BCF Awards 27 New Scholarships

High Hopes Scholars Community Grows to 96 Students

Join the Berkeley Community Fund on Thursday, October 8 as we honor Archana Horsting, co-founder and executive director of Kala Art Institute, with the 2015 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Award at our annual dinner.

The award recognizes Archana’s selfless and indefatigable 43-year (!) leadership of the internationally renowned nonprofit arts center. Through her vision, inspired by Atelier 17 in Paris, Kala offers exhibitions, lectures, workshops and professional development for artists. It also brings art classes and workshops into our public schools and the community, serving about 25,000 individuals every year. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Look for details in the mail or call us at 510.542.2126. All proceeds will support the High Hopes Scholarship Program.

Berkeley Community Fund (BCF) friends and families beamed with pride as we welcomed 27 new scholars at the 2015 High Hopes Scholarship Awards Ceremony on June 8, at the Berkeley City Club. All scholars, who were chosen among 100 applicants, were graduating seniors from Berkeley High School.

Keynote speaker Walter Robinson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Admissions at UC Davis, returned to his former hometown to help congratulate the group. Reflecting on his own experience at Berkeley High, he noted BHS graduates “Go out and make a difference wherever we go.” Claiming he had the best job on the planet, he advised the scholars, “Don’t hold back. Be the wholeness of who you are…People don’t go to college intending to do what I do. They discover what to do.”

BCF is proud to help them embark on their own discovery as they head to the campuses of the University of California, several California State universities, and private colleges including Wesleyan University, Mount Holyoke College, St. Mary’s College of California and American University. Their intended majors include architecture, engineering, marketing, math and several fields of science.

You Can Make A Difference

Save the Date

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8TH

H’s Lordships, Berkeley Marina

Berkeley Annual Dinner
Honoring Archana Horsting

We set an ambitious goal last fall to raise $2 million by 2016 for our High Hopes 100 initiative: Support 100 enrolled scholars and achieve a 100% graduation rate. As of June, we’ve raised $1.014M and 90% of our scholars are on track to graduate. You can Make a Difference. 100% of your donation goes directly to scholarships and program support. By investing in a High Hopes Scholar, your generosity will help us create a more equitable society—starting right here in Berkeley.

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Invest in the Future
by making a donation to the Berkeley Community Fund. Contributions of any amount are welcome.

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Recently, college persistence has become a focus. BCF is ahead of the curve.

Over the last 50 years, many programs have emerged in the United States to help first-generation and low-income students gain admission to four-year colleges. While college access has increased for these students, challenges arise when they matriculate. Some are not able to navigate the academic, social and cultural challenges they encounter, resulting in a dropout rate that is five times higher than the overall dropout rate. According to a study by the Pell Institute, just 11 percent of low-income students who are the first in their family to attend college graduate in six years.

In recent years, this reality has been acknowledged and is slowly being addressed. New findings have revealed that putting resources into helping these students reach college is just part of the equation. In order to increase college graduation rates—and as a result, the odds for first-generation college students to achieve post-college success and maximize lifetime earnings—creating programs that help them stay in college and graduate are equally critical.

College persistence and graduation is the focus of the Berkeley Community Fund (BCF). Not only does BCF provide each scholar with a $4,000 annual scholarship (widely considered the gap between the typical financial aid package and the true cost of a year of college), it also supports its scholars in other ways. For example, a key component is the mentoring program. Each scholar is matched for all four years of college with a dedicated adult mentor who helps them navigate the college experience.

In addition, BCF provides other resources to help scholars thrive in college. Scholars receive support from our College Success Coordinator to help them overcome challenges.

BCF provides scholarships to help students succeed in college.

The Power of Mentoring

Mentoring can change a life. And who knows? It just may be your own.

Last year, when Juan Azuara, a Berkeley Community Fund (BCF) High Hopes Scholar, told his mom that he was thinking of transferring from San Francisco State to a community college and then on, hopefully, to UC Berkeley, she was hesitant.

“In her mind, I was going backwords,” says Juan. “But then I talked to Kit about it, and he was encouraging. Because he knew I had a bigger goal in mind—UC Berkeley. He told me ‘follow your intuition and your dreams.’ It’s a risk, but there is a great reward, and you need to do what feels best for you.”

“Kit was really meaningful to me, to have someone back up when making such a big decision.”

And the decision paid off. Today, Juan, who graduated from Berkeley High in 2012, is finishing up his junior year at UC Berkeley, majoring in economics. He’s also considering applying for business school.

Kit Ratcliff is Juan’s BCF mentor. Kit is one of more than 90 mentors, each paired with a High Hopes Scholar currently attending a four-year university. While each mentor and mentee communicates on a regular basis, each relationship is unique, as students have different needs, communication styles and time availability.

Juan and his family moved to United States when he was nine years old, from Mexico. At Berkeley High, even though he was an English Language Learner, he graduated with a 3.6 GPA and played varsity soccer. Juan, who says he would like to be a mentor someday, in a way already is—volunteers as a tutor at METAS, a program in San Pablo that tutors K-12 Latino students in STEM subjects.

Juan and Kit have developed a tight bond. They see each other every month, and talk weekly. At the beginning, as they were developing the relationship, they talked a great deal about school. Now they talk about everything. Kit has met Juan’s family, and Juan is a familiar presence in Kit’s house—hold. Sometimes they get together for a big outing, such as to the San Francisco Symphony.

Meet a New Board Member

Jackie is the proprietor of Krentzman Communications, a communications and content strategy company. She is also the editor-in-chief of Diversity Woman, a national quarterly magazine distributed to women in leadership positions in Fortune 100 companies. Previously, Jackie was the editorial director of DCP, the largest custom publisher in California. At the beginning of her career, she was a sportswriter, covering the San Francisco Giants, Oakland A’s and Golden State Warriors.

In 2012 Jackie made a documentary film that aired on PBS and at numerous film festivals, American Jerusalem, Jews and the Making of San Francisco. Jackie has taught at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism and UC Berkeley Extension. She earned her Master’s of Journalism from UC Berkeley and a BA from the University of Michigan. Jackie lives in Berkeley with her husband Larry. Their son Josh graduated from Berkeley High and Howard University, and now lives and works in Washington DC. She was previously on the board of EWIP, a national organization for women in publishing.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S !

High Hopes Graduates

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