College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc.

COLLEGE FUND NEWSLETTER

October 2021

College Fund of Pinellas County Approves $27,600 in New Grants

On August 7, 2021, after completing four days of interviews, the Board of Directors of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. selected 23 Pinellas County residents to receive $1,200 per year grants to help with their college expenses. Board member Dr. Shirley Lorenzo called each new grant recipient to notify them of their good fortune, and $600 checks for the fall 2021 semester were mailed out by Treasurer Tim Owens. A second $600 check for the spring 2022 semester will be distributed to the students in December after their fall semester grades are reviewed.

Sixteen of the selectees are entering their freshman year, and for freshmen, the award amounts to a $4,800 four-year scholarship since students continue to receive $1,200/year if they continue to receive a Pell Grant and maintain their grades.

Students whose applications met the College Fund’s grade point average and financial need requirements were selected to be interviewed. Each interview was scored based on the student’s academic and financial preparations and their attitude about the college they were attending and the degree they were seeking.

These new grant recipients join 28 additional students selected in previous years. All totaled the College Fund expects to pay out up to $61,200 in student grants this fiscal year.

The College Fund is committed to addressing issues of racial and gender equity. Of the 23 students approved for the 2021-22 school year, 12 are students of color, 15 are women, 2 are currently homeless, and 3 will be the first in their family to attend college.

New Students Faced Hardships

The 23 students we interviewed and selected to receive grants this year overcame incredible adversities through their young lives, and yet they persevered and are now getting a college education. Many of the students live in single parent households on limited income because of divorce or death of a parent. Some assist with family members who are suffering from mental illness or disabilities. Others have endured severe abuse or have been victims of crimes. We noted an unusual number of the students are majoring in Psychology to learn how to deal with the issues they are living with and their desire to help others who face the same issues. There are three students who lived in transitional housing due to severe family conditions which included physical or substance abuse.

This past year has been very unusual in the lives of students because of the pandemic. They have had to adjust to a new environment, and we were amazed at their resiliency and strong drive to get an education. They told us how they have dealt with challenges, and many expressed that they turned to their faith or to their teachers for advice and counseling. Your donations are making an incredible difference for these students as they continue to work toward meeting their goal of a bachelor’s degree.

Our Mission

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 1965 the College Fund has
awarded nearly 1.3 million dollars in scholarships to over 860 Pinellas County residents.

For more information about the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc., go to our website, www.collegefundpinellas.org. **Watch for a newly designed website appearing soon at this address!**

**Former Director Passes**

James C. Rembert of Clearwater passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 2, 2021, at the age of 100. James served on the Board of Directors for the College Fund of Pinellas County for more than 20 years ensuring that scholarship funds were made available to students to attend college. When he retired from the Board in 2014, he was honored by the Board of Directors by electing him as a Director Emeritus.

**It’s Tax Free!**

IRA owners who are 70½ or older can make a tax-free charitable contribution to the College Fund or any other qualified charity. The contribution must be paid directly from the IRA to the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. Charitable contributions must be made by December 31st to exclude that amount from taxable income. This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.

**Measuring Success**

To provide our donors some reassurance that their donations are being well spent, we asked the question “Are the students we select to receive our grants succeeding in obtaining a bachelor’s degree?” Each summer we conduct interviews to select the students most likely to succeed in obtaining a degree from among freshman, sophomore, junior and senior applicants. So, we went back and looked at the progress of the students we selected in summer 2017, since all of them should have graduated by now. We found that all the 20 students we selected in 2017 have indeed graduated, a **100% success** rate! We hope this encouraging result gives our donors some confidence in our student selection and monitoring process.

**Grateful Students in Need**

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 Biomedical Science at the University of South Florida:**

“I appreciate all of your help. Your generosity has given me the opportunity to further my education and pursue my dreams. I chose my career path because I want to help members of my community and contribute to their success much like the College Fund of Pinellas County has done for me. I am sincerely grateful and hope to give back to this amazing organization in the future. Thank you again!”

**From a freshman majoring in Biology at Hope College in Holland, Michigan:**

“I thank you so much for the gift of your scholarship. Your gift helped me buy my textbooks and a laptop for my college classes. Thank you for caring about helping others, and for being so generous to me.”

**From a freshman majoring in Business & Finance at Utica College in New York:**

“I wanted to take the time to say thank you for picking me as one of the grant recipients. I’ve been working hard to achieve my dreams of earning a degree while playing basketball. It has been difficult financially and that is why your support is so greatly appreciated. I will be working hard to continue to achieve my goals.”

**From a freshman majoring in Marketing at the University of Tampa:**

“Thank you for sending the check in the amount of $600.00 for the Fall Semester 2021. I feel honored to have received such a generous gift from your organization and will use it towards my college expenses. It will definitely come in handy to help with such items like books and mandatory fees to mention just a few. I am currently enrolled in 16 credit hours and plan to keep a full load through my 4 years.”

**Mentoring**

Sean Schrader, a junior majoring in Business at the University of South Florida, is being mentored by our president, Britt Hart.

Sean wrote us a very thoughtful letter which highlights how a student is coping with the difficulties that our grant recipients are experiencing during the pandemic. Here are some excerpts.
“Thank you so much for awarding me a scholarship for the 2021 Fall school semester. As with receiving this award in the Spring of 2021, I am very grateful for the opportunity to have financial support to aid my academic goals.

“As we have all endured the many challenges that the last year has brought us, it has made me realize now more than ever before why access to a higher education is something that should never be taken for granted. Through this scholarship, it allows me to focus more on my schoolwork, and community involvement, and less on how my academic endeavors will be funded. …

“Additionally, I have been very fortunate to work with Mr. Britt Hart who has been a wonderful mentor to provide guidance as I navigate through college.

“Thank you so much for the financial support that you continue to provide me, and to so many students throughout the Tampa Bay Area.”

**Success in College**

We monitor each grant recipient’s school progress so donors can be assured their contributions are supporting industrious students dedicated to obtaining their bachelor’s degree. We received these notes from College Fund grant recipients who recently graduated:

*From a 2021 graduate in Health Science from the University of Southern California:*

“Thank you for your congratulatory words. I want to thank you for your continued support throughout my journey in higher education. Without College Fund, attending an out-of-state college would not have been possible.

“I will graduate from the University of Southern California on May 14th with a Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and a minor in Business. In June, I will begin a 6-month internship at True Capital Management in a Client Relations role.”

*From a 2021 graduate from Marquette University in Marketing:*

“Thank you! My career plan after graduating from Marquette University is to work at Mid-America Real Estate Group as an Investment Sales Marketing Coordinator in downtown Milwaukee, WI. Thank you again for your support!”

*From a 2021 graduate in Biomedical Engineering at Bob Jones University:*

“I graduate with my bachelor's degree this Friday. I plan to continue my studies at the University of South Florida studying to get my Master’s degree in Biomedical Engineering. Thank you so much for your support which has gotten me this far!”

*From a 2021 graduate in Information Communication Technology at Florida State University:*

“Thank you for reaching out! I did graduate this semester with my B.S. in Information Communication Technology. For my future career plans, I have accepted a full-time position as a junior web developer at Brandt Information Services in Tallahassee, FL. I plan to live in Tallahassee for the next few years and work at Brandt to gain experience in the field. Thank you for the years of financial and moral support!”

**Civic Organizations & Charities Support Us**

Since 2007 the Optimist Club of St. Petersburg has been donating $1,000 a year to the College Fund to provide a grant for a student, more recently in memory of former club member and former College Fund director Marvin Ivey. This year, as the College Fund increased its student grant to $1,200 a year, the Club correspondingly increased its contribution to $1,200 for which we are exceedingly grateful.

College Fund received a very generous gift of $3,907.63 from the Francis Kierman Schoonmaker Memorial Fund at the Pinellas Community Foundation for 2019 and 2020. We notified the Foundation that three of the new students we interviewed who are first in their families to attend college will be funded by their generosity.

We are grateful to AMSCOT Financial for selecting College Fund to receive one of the 23 Mini-Grants
to service organizations throughout Florida in the amount of $1,000. We thank Mr. Deveron Gibbons who works with AMSCOT for his efforts to help us receive this donation because of an appeal from a relative who is one of our board members.

College Fund received $827.78 in interest from the Pinellas Community Foundation from a fund the Foundation uses to collect endowments sent to them for the benefit of the College Fund.

Welcome New Directors

The College Fund Board of Directors welcomed two new members this year, one who retired from Raymond James and one who has recently joined Raymond James.

Alaina Butler joined the Board at its April 2021 meeting. Alaina is the Longevity Planning Consultant at Raymond James, helping connect advisors and branches to the resources they need to help their clients and clients’ families holistically. Alaina recently earned her Master’s in Business Administration from the University of Tampa and graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Tampa Sykes College of Business with a Bachelor of Science in Management. Alaina is a former College Fund grant recipient and believes her purpose is to help others.

Joseph “Joe” Blanton joined the Board at its June 2021 meeting. He received his B.S.B.A. degree from the University of Florida. Joe retired from Raymond James where he worked for 33 years, first as a managing director of their fixed income operations and then as a senior investment advisor in the home office. Previously Joe worked with Sun Bank and Barnett in their trust department as an investment officer and for a private investment counseling firm. Joe is currently supporting other not-for-profit charities, including the St. Pete College Foundation, the endowment fund at First United Methodist Church of Clearwater, and previously the Florida United Methodist Children’s Home.

Memorial Gifts

Many thanks to the following people who have given a donation in memory of (IMO) or in honor of (IHO) a relative, friend or colleague since our April 2020 brochure:

Mr. Donald Haynes IMO Marvin Ivey
Ms. Vera Baker IMO Oscar & Hazel Hopkins
Ms. Katherine Chisolm IMO Oscar & Hazel Hopkins
Ms. Suzanne Quido IMO Carolyn Coram
Ms. Rae Newman IHO Anona Missions
Restani Family Trust IMO Marvin Ivey
Ms. Margena Hinley & Ms. Marian Goodman IHO Bette Ra Ivey
Mr. Timothy Trzinski IMO Robert Michael Moore
Ms. Jessica Denman IMO Robert Michael Moore
Mr. Louis Heinzs IMO Robert Michael Moore
Mr. Ronald Maniscalco IMO Robert M. Moore
Mr. Robert & Mrs. Mary Ellen Weiland IMO Robert M. Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Brasher & family IMO Robert M. Moore
Mr. Eugene & Mrs. Laurie Sanders IMO Robert M. Moore
Mr. Marc Vallin IMO Robert M. Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Allen Titzworth IMO Ellie Bennett
Mrs. Bette Ra Ivey IMO Marvin Ivey
Ms. Maria Davis IMO Robert M. Moore
Ms. Jennifer Hooker Moore IMO Robert M. Moore
Mrs. Elizabeth & Mr. Luis Vallin IMO Robert M. Moore

Special Date to Remember

Saturday, February 26, 2022: ANNUAL MEETING of the College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc. Pandemic situation permitting, 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 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Seminole Community Library, 9200 113th Street, Seminole.