VSAC Outreach Counselors – Behind-the-Scene Heroes of the Curtis Fund

IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS, WE’VE TALKED ABOUT THE VERMONT STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION (VSAC) AND HOW VITAL ITS SERVICES ARE TO THE CURTIS FUND IN IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE GRANTEES. DOING THIS WORK ARE THE VSAC OUTREACH COUNSELORS. HERE ARE A FEW OF THOSE SPECIAL COUNSELORS.

MICHELE DELHAYES
Michele has been with VSAC for 19 years. She is an Educational Counselor for the Adult Outreach Program, a TRiO Educational Opportunity Center, which is funded in part by a federal grant. The program works with adults helping them explore careers, choose college and training programs, and apply for financial aid. The adults Michele sees are often going through some sort of transition in life.

“The part I love the most about my job is giving people hope,” said Michele. “I feel like I open doors for people that they never thought could open. I love helping make their dreams come true, helping them succeed and become self-sufficient, productive people. It’s a very wonderful place to be—having the key to unlock doors!”

Also important is The Curtis Fund, according to Michele. “[The Curtis Fund] helps us help those most in need. It is a huge gift to our students, but it’s also uplifting for us as outreach counselors. It makes me feel like a fairy godmother! When a student realizes that he or she has been selected for this big gift of money, it is like winning the lottery!”

“For me, helping people achieve their dreams is what it is all about. Thank you for giving us this wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our most needy students.”

MICHELLE LEGAULT
“In 20 years as an Outreach Counselor, I can honestly say that no two days have ever been alike,” said Michelle, and it’s what she likes most about her job. Michelle’s priority is to help 6th to 12th grade, first-generation, college-bound students pursue a post-secondary education. The work involves meeting with selected students from schools in her region who are participating in a federal grant program called Talent Search.

“This scholarship opens many doors for the students I work with and can be the determining factor of whether and/or where they attend college.”

MICHELLE LEGAULT
Michelle meets with students monthly to provide support and information related to the goals of the federal grant. Often Michelle plans field trips to college campuses and arranges job shadowing experiences so her students have exposure to possible careers. The best testimony to the work that Michelle does comes from one recent graduate who said, “Michelle pushed me to reach my full potential. I wouldn’t have understood the financial aid or most of the college process without VSAC and VSAC helped me figure out my major. Michelle believed in me every step of the way!”

Michelle is involved in selecting students who meet the Curtis Fund scholarship requirements. “This scholarship opens many doors for the students I work with and can be the determining factor of whether and/or where they attend college,” Michelle said. “It’s one thing that makes my job easier in April and May!”

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MONICA SARGENT
During the course of a year, Monica keeps a list of potential nominees for a Curtis Fund grant. “I try to identify those who are attending more expensive colleges or those who have particularly compelling personal circumstances for a Curtis nomination. I also look for students who have performed well academically and who have strong potential to succeed.” Monica said that The Curtis Fund is a vital resource for the students with whom she works.

Monica, who has been with VSAC for 31 years, is the Lead Counselor in the Educational Opportunity Center. As a native Vermonter and a first-generation college graduate herself, Monica knows firsthand the difference a college education can make. “I’m a significant source of encouragement for the students with whom I work, but also, I often get them to see beyond their immediate goal to more expansive future possibilities.”

The hardest part of the job Monica feels is encouraging low-income students about higher education with the ever-growing costs. “When students are freed up from worrying about having enough money to cover the costs of their education, they are better able to concentrate on their studies, and this supports their goal achievement.” The Curtis Fund helps these students meet some of the costs and concentrate on learning.

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, P.O. Box 8490, Burlington, VT 05402-8490.
Flying the friendly skies is a former Curtis Fund recipient, Justin Turco. Inspired by his grandfather who loved planes and a family friend who was a flight instructor and took him on his first airplane ride, Justin thought, “If I can get paid to fly airplanes...that’s what I want!”

However, to be a pilot, you must have a college degree. Justin’s VSAC counselor, Steve Jonas, introduced him to The Curtis Fund. “Steve was a great guy. He helped me focus on how I would reach my dream of becoming a Pilot.” Justin went on to say, “Money was tight for my family. I couldn’t have gotten my education without the grants and loans I received. The Curtis Fund was an important part of this mix,” He also credits his parents who told him that he “could be successful at ANYTHING.”

Justin is now an international pilot for United Airlines as a Boeing 757/767 Co-Pilot. He was in Edinburgh, Scotland for the interview.

“A Former Recipient Says Thanks

Someone Special.

This past Spring, someone special will be going to college because of what a special couple has done. A former Curtis Fund scholarship recipient and his wife made a grant to The Curtis Fund this summer, which will provide funding for a full scholarship to a worthy and in need student to begin her/his education. Not only did they gift one scholarship, but they also made a commitment to provide a scholarship to one of our students each year for a very long time. And, their generosity didn’t stop there. They have informed us that we will inherit a substantial portion of their estate upon their deaths so that, in time, hundreds of young men and women will be able to pursue a post-secondary education. Their generosity, like our founder’s, Emma Eliza Curtis, will touch the lives of so many for so long it will be impossible to measure the tremendous impact it will have. We can’t thank them enough. You’ll learn more about them in issues to come. Stay tuned.

"Thank you Emma Eliza Curtis Fund. I couldn’t have done it without you.”

A FEW THOUGHTS

Joseph Boutin,
Chair Curtis Fund
Board of Trustees

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

The gift that CHANGES LIVES AND FUTURES!

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 with a student just like Justin Turco.

Please consider making a donation to the Emma 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!

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!