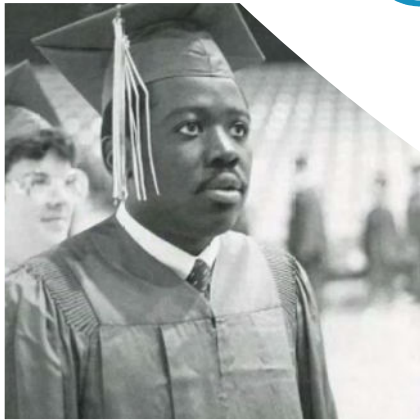




40TH ANNIVERSARY
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Celebrating 40 YEARS OF LIFE CHANGING SCHOLARSHIPS



LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

OPENING DOORS
TO *Opportunity*

For 40 years, the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties has been opening doors to higher education through our need- and merit-based Scholarship Program, sustained by champions of higher education like you.

Scholarships are one of the most powerful tools we have in changing the trajectory

of entire families and communities. Their effect on economic mobility is immediate — and the need is rising.

As we commemorate our Scholarship Program's 40th anniversary, we hope the stories on the following pages inspire and motivate you to give for good and open more doors to opportunity.

Yours in philanthropy,

Joanne Julien, M.D.
Chair, Scholarship
Committee

Jeffrey A. Stoops
Chair, Board of
Directors

Danita R. DeHaney
President and CEO



40 YEARS OF *Impact*
BY THE NUMBERS

1985
first awards
distributed

270
colleges and
universities attended

\$17.7M
distributed

3,231
scholarships
awarded



across
42
states

139
scholarship funds
created by donors



THE Scholarship SOCIETY

Celebrating four decades of our Scholarship Program's impact starts with honoring the people and organizations who made it possible: Our donors.

To recognize their passion for higher education and commitment to closing our area's opportunity gaps, we welcome the individuals and organizations that have founded scholarship funds into our exclusive Scholarship Society.

On behalf of the thousands of college graduates whose lives have been transformed thanks to your foresight and generosity: **Thank you.**

Mary Pat and Darren Alcus
Anne D. Alvern
Helen M. Andrews*
Patricia Atwater*
Ellen and Kevin Audin
George H. and Mary Liz Bailey*
Sherry and Tom Barrat
Laurence E. Barreca*
Maura and William E. Benjamin*
Gail and Stig* Bjork
Milton J. Boone*
Anne M. and Robert Branen
Bertha and Harry Bronstein*
Lucy Cesa*
Grace B. Clark*
Sanjena V. Clay
Maureen Cleary
Julian Cohen*
Carol Collins*
Sigrid Crede-Meisell
LaRue and Donald E.* Dahlberg
Dawn M. Darby*
Elaine Bennett Darwin
James H. Davis*
James C. (Chip) DiPaula
Donald J. Donahue
Mary D. Dorsey
Mae* and Robert W. Eddleman
Edward T. Bedford Foundation
Mary and Gregg Elfreth*
Charlie Lovett Ellington*
Exchange Club of Wellington
Sylvia Faust
Michael W. Ferro, Jr.
Nettie Spiro Finkle*
Mark Foley
Jeannie and Steve Fowle
Ernest Frank*
Peter A. Freudenberg and Stephanie Flicker
Friends of the Gale Academy of
Environmental Science and Technology
Gayle and Paul Gross

Gubelmann Family Foundation
Gunster
Richard H. Gustafson*
Jean B. Gutkin
Jane Handley*
Cheryl and Will Harman
Dorothy and Vernon A. Harrington*
Linda* and Harlen Hatfield
Heather and Patrick Henry
Christopher T. Hill
J. Peter Hoffman*
Edith Howland*
Martha K. Husvar*
Bobby and JoJo Julien
Eric J. Keiper
Peggy Keyes
Laura Klein*
Marianne and William L. Kollmer
Lawrence A. Sanders Foundation
Richard G. Lepeska*
Christine and Hugo Liberti
Fred Love*
The Hon. Eva W. Mack*
James Mackey*
Charlotte Mandelblatt
Karen and Norbert S. Marcelle III
Lilly McCarthy*
McDavid Group Charities, Inc.
Connie McEvoy*
Esther C. McShurley*
Adele and George F. Merck
Sydelle and Arthur I. Meyer*
Gina and Courtlandt G. Miller
Sgt. Matthew A. "Bump" Mitchell*
Judith and Albert* Napierkowski
Mabry M. Noxon*
Perry-Belle and Phillip D. O'Connell, Sr.*
Jane and Victor Oristano*
Harvey E. Oyer III
Darryl B. Padgett
Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce
Palm Beach County Estate Planning
Council, Inc.

Palm Beach Kennel Club
Palm Beach Newspapers
Donald M. Paterson*
PBC Society of Plastic Surgeons
Dorothy Adams Peck
Patricia Pedersen*
Peter J. Sharp Foundation
Quantum Foundation
Relgalf Charitable Foundation
Robert and Deborah Jacobson
Charitable Trust
Irving R. Rutkin*
J. Lawrence Sartory*
Jonathan R. Satter
Joan and Robert A. Satter
Margaret and Robert Schuemann
Claire B. Schultz*
Nadine Allen and Sanjiv Sharma
Scott A. Sheridan
Jerome R. Siegel
Mildred and Daniel R. Smith*
Beverly Sommer
Rebecca and James Sorensen
Annette and Harold P. Stern*
Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative
of Florida
Sunburst Foundation
The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation
The Janirve Foundation
The Walter & Adi Blum Foundation
The Weitz Company LLC
Patricia Toppel
Barbara and Edward C. Trimble*
John Trnik
Roberta and Stephen R. Weiner
Nancy Widell*
Carolyn L. Williams
Willoughby Foundation
Mrs. Ralph O. Wood*
David Yanis*
*deceased

ABOUT OUR *Scholars*

WHERE OUR SCHOLARS CALL HOME

89% of our scholars come from Palm Beach County and **11%** come from Martin County; the Top 10 hometowns include:

1. West Palm Beach
2. Boca Raton
3. Lake Worth
4. Jupiter
5. Boynton Beach
6. Palm Beach Gardens
7. Stuart
8. Belle Glade
9. Wellington
10. Delray Beach

11%

Martin County

89%

Palm Beach County

WHERE OUR SCHOLARS GO

74% STAY IN-STATE to attend Florida's own outstanding colleges and universities. In fact, the Top 10 destinations of our Scholars are all here at home:

1. University of Florida
2. Florida Atlantic University
3. University of Central Florida
4. Palm Beach State College
5. Florida State University
6. University of South Florida
7. University of Miami
8. Florida A&M University
9. Palm Beach Atlantic University
10. Florida International University

26% GO OUT-OF-STATE to some of the country's most prestigious colleges and universities. Here are the Top 10 destinations:

1. Duke University
2. University of Pennsylvania
3. Cornell University
4. Harvard University
5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
6. New York University
7. University of Southern California
8. Vanderbilt University
9. Georgia Institute of Technology
10. Princeton University

74%

stay in-state

26%

go out-of-state

A *Pioneering* ACT OF PHILANTHROPY: DON DAHLBERG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

FIRST, BUT NOT LAST: The Dahlberg family set up the Community Foundation's inaugural scholarship fund; to date, nearly 140 more donors have followed suit.

THE NAMESAKE: Donald (Donnie) David Dahlberg was a 16-year-old Jupiter High School student who tragically passed away in an automobile accident.

A VIBRANT LIFE: Outgoing and sociable, Donnie played football, held first chair in trumpet, and is remembered fondly as a happy light with a big heart.

SINCE 1983: 45 Jupiter High School students have received a Dahlberg Scholarship through \$77,000 in awards.

On Christmas Eve of 1982, an accident on A1A forever changed the lives of Jupiter's Dahlberg family. Their 16-year-old son, Donnie, was driving home from a holiday party in stormy weather when he collided with another car, ending his life and unintentionally changing the trajectory of thousands of others' lives.

"Instead of opening presents on Christmas Day, we were looking at burial plots," remembers LaRue Dahlberg, his mother, now 95. "We wanted to do something to honor him. Donnie was such a vibrant young man, full of life and promise. It seemed right to help other young people like him continue their education."

Fellow church members and neighbors began to donate, and soon LaRue and her husband Donald, an engineer at Pratt and Whitney for over 30 years, sought a partner to collect, grow, and administer the funds that totaled \$10,800.

The sum wasn't huge in LaRue's estimation, but a neighbor was on the Community Foundation's Board of Directors and

convinced her that philanthropy starts in all sizes. She connected the Dahlbergs to the Community Foundation and the couple opened the organization's inaugural scholarship fund in 1983.

The Don Dahlberg Memorial Scholarship Fund is intended for seniors at Jupiter High School, where Donnie attended, who share his passion for sports as well as his ambition to attend college.

"I thought we would give one or two scholarships. But it just grew and grew — even one of my fifth graders eventually received a scholarship!" says LaRue, who was an elementary school teacher for over 30 years.

"I never had the idea that Donnie's scholarship would kick-start such a big program at the Community Foundation, but I'm happy that his life and legacy have had a ripple effect on an entire community."

At Right:
Don "Donnie"
Dahlberg



Below: Donnie, his dad, Donald, his sister, Susan, and his mom, LaRue



"I am grateful and honored to be a recipient of the Dahlberg Scholarship. This fall, I will be pursuing a degree in Digital Journalism with a minor in Art. I am incredibly grateful and committed to making the most of this opportunity as I turn over a new chapter in my life."

— **Lea Abito**

Dahlberg Scholar
Florida International University
Class of 2028



"I will soon be graduating with honors with a joint degree in computer science and business administration. This summer I gained valuable experience as a Product Manager intern at Capital One focused on improving fraud detection and the customer service experience. Thanks to the Community Foundation's scholarship support, I'm looking forward to the next chapter of my career."

— **Jiazhen Li Ruan**

*Bedford Foundation Scholar
University of Southern California
Class of 2025*

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

EDWARD T. *Bedford* FOUNDATION

SCHOLARSHIP: Edward T. Bedford Foundation Scholarship Fund

SUPPORTS: Students graduating from a Palm Beach or Martin County high school with a record of academic excellence in athletics, artistry, literary, musical and other pursuits

SINCE 2009: 142 students have received an Edward T. Bedford Foundation Scholarship through \$1.4 million in awards

For more than 15 years, the Edward T. Bedford Foundation has been a significant supporter of the Community Foundation. In fact, of the many scholarships the Community Foundation has awarded over the years, the Bedford Foundation's award is notable for the volume of its impact. Over 140 local students are Bedford Scholars, one of the highest numbers for a scholarship fund in the Community Foundation's history.

"The grant for scholarships that the Bedford Foundation issues each year to the Community Foundation is by far the largest, and significantly larger than any others we award," said Ron Fick, a lawyer and Bedford Foundation trustee. "It has always been one of the highest priorities for the family and it is so gratifying to see their legacy live on through these scholarships and help so many students achieve their higher education goals," said the longtime family friend.

Established in 1994 by Palm Beach resident E. T. Bedford Davie, the Bedford Foundation is named in honor of his maternal grandfather, Edward T. Bedford, who was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1849 after his parents emigrated to the United States in 1848.

Edward worked initially as a salesman for Charles Pratt & Co., selling lubricating and heating oils. Through collaboration with his friend, Robert Chesebrough, he helped develop and market the petroleum byproduct now more commonly known as Vaseline. Edward later became a sales agent for Standard Oil, and was named a director in 1903.

Edward was a personal friend of John D. Rockefeller and his business acumen was highly regarded. He was the frequent subject of news articles and was even mentioned in Dale Carnegie's seminal work, "How to Win Friends and Influence People." Edward died in 1931, at age 82, in Westport, Connecticut.

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT:

Emma FARIELLO

HOMETOWN: Palm City, Martin County

UNIVERSITY: University of Florida, marketing major

SCHOLARSHIP: Julian and Eunice S. Cohen Scholarship Fund

FUN FACT: She loves writing and getting to exercise her creativity; recently studied abroad in Galway, Ireland

Emma Fariello grew up with a passion for learning. With parents who both held undergraduate degrees, education was always a significant part of her life. Emma, however, faced the daunting prospect of financing her college education, which often overshadowed her academic achievements at South Fork High School.

“The thought of college had always been associated with large numbers swirling around in my head,” she says.

The turning point came during her AP literature class, when a classmate encouraged her to apply for a scholarship from the Community Foundation. Emma decided to take the plunge and completed the application in a single day. She enjoyed the process, which allowed her to express her authentic self.

Emma's interview with the scholarship committee was one that she'll never forget.

“I distinctly recall leaving my interview with a brand-new perspective,” she said. “And I had never felt more grown up and like my own person than during those 30 minutes.”

The committee's genuine interest and support left her feeling more confident about her path ahead.

Finally receiving the scholarship from the Community Foundation was a significant relief for Emma and her family — and she soon found herself on the campus of the University of Florida. The scholarship allowed her to complete her first two years of her undergraduate degree with no loans or student debt, and covered her housing and tuition. “For the first time in ages, I got to embrace learning without all of the anxiety that used to accompany it.”

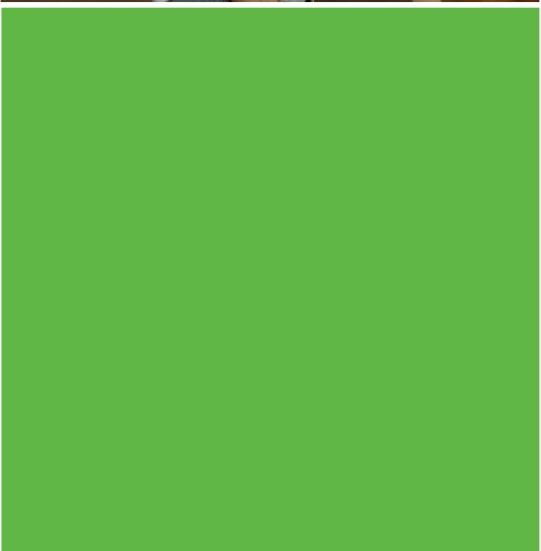
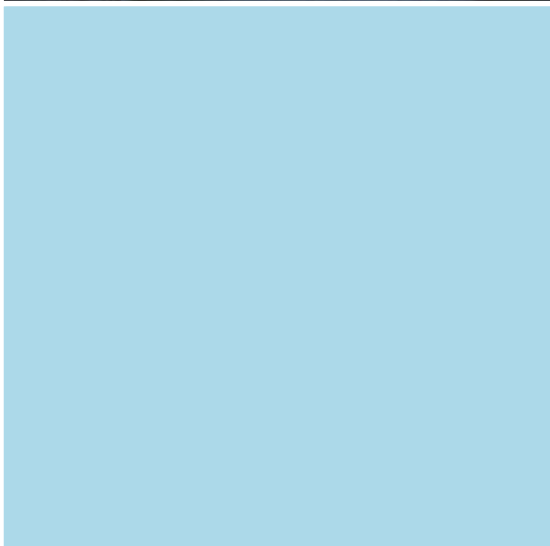
Although matriculating to a large university catapulted her personal growth, Emma also found herself comparing her own means, intelligence and situation to those around her. “However, having the privilege to attend college has given me so much confidence in who I am as a person, and that's all that truly matters,” she reflects.

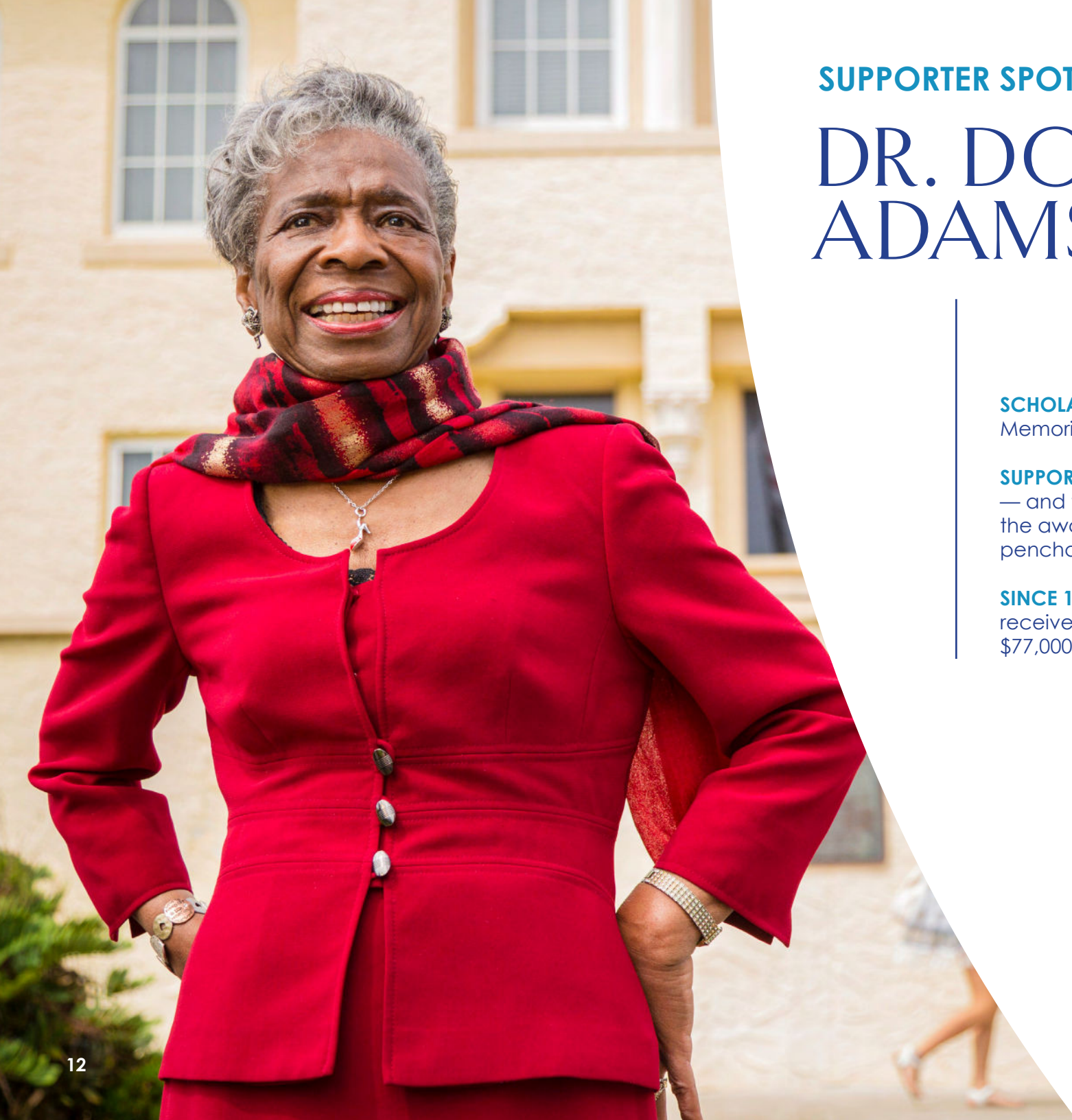
As Emma enters her junior year, she is not only excelling in her dual majors but also expanding her worldview. This summer, she traveled outside of the United States for the first time to intern and study abroad in Galway, Ireland — an experience made possible by the scholarship.

On campus, Emma has embraced various leadership roles. This fall, she will serve as a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences ambassador and a mentor for the Florida Leadership Academy. These roles allow her to give back to the UF community, helping other students navigate their own paths like she has.

In the future, Emma seeks to continue higher studies at UF, aspiring to complete a law school degree with a focus on environmental law. And, ultimately, she imagines developing a career that speaks to her with purpose.

Today, Emma is deeply grateful for the support of her scholarship donors, whose philanthropy has allowed her to build a full academic and personal life. “It is a priceless feeling being able to wake up every morning knowing that others have invested into my future, with their confidence backing up every step and decision I make.”





SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

DR. DOROTHY ADAMS *Peck*

SCHOLARSHIP: Stephen Madry Peck, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund

SUPPORTS: In the spirit of her late son — and the scholarship's namesake — the award is aimed at students with a penchant for languages

SINCE 1990: 20 local students have received a Peck Scholarship through \$77,000 in awards

Dr. Dorothy Adams Peck, who became the Community Foundation's first Black Board of Directors member and fundholder in 1986, as well as a philanthropist and honored member of the Legacy Society, stands as a critical figure in our Scholarship Program's history.

Dr. Peck was born in Waycross, Georgia, but moved to Palm Beach County in 1969, where she was an educator at Palm Beach High School, now Dreyfoos School of the Arts, and at Roosevelt High School. She would later become North Area School District Superintendent and, upon her retirement, begin missionary work in Africa.

Dr. Peck's son, Dr. Stephen Madry Peck, Jr. would follow in his mother's footsteps. A graduate of Twin Lakes High School in West Palm Beach, Stephen was a scholar with a deep interest in foreign languages and cultures.

His academic journey took him across Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and South

America, where he immersed himself in research and language studies. He was also proficient in eight languages besides his native English, and was a professor of Romance Languages at UCLA.

Stephen's insatiable hunger for teaching and learning influenced his professional and philanthropic pursuits before he tragically passed away from a brain tumor. To honor his legacy — and encourage the same passion in young people he would've inspired had he been alive today — his mother, Dr. Peck, established the Stephen Madry Peck, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund in 1990 with the Community Foundation.

This scholarship supports graduates who seek to pursue degrees in French or Spanish, reflecting Stephen's lifelong dedication to language studies and cultural exchange.

"I just want some youngsters to know that they can make a difference, and education is key," Dr. Peck explained.



At Left:
Dr. Stephen
Madry Peck, Jr.

At Right:
Rashida Polk,
2007 Peck
Scholar



At Left:
Toni-Ann Miller,
2008 Peck Scholar



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:



SCHOLARSHIP: The Frederick A. DeLuca Scholarship Fund

SUPPORTS: Students who may have underperformed in high school, but possess drive, determination, and talent

SINCE 2021: 50 local students have received a DeLuca Scholarship through \$500,000 in awards

Because of its deep investment in, and expertise on local issues, the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties is one of the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundations' select few and highly valued philanthropic partners. With a lean staff, the DeLuca Foundation extends its changemaking work through thoughtful collaboration.

Judith Fletcher, a program officer at the DeLuca Foundation, spearheads the organization's Palm Beach County grantmaking and relationship-building initiatives. With a keen eye for strategic distribution, Judith is on a mission to ensure that each grant is a catalyst for transformative change within the community by not just by focusing on funding but also by forging strong partnerships and fostering impactful projects that make a lasting difference.

"That's why we appreciate the Community Foundation's deep knowledge of and engagement with the community,"

says Fletcher. "Not only does it have the finger on the pulse of what our neighbors really need to be successful, we see the outcomes we are looking for."

Created in 1997 by the late Frederick DeLuca, co-founder of the global Subway® restaurant chain, the organization channels its grantmaking efforts into building healthier communities, developing youth, creating a skilled workforce, promoting arts education and outreach, and providing scholarship support.

The Community Foundation deeply values its close-knit and supportive relationship with the DeLuca Foundation, which was founded upon shared goals and impactful initiatives that uplift the community together.

"We believe that what we put into the community will have a positive impact in helping people improve their lives," says Fletcher. "The Community Foundation has the expertise and leadership to bring this impact to action."



"The Community Foundation has provided me with the resources to pursue my passion of becoming a doctor while unlocking doors to opportunities that seemed elusive before. I am able to focus on academics and extracurriculars without the constant worry of paying for tuition or juggle second or third jobs to cover expenses. I have been able to excel academically, give back to my community through volunteering, and make the most of my college experience."

— **Dodlee Mosilme**

DeLuca Foundation Scholar
Florida Atlantic University
Class of 2025



SPOTLIGHT ON: _____

Lyla
IBRAHIM:

- NAME:** Lyla Ibrahim
- HOMETOWN:** West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County
- HIGH SCHOOL:** Suncoast Community High School
- UNIVERSITY:** Stanford University, computer science major
- SCHOLARSHIP:** Barrat Family Scholarship

As the eldest daughter of two immigrants (her dad immigrated from Egypt and her mom from Ireland), Lyla Ibrahim was on her own with no frame of reference for how to navigate the college application process. "It was quite confusing and scary for me," she said.

With two siblings and parents with severe medical conditions, figuring out how to pay

for her college education also fell on Lyla's shoulders. All of this while still managing to work two or three jobs throughout high school to help support her family.

It was a daunting experience. After submitting applications to a number of colleges, she eventually committed to one after being waitlisted by eight others. And then things got interesting. One week before her high school graduation, she learned that she was taken off the waitlist and accepted into Stanford.

"That's when everything changed," she said. "At first I was scared I would not be able to afford Stanford." Average annual tuition and fees at the prestigious, private research university are more than \$58,000. On top of the hefty price tag, Lyla was also apprehensive about packing up everything and moving across the country so far away from her family and friends.

However, Lyla knew that attending Stanford was the opportunity of a lifetime and one that she could not pass up. She began looking into other funding resources, which led her to the Community Foundation's Barrat Family Scholarship, ultimately fulfilling her higher education dream.

Thanks to the Barrat family's generous support and partnership with the Community Foundation, Lyla is entering her sophomore year at the famed California institution this fall.

So far, Lyla has been making the most of her Stanford experience. She participated in TreeHacks, Stanford's premier hackathon,

where the country's brightest engineering students are flown to Stanford's campus to build solutions to the world's largest challenges for 36 hours straight.

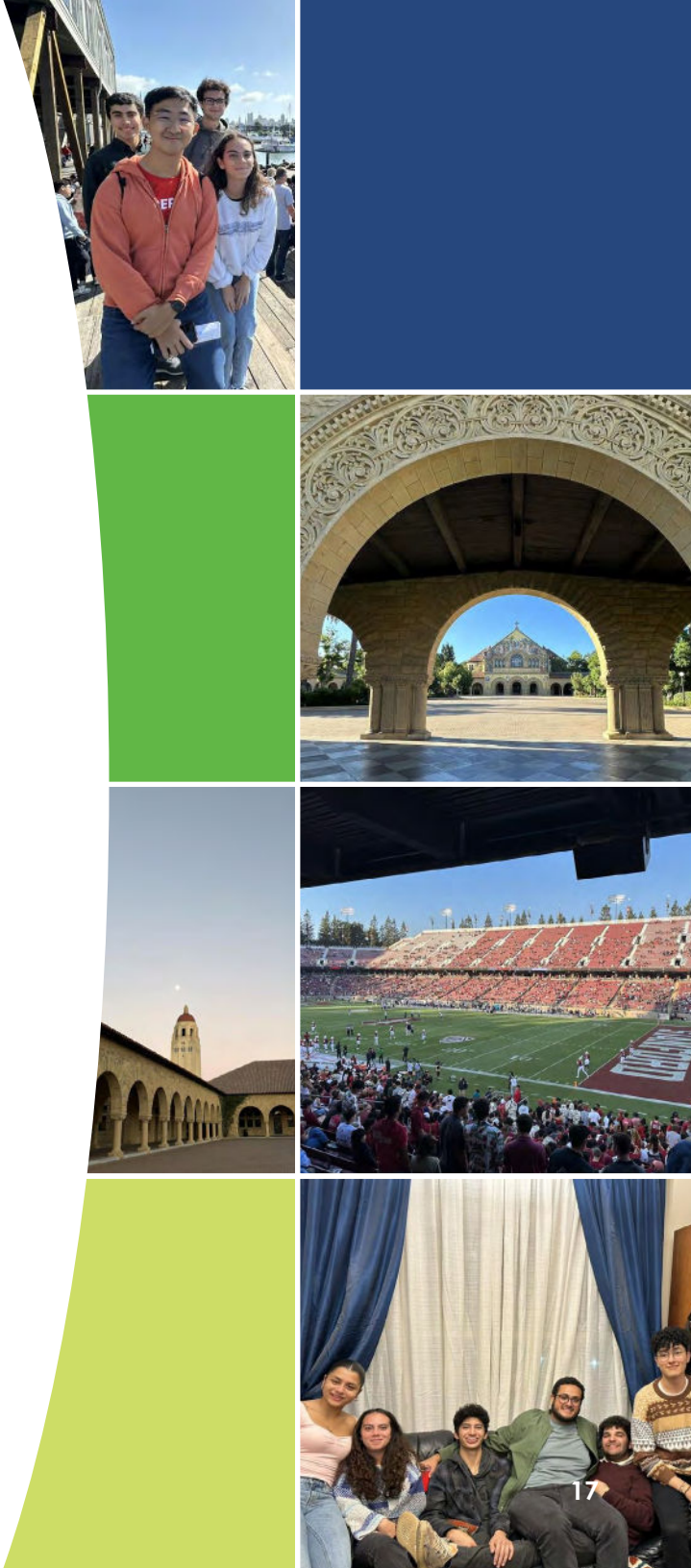
She's worked on international relations issues through the Women in National Security program at the Gordian Knot Center for National Security Innovation, toured the local FBI offices, visited the Google wing, a drone delivery company, and conducted research with the Aerospace Engineering department on plane spoofing attacks. She is also involved with the Women in Computer Science Club, Orthodox Christian Campus Ministries Club, and the Irish Student Association.

Lyla's work ethic, perseverance and willingness to venture outside her comfort zone continue to pay off. This summer, she received an internship position at NextEra Energy, the parent company of Florida Power and Light, where she was part of the Restoration Spatial View team focused on the power distribution grid.

As her educational journey continues, Lyla is grateful for all the doors her scholarship has helped open and looks ahead with eager excitement.

"I am so thankful for the partnership the Barrat's have with the Community Foundation and the support they have provided."

The Barrats will be honored with the annual McIntosh Award this year at the Community Foundation's Founders Luncheon, where Lyla can meet and thank them in person.



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

Charities

THE McDAVID GROUP

SCHOLARSHIP: America's Heroes Scholarship Fund

SUPPORTS: Children or spouses of fallen law enforcement officers

SINCE 2022: 5 students from all around the United States are America's Heroes Scholars through \$200,000 in awards

In the summer of 2016, five police officers were tragically killed in Dallas, Texas. As Jim McDavid listened to the radio commentary in his truck, the gravity of the situation profoundly impacted him. At that moment, he resolved to dedicate his time and resources to support law enforcement personnel.

"I discovered that there were very few charities that support law enforcement families, and the money raised was very small in comparison to other notable charities," says McDavid, a Tequesta resident with his wife, Maria. In response to this need, he founded McDavid Group Charities, and in eight years of this program, the foundation has already raised upwards of \$4 million in scholarship funds.

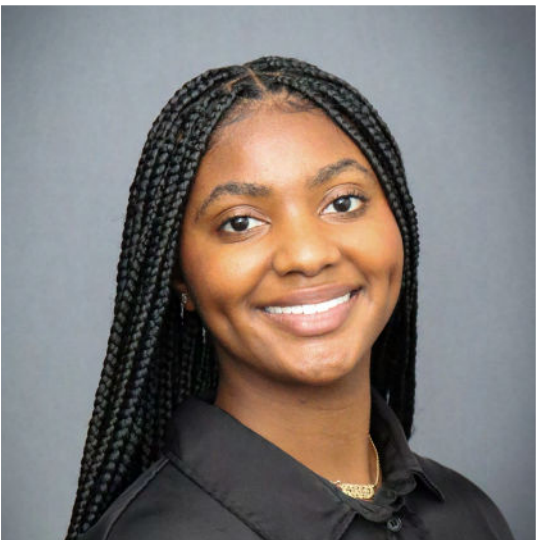
By providing educational opportunities, the scholarship fund helps ensure that the children and spouses of fallen law enforcement officers have access to the resources they need to pursue their

educational aspirations, while also building a sense of community and support among those affected by the loss of a hero.

"They are more than just police officers; they are husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, family and friends," says McDavid. And, in this way, the America's Heroes scholarship seeks to go beyond providing financial assistance; it also serves as a beacon of hope and solidarity for families grappling with and navigating their loved one's legacy.

A proud partner of the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, the McDavid Group Charities' America's Heroes scholarship is a testament to the enduring gratitude and support for those who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. And reinforcing our commitment to honoring fallen law enforcement personnel through education exemplifies the transformative power of philanthropy in uplifting and honoring our nation's heroes.

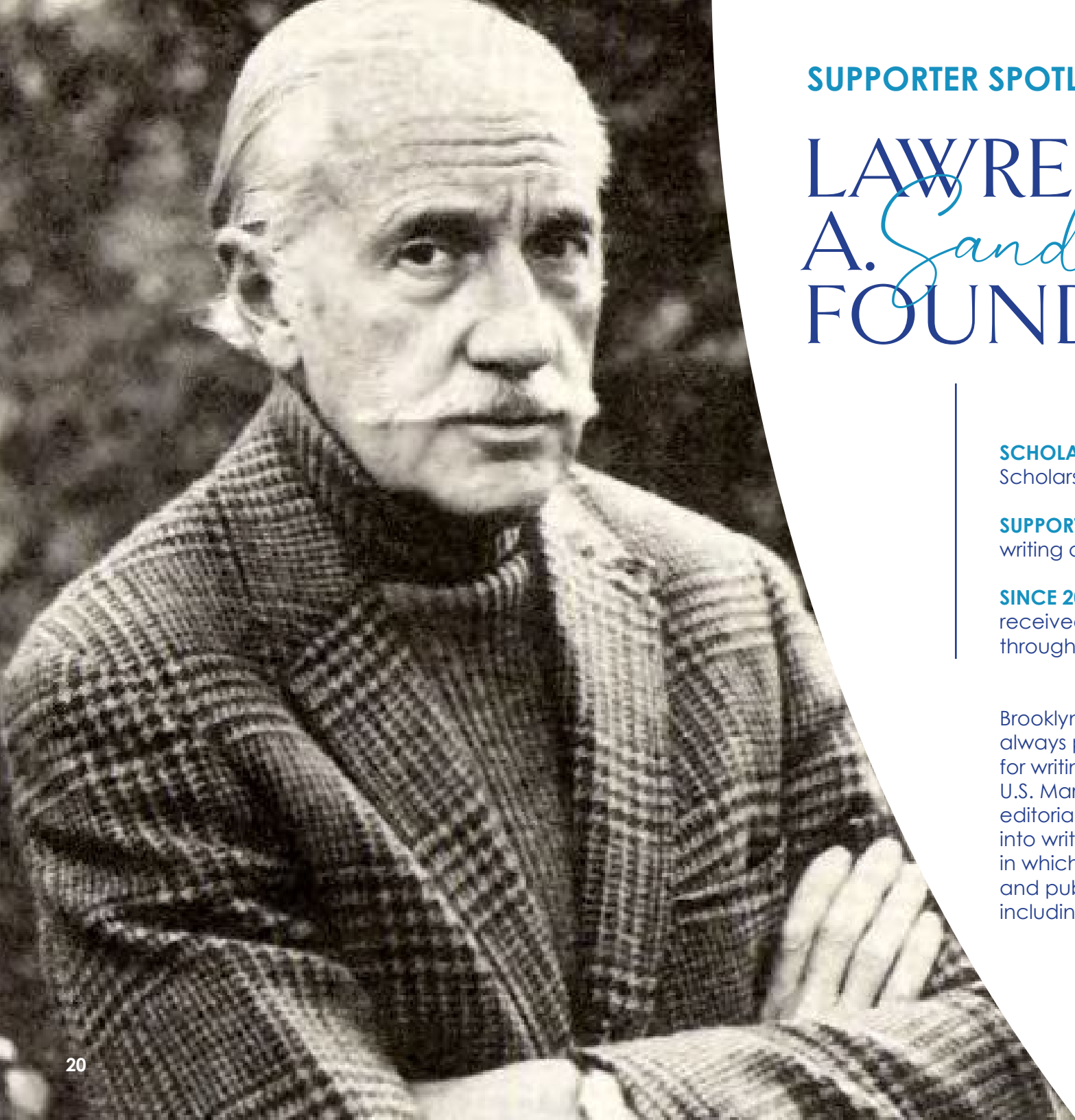
Below: Jim and Maria McDavid with Danita R. DeHaney, President and CEO



"Thank you for believing in me and investing in my dream and my future in data science. I will continue to work hard in college to honor my hero, my dad, an officer who died in the line of duty when I was three months old."

— Jacob Steve Favela

America's Heroes Scholar
Chapman University
Class of 2028



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

LAWRENCE A. Sanders FOUNDATION

SCHOLARSHIP: Lawrence A. Sanders Scholarship Fund for Creative Writing

SUPPORTS: Students with a flair for writing and a love for literature

SINCE 2000: 40 local students have received a Sanders Scholarship through \$320,000 in awards

Brooklynite Lawrence Sanders had always possessed a remarkable talent for writing. Following his service in the U.S. Marines, he began writing for editorial magazines before transitioning into writing crime fiction — the field in which he would find great success and publish nearly three dozen novels, including the Arch McNally series

about a Palm Beach private investigator. Three of his novels were even adapted into popular films.

But as his literary career flourished, Sanders felt a deep commitment to giving back to his community. This led him to establish the Lawrence A. Sanders Foundation in 1991, marking a significant contribution to the world he cherished.

For over 25 years, the Lawrence A. Sanders Foundation has been a valuable supporter of the Community Foundation through the Lawrence A. Sanders Fund to Promote Literacy and the Lawrence A. Sanders Scholarship Fund for Creative Writing. These funds have invested more than \$2 million at the Community Foundation and supported 40 student scholarships.

This generosity has helped dozens of students hone their literary skills and pursue their passion for creative writing, spreading the joy of writing, reading, and storytelling far and wide.

“Mr. Sanders was committed to using his wealth to create a lasting impact in the community,” said J. Daniel Brede, the late author’s estate planning attorney. “He was comfortable collaborating with the Community Foundation because he knew they had the staff and research ability to identify where his giving would have the greatest impact.”



“I am almost done with my last semester at FSU and currently abroad at the University of Pavia in Italy, where I am becoming fluent in the language and developing my creative writing skills in the field of Greek and Roman ancient history. I have the chance to attend master-level courses at the University of Pavia and have already learned so much. All of this would not be possible without your generosity and not a day passes that I do not feel so thankful for it.”

— **Alessandra Cardelli**

Sanders Foundation Scholar
Florida State University
Class of 2025



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT:

Esther APPOLON

HOMETOWN: Delray Beach, Palm Beach County

COLLEGE: Tallahassee State College, business marketing major

SCHOLARSHIP: James H. Davis Memorial Scholarship

FUN FACT: Loves to dance and volunteer with Community Greening to increase the tree canopy in South Palm Beach County

As a student in the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Atlantic Community High School, one would have never thought that Esther Appolon grew up missing out on some of her most formative years in school.

She battled severe scoliosis as a young child, and at age seven, she was diagnosed with Potts Disease — a rare and debilitating extraspinal infection. This disease required two major surgeries, which placed a significant financial strain on her family, but also forced her to miss half of her second-grade year.

Her father, a Haitian immigrant unfamiliar with the American school system, tried his best to help her stay on track as she did coursework at home, but he ultimately struggled to teach her what she needed to keep up with her peers.

“This left a gut-wrenching feeling of being the odd man out around the kids my age upon entering third grade. I would have to go to a different room to take tests, and it was hard for me to finish assignments on time. But I had to force myself to accept the idea that my surgeries were a hurdle, rather than a burden, even if it wasn’t easy,” she says.

As her hard work and sleepless nights began to pay off, the question of how she would finance her higher education loomed over her and her family. That all changed when she found the opportunity to apply for a scholarship through the Community Foundation.

Initially, Esther was nervous about the scholarship interview. It was her first experience with such a process, and the stakes felt incredibly high. However, any apprehension she had melted away when she found herself in a welcoming and supportive environment created by the Community Foundation.

They listened intently to her story, understanding the challenges she had faced and what she had been through thus far. This positive experience culminated in the news that she had been awarded the James H. Davis Memorial Scholarship.

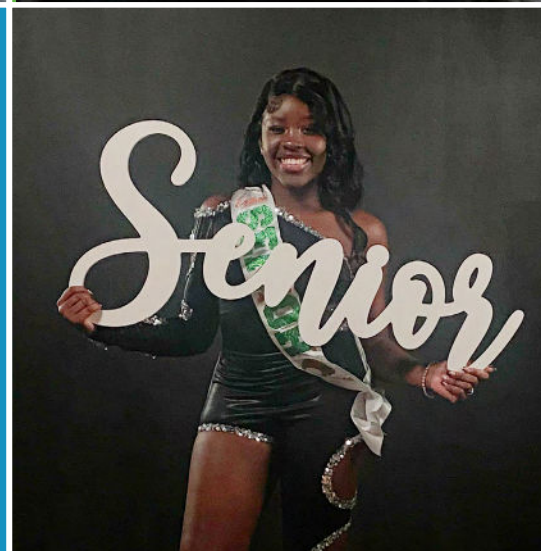
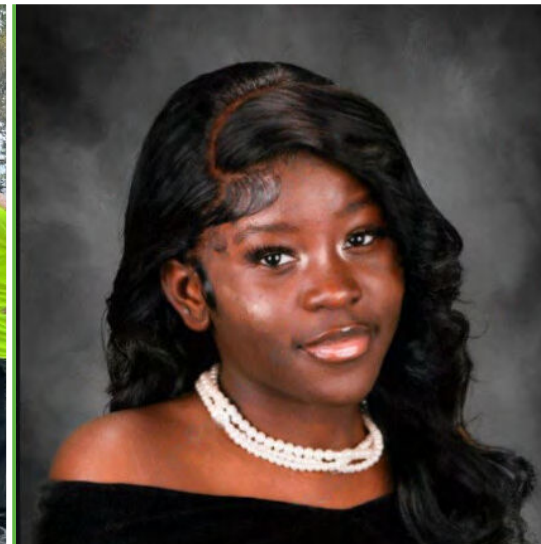
As she transitions from high school to college, Esther’s summer has been filled with meaningful and fun work, spending her third and last year with Community Greening, a nonprofit organization dedicated to planting and maintaining trees — through weeding and watering — in underserved areas.

On “enrichment” days, they would visit nature and wildlife institutions to learn more about the state of the ecosystem. Sometimes they would even go kayaking and snorkeling. “What made this experience special was the family that was built, and the best friends I gained,” she reflects.

In August, Esther will begin her next chapter at Tallahassee State College. Her ambitions are clear: She envisions creating her own nonprofit organization focused on nature and wildlife. And her dream is to establish a center where people can learn about their natural environment, complete with a diverse array of trees and educational materials about local wildlife.

Further, the generosity of Esther’s scholarship donors has opened doors she once thought unreachable, allowing her to pursue her education without the worry of financial constraints.

“Knowing that I can further my education without financial worries makes life so much easier.”



WHAT'S NEXT:
GIVING
FOR
Growth

Thanks to donors like you, the Community Foundation has helped reduce the burden of debt for **nearly 3,000** of our area's promising college students through **need- and merit-based scholarships**.

And yet, each year, thousands more apply to us for help.

To close the gap and build a highly educated, local workforce for the next 40 years, we need your help.

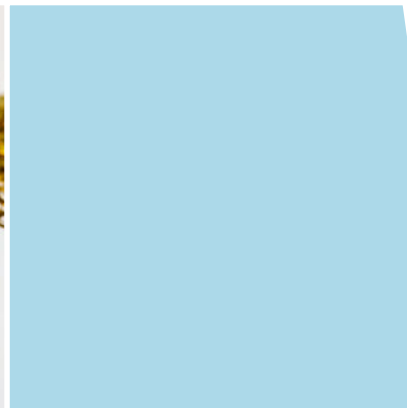
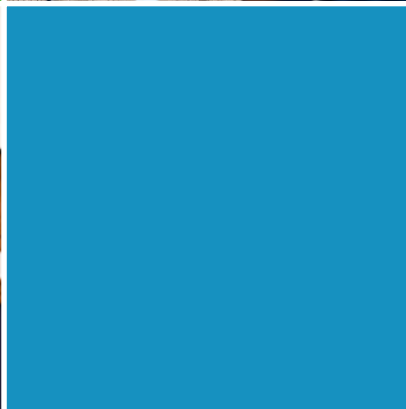
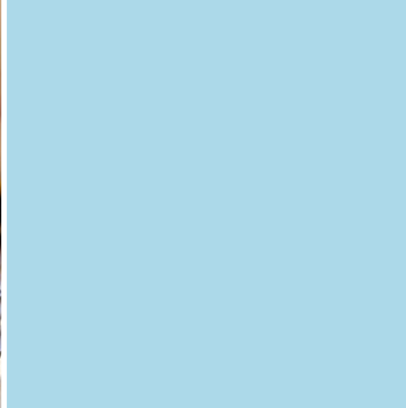
Through **your investment in scholarships and wrap-around services**, we can help get promising local students to — and through — the college of their dreams.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
SUPPORT PROMISING LOCAL STUDENTS IN THREE WAYS

I. Make a gift to the Community Foundation Scholarship Fund, a general pool of support that sends outstanding students to college each year.

II. Create your own Non-Endowed Donor-Directed Scholarship Fund based on the criteria of your choice (amount, length, majors, etc.).

III. Establish an Endowed Donor-Directed Scholarship Fund based on your criteria and set up to send students to college in perpetuity.



ABOUT WRAP-AROUND
SERVICES

With 40 years of experience in scholarship-making, the Community Foundation has learned that getting students to college is only the first step. Wrap-around supports are needed to ensure students get through college as well.

Launched in 2024, the Wrap-Around Services Program helps Scholars persevere through three services:

- A dedicated **Success Coach** on staff at the Community Foundation who acts as the Scholar's advocate throughout their studies;
- A **webinar series** designed to help Scholars hone skills in areas such as financial literacy, job or internship interviews, resume writing, or navigating complex university systems;
- And **emergency funding**, a pool of resources that Scholars can apply to in crisis situations that imperil their studies, including food insecurity, rental assistance, and transportation assistance.



CONTACT US

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