student to cover the cost of tuition and fees at a State college. Today the total of that support would cover less than 80% of the cost to attend a State school. Private colleges in the 1980s allocated 20-30% of their budgets to financial aid. Today that number exceeds 50% in many cases.

As college costs have risen so has the need for financial support for those in need. Greater pressures from lower and middle-class families, particularly those with more than one child in college, have put additional pressures on college financial aid staffs to allocate precious financial aid dollars over a larger pool of candidates.

The financial aid packages provided to our Curtis Fund students, who are first-generation, low-income students, although generous, are often not enough. Our supplemental grants, although modest in comparison to the combined aid packages the schools and VSAC provide, are just enough in most cases to make it possible for most of our scholars to attend school in the fall. In many cases, our recipients get to attend their “number one school choice.”

In light of the startling statistics, The Curtis Fund is doing what it can to make a difference in the lives of so many worthy and in-need Vermont students. In their own words, here are a few stories.

The Stories Behind the Numbers

Amie Schiller
Graduated 2015 University of Vermont
Major in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology
Minor in Geospatial Technology

“I’m currently serving my third AmeriCorps term as a Trails Partnerships at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, VT.

Going to college was important to me, because I knew I needed a solid education to move forward to find a vocation that I love. The Curtis Fund was important to me, because it allowed me to focus on being a student, continued on page 2
The Stories Behind the Numbers continued

without having to constantly worry about paying for college. I also had two siblings enter college while I was getting my degree, so it lessened the stress on my family. The Curtis Fund also gave me an opportunity to have a choice in my education and my future and without it, I don’t know if I would’ve gotten the specialized field-based education so essential to my future career. If there was one thing that changed my life as a result of receiving the Curtis grant, it would be an experience that culminated in being selected as the 2014 ‘Youth Vermont Tree Steward’ Recipient by the VT Department of Urban and Community Forestry.

During my college career, I took on an internship described as ‘creating an initiative to preserve and document the state’s historic village greens’ to further my learning and experience. After 2 years, one 60-page report, 30+ college students, and hours of research later, I had created a pilot report for statewide documentation and recognition of these critical pieces of Vermont history. I was chosen as a recipient of the VTS award, because of the work I conducted on this project.”

“The fund gave me a foundation that I know I’ll be able to build on as I continue to grow.”

— AMIE SCHILLER

Blaz Mihaljevic
Currently Attending Champlain College
Major in Criminal Justice

“College is something everyone should experience. Education is key in today’s society. It helps you discover who you are. My goal was to attend College and that is what I have achieved.

The Curtis Fund literally gave me just the right amount so that I could go. I can’t imagine if it had not worked out. It took a huge weight off my family. I truly believe without this scholarship I wouldn’t be attending. As hard working and dedicated as my parents are, the expenses of college would have completely consumed them.

Getting the Curtis grant was hope. It was what I needed to continue. Frankly, no one’s life is easy. Life is a battle sometimes, especially for a first-generation American from Croatia. The fact that there is a grant such as the Curtis Grant to give the chance for students to follow their hopes and dreams to me is astonishing. It’s sometimes hard to imagine such generosity. We all should attempt to live a life like Emma Eliza Curtis. Her kindness and generosity was outstanding. I thank her.”

“We all should attempt to live a life like Emma Eliza Curtis. Her kindness and generosity was outstanding. I thank her.”

— BLAZ MIHALJEVIC

Brian Lynch
Graduated 2011 University of Vermont
Major in Microbiology

“Thanks to The Curtis Fund, I am working for UVM at the Laboratory for Clinical Biochemistry Research in Colchester. My dream was to get a job in the science field doing research and/or working for a health department and I have fulfilled my dream.

The Curtis Fund helped me get through college in a big way— I would have had almost twice the debt I have today if I had not received that grant. In fact, I may not have been able to complete college if the rest of my financial aid did not cover that amount. Because of the financial help, I was able to graduate with a bachelor’s degree with much less debt than many of my peers and to get through college in a much more comfortable financial situation. In addition, my parents thankfully did not have to take out any loans to help me pay for college.

I’m so glad that The Curtis Fund and similar funds encourage people to get their degrees and pursue their dreams. It means the nation will flourish as more skilled personnel enter the workforce doing what they love while boosting our industry, the nation will flourish as more skilled personnel enter the industry, research, and economy. We will be able to pay back the kindness given in the grants.”

“I’m so glad that The Curtis Fund and similar funds encourage people to get their degrees and pursue their dreams.”

— BRIAN LYNCH

Donations to The Curtis Fund make a difference for a lifetime

With your donation to The Curtis Fund, you can make a positive impact on the lives of Vermont students, just as Emma Eliza Curtis did. Every gift—large or small—is tax deductible and helps Vermonters achieve their dreams for education and a better life. All contributions to The Curtis Fund are tax deductible to the limit of the law.

Donate by going online to www.thecurtisfund.org/support/donate-now, or by sending your check to: The Curtis Fund, Merchants Trust Company, PO. Box 8490, Burlington, VT 05402-8490

Gratitude and Regret

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year!” These words are from a holiday song, but for me they represent the spirit resonating from the piles of thank you letters we receive from our scholars studying throughout the United States. From Florida, to California, to Missouri, to right here in Lyndon, Vermont, we hear thanks and gratitude for the help they’ve been given to further their education.

Our recipients send pictures and report cards and share their aspirations, hopes, and dreams. Their goals are ambitious. And, why not? Look how far these students have come. Many are the first in their family to go to college. Few had the financial resources or the economic and social opportunities growing up that most of their peers had. Having gotten this far, the sky’s the only limit. Our grantees include future doctors, forensic anthropologists, teachers, mechanical engineers, avionic specialists, nurses, and social workers, to mention just a few of the careers being pursued. I have no doubt, that one day, one of them will be writing this letter to all of you.

My only regret is that we could do more. The Curtis Fund trustees recognize that there is still a greater unmet need in the Vermont community. Too many qualified scholars are still unable to pursue their dreams of a post-secondary education. Our founder, Emma Eliza Curtis, did her part one hundred years ago when she created this Foundation. It’s time to do more. We have some ideas on how to expand our efforts working from the vision our foremother laid out for us. Later this year we will share some of our ideas with you.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you a Happy 2016.

Joseph Boutin, Chair, Curtis Fund Board of Trustees