

Scholar Alum Sets Sights On Advertising Career



Meet **Yesenia Rodriguez**. This first generation college student overcame great obstacles to entering college thanks to the generous support of Philadelphia Scholars donors.

Her parents were unable to get an education, as they needed to find jobs after migrating to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic. Fortunately, Yesenia was introduced to the Philadelphia Education Fund's (Ed Fund) College Access Program (CAP) during her junior year at Olney Charter High School, where she received the critical sup-

port she needed to set her sights on college.

"I came to be in the program when I randomly met both of the CAP Coordinators after school one day, and they introduced me to the program and offered me assistance with the college process," said Yesenia, a North Philadelphia resident.

Through CAP, Yesenia was able to apply for a Last Dollar Scholarship and become a Philadelphia Scholar. She is currently in the second semester of her freshman year at Manor College in Jenkintown, PA. Yesenia is considering a career as an advertising specialist with a major cosmetics company.

She says Scholars is primarily important for students like herself because it "offers you the backbone to succeed. You have someone there supporting you," she said.

Loyal donors have also helped students stay in college through the Mentoring Program. This program matches a Scholar with a business professional who mentors the student through their first two years of college. Yesenia has benefitted greatly from working with CAP Coordinator and Mentor Adriana Rivera.

"I've been able to provide her with assistance and **(cont. on Page 2)**

Donors in Profile: Sarah & John Wildemore

Sarah and John Wildemore, who have generously supported Scholars for over two decades, remember helping their three children fill out college applications. As stressful as that was, they know applications are more complicated today and that not all children have families that can help them with filling out college applications, as well as financial aid and scholarship forms.

"So it's great that the Ed Fund's CAP helps students through this often frustrating process," said John, Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor at Morgan Stanley.

In fact, the Berwyn, PA couple has been impressed by all of the support the Ed Fund offers students throughout their high school and college careers in order to help them graduate. Recognizing that these enhancements take time and money, the Wildemores continue their steadfast support.

Long-time Philadelphia Scholars supporters John and Lili Neff, as well as Morris Williams, introduced the Wildemores to the work. Their first memory of Scholars was a Celebration of Scholars event at City Hall. "I remem-

ber going to City Hall and hearing from a young man who had gone off to college and from a student who had just graduated. We could see the good results of the program and it just touched everyone's hearts. It made us want to help," Sarah said.

Sarah and John were moved when they heard what students went through to achieve their goal of a college education. Initially they were surprised that once a student received a scholarship and financial aid, they could still be short of reaching their dreams. They were drawn to the idea of the Last Dollar Scholarship.

"Students might have scholarships and financial aid, but still need money for tuition, books, and food," said John. "A few hundred or thousand dollars does not seem like a lot to many of us, but it makes a big difference in whether or not a student can attend college."

Sarah and John care deeply about many causes and see education as the answer to a lot of problems. They support Scholars because they believe that everyone who is willing to try should have an opportunity to succeed and go on to college.

At the annual Celebration of Scholars event, they see the power of their investment, the couple says. They value transparency in how donations are spent and appreciate the opportunity to see first-hand the difference their support makes.

Sarah and John advise those interested in making a difference in the lives of Philadelphia public school students to join them at Celebration of Scholars. They suggest asking students and supporters questions to learn more about the work.



Sarah and John Wildemore celebrating the holidays with three of their grandchildren.

The couple is deeply committed to their community. When they are not working and volunteering, they spend time with their family; their four grandchildren (including a newborn) are their biggest priority right now.

In Search of Mentors: Philadelphia Scholars Hosts Breakfast to Recruit New Scholar Mentors

Our generous donors help us expand our Mentoring Program, which connects our Scholars with corporate mentors who support them through their college experience. In order to grow this work, we hosted our first mentor recruitment breakfast of 2014 on January 29.

More than two dozen attended the morning session where business leaders learned about the Mentoring Program and explored their company's interest in partnering with the Ed Fund program. The business professionals were energized as they heard how mentors and Scholars inspired each

other.

We are grateful for the mentors and Scholars who came to the breakfast to share their story. **Shanee Garner-Nelson**, an alumna of Scholars and member of its Advisory Committee, told guests she is a "champion" of the Scholars mentoring program and is honored to be a part of it. "Kids say they want to go to college but it's needing that space in between – what they actually need to do to get there – that really is critical here" she said.

The Mentoring Program, which began in 2011 when 12 Scholars were

matched with Shire Pharmaceuticals employees, has grown substantially. Companies like Mitchell & Titus and 3ci have joined on. Fifty-five Scholars are currently matched with mentors. **(cont. on Page 3)**



Mentors and mentees share their experiences at the Jan. 29 Scholars Mentor recruitment breakfast

Scholar (cont. from front page)

guidance that her parents aren't able to because I have been through the experience myself," said Adriana.

Yesenia said Adriana was instrumental in helping her retain another of her college scholarships, which she was in jeopardy of losing because she was having difficulty juggling an overwhelming class schedule.

"One day, Adriana called me and I was freaking out because Manor College was taking away my premium Manor College scholarship," Yesenia recalled; "She (Adriana) said, 'relax; let's think things through.'"

With Adriana's guidance, Yesenia said

she was able to streamline her class schedule so it would not be so daunting, allowing her other scholarship to remain in place.

"I have been able to answer any questions that have arisen for Yesenia and I have even been able to be an ear for her when times have become rough," said Adriana.

"I came to be in the program when I randomly met both of the CAP Coordinators after school one day, and they introduced me to the program and offered me assistance with the college process,"
Yesenia Rodriguez



Students celebrate upgrades at our College Access and Success Center at the Gallery Mall in Philadelphia. The Feb. 7 event showcased how donor contributions aid youth and recognized *Motivos* magazine for its partnership with the College Access Program.

Get Off the Bench and Sponsor Score 4 Scholarships!

We're only a few weeks away from the 2014 **Score 4 Scholarships 5-on-5 basketball Tournament on Saturday, May 10, 2014** to benefit our Scholars program. Your participation makes a critical difference in the lives of Philadelphia public school students who dream of a college education.

The 8th annual **Score 4 Scholarships**, to be held at **Drexel University's Daskalakis Athletic Center**, will feature national and local sports and entertainment celebrities who will be lending their basketball expertise to sponsored teams. Imagine you and your colleagues being led by a college basketball coach or maybe even a former NBA player! For more information about sponsorships or to register a team, **contact Rob Kutzik at 215-665-1400 ext. 3350 or rkutzik@philaedfund.org.**



Honor Roll Update

In our Fall 2013 Newsletter, we thanked our Fiscal Year 2013 Donors by publishing our Honor Roll. We regret that errors in the lists were made and have made every effort to fix these mistakes. Please accept our sincere apologies and gratitude for these generous gifts:

10,000 - 24,999

John H. And Carol A. Durham
John B. and Lillian Neff
The Grace S. and W. Linton
Nelson Foundation
Morgan Stanley Foundation

5,000 - 9,999

Sarah and John Wildemore

500 - 999

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You shop. Amazon gives.

For information about Philadelphia Scholars and how you can make a difference for college-bound students, contact **Haley Singer**, Manager of Philanthropy at 215-665-1400 ext. 3339. or hsinger@philaedfund.org

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Mentors (from Page 2)

Our thoughtful mentors help Philadelphia Scholars achieve their dreams of a college education. First-generation college students, who cannot always turn to family members for advice, benefit from the time and wisdom of their supportive mentors. These individuals, already having experienced campus life, share their insights on what it takes to succeed in college and prepare for a career.

"Our Scholars have a chance to stay in college and benefit from their mentors' experiences," Ed Fund President and CEO Darren Spielman told attendees at the start of the breakfast.

"The energy in the room was amazing and I am confident that with your help we can reach our goal of 100 mentors," Scholar Coordinator Tia Hall told attendees. "My hope is that by attending the breakfast you were inspired, and will leave our meeting recognizing a real need and be motivated to mentor a Philadelphia Scholar."



Our Scholars have a chance to stay in college and benefit from their mentors' experiences", Darren Spielman, Pres./CEO, Philadelphia Ed Fund, told breakfast guests.

Scholar Grateful for Your Generosity

Chang An Invites You to Celebration of Scholars June 18th

Thanks to donors like you, I am a Bio-engineering major at Temple University. The Last Dollar Scholarship allows me to focus on my studies, which will lead to a bright and successful future. I am so grateful for your support.

I was born and raised in South Korea and immigrated to America at age 11. With limited English fluency and an unwelcoming school environment, the transition was difficult. During high school, I worked hard to get into college. **Because of you, I was able to fulfill this dream.**

As I reflect on my time at Temple, I know I could not have done it without you. **Your gift is an investment** and my degree will have a lasting impact on my family and community.

I invite you to join me at Celebration of Scholars on June 18th at the Franklin Institute. This is a unique opportunity to hear from students whose lives you have touched and celebrate our accomplishments. You can champion Philadelphia Scholars by supporting Celebration of Scholars.

Your gift, whether it be \$150 or \$5,000, will help determined students like me become business leaders, doctors, scientists, and engineers. Your support will also help us attend Celebration of Scholars for free.

Your donation will make a world of difference for students, their families, and our city. I promise you.

Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Chang An

Philadelphia Scholar

Temple University, Class of 2015

P.S. Your Celebration of Scholars invitation is enclosed. RSVP today for this memorable evening.



RSVP By June 1

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Philadelphia Education
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Philadelphia Scholars United Way Donor Choice #5914

Scholars By The Numbers

283 students at 61 different schools received
a total of **\$499,550** in scholarships for the
Spring 2014 semester.
Thank you for your support!

A Big Thanks to the Scholars Advisory Committee

We are grateful for the dedication, time, and energy of these individuals who make an impact in the lives of students every day.

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years while enrolled in college.

Often the first in their families to attend college, Philadelphia Scholars receive support from Ed Fund staff critical to their college journey. Services include workshops on topics such as time management and enhancing study skills, mentoring and internship placements, along with scholarships.

Since the Scholars Program began in 1990, over \$11 million in Last Dollar Scholarships have been awarded to more than 2,200 students.

For more information, go to www.philaedfund.org

About Philadelphia Scholars

Philadelphia Scholars receive Last Dollar Scholarships, filling the gap between financial aid, other scholarships, and the total amount needed to attend college. Award amounts range from \$200-5,000 every year for up to six consecutive