



The Phillips Scholar

The Stephen Phillips Memorial Scholarship Fund, Inc.

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We Are So Very Grateful

It hardly seems possible that this is the 21st issue of our newsletter, *The Phillips Scholar*. First published in 2000, *The Phillips Scholar's* goal was keeping our recipients up to date with the scholarship itself as well as to provide glimpses of our remarkable recipients. In 2002, we added a fundraising component, asking alumni to help support students like themselves who needed help with the high cost of attending college. Since then, alumni, parents and friends have donated well more than \$120,000 towards the college costs of our Alumni Scholars. Nine of those donors have given gifts for more than 10 years, and some as many as 15 annual gifts over the past 18 years! We are so grateful for the support of every single donor.

The 2019-20 Scholarship Cycle in Review

By the numbers

- Close to \$3.5 million to 451 new and renewing students
- 143 unique colleges across the U.S.
- 150 new awards from more than 1,000 applications

But the Scholarship is more than a numbers game, as each application represents a student who dreams of college. As always, it was difficult to make the final decisions among the many new applicants who told us their stories. From our Renewal applications, we learned that college students are increasingly mindful of the need to link their college education to meaningful employment afterwards. Many students wrote about internships they were seeking or carrying out to get experience in careers they are considering --and sometimes discovering that this wasn't the future for them, which led them to consider alternative paths. Others were hopeful that these internships would result in job offers upon graduation. As always, a fair number of seniors are considering graduate school.

New Opportunities that Extend Our Reach

For more than 25 years, the Phillips Scholarship has been fulfilling the dream of Mrs. Betty Phillips to honor her husband through an endowment to fund college scholarships. That endowment, along with our Alumni donations, serves as the financial backbone of the scholarship. Recently, we have begun expanding our impact by working with donors who want to follow in Mrs. Phillips's philanthropic footsteps without having to create an administrative arm to manage a fund.

In this award cycle, three donor-funded initiatives provided more than \$280,000 to our totals. This includes the new and renewed awards for the Western Massachusetts Scholarship funded through The Janey Charitable Trust and new awards via the H&H Scholarship, providing support for students from Essex County. A third initiative helps some renewing students with unexpected financial hurdles. These donor-funded initiatives may be long or short term, and we look forward to creating relationships with more charitable funds or individual donors who seek a way to help under-served students get to college.

INSIDE THE NEWSLETTER: When Service Is a Family Affair



Meet the 2019-2020 Phillips Alumni Scholars

These two new recipients, Rosa Brito and Cole Chizmadia, exemplify the characteristics of a Phillips Scholar: academic excellence, dedication to serving others, strong work ethic, and excellent character. All funds raised from our generous alumni and parent donors go toward supporting our Alumni Scholars.

Rosa Brito

A graduate of Chelsea High School ('19), Rosa Brito has just started at Clark University in Worcester where the coursework is well-suited for her career goals in the health sciences field. Clark has exceeded her expectations in terms of the friendliness and sense of unity among the students; the numerous clubs offered; the support for students through mentors, peer advisors and tutoring; the Connections transition program for multicultural students; and even the food! "I love this university; I believe I made the best decision to attend Clark," delights Rosa.

Worcester is far from the small island of Brava in Cape Verde from which Rosa emigrated to the United States at age five. Despite a late start speaking English, Rosa was an honor roll student at Chelsea High, challenging herself with honors and AP courses as well as dual enrollment in community college. Graduating in the top 10% of her class, Rosa was also very involved in the school community. She served as Student Council President her sophomore year and as Vice-President of her class as a senior; she tutored through the National Honor Society; she worked at the school store and ran track.

As a junior looking ahead to graduation, Rosa, along with other dedicated students, petitioned the School Committee to change the venue of her class's commencement ceremonies so that there would be enough room for the parents of all of the graduates to attend. Previous classes had advocated for an outdoor graduation, but had failed. After months of attending school board meetings, they were granted permission to use the football field, but only if they raised \$7,000 in one month. Determined, Rosa and her friends worked tirelessly, reaching their goal with only three days left.

From 7th grade on, Rosa was a member of REACH, an after-school program supporting Chelsea students. During high school, she served as an Assistant Group Leader and tutor there, working with middle school students. Rosa also served on the REACH youth advisory council where she helped to plan and implement a fundraiser for residents of Puerto Rico who were displaced to Chelsea after hurricane Maria.

In the summers, Rosa worked in the St. Stephens Youth Program, creating science curriculum as a STEM specialist in 2018 and as lead counselor in 2019. On top of all of these academic and service achievements, Rosa worked 12-20 hours per week with a second job in retail. Asked if she has become as involved at Clark as she was in high school, she responded, "I am a part of the Black Student Union, Caribbean African Students Association, and I was elected as my hall representative." So, yes, she has!



Get Connected with Other Phillips Scholars

Join our closed LinkedIn group for both alumni and current Phillips Scholars!

This group is a great place to network with other Phillips Scholars and also to ensure that you hear about opportunities such as the upcoming Career Panel or service events. Group members are encouraged to connect with one another and to start their own conversations within the group that pertain to their specific professional field, job openings, or events they are hosting. Once you are a member of LinkedIn, navigate to the Phillips Scholar page and click on "Request to Join."



Cole Chizmadia

“I want to be a teacher that students will always remember; I want to be the teacher that encourages other students like myself to pursue a future in education.” Cole Chizmadia has always wanted to be a teacher, and this desire to make a difference has influenced his whole life.

As a volunteer at the preschool of Fairfield Ludlowe High School in Fairfield, CT, from which he graduated in June 2019, Cole created his own lesson plans. He devised activities and creative art projects appropriate to their different age levels, bringing in the needed materials from home to bring them to life.

In other venues, he coached numerous age groups in basketball, his other passion besides teaching. He worked with young athletes from the ages of eight up through eighth grade at the Wakeman Boys and Girls Club, giving back to a place he began to attend as a seven year old; he was nominated for Wakeman Youth of the Year in 2018 for his impressive involvement. In addition to his work overseeing after school sports, he also dedicated time on Saturdays to teach basketball fundamentals to children with special needs and developmental disabilities. Additionally, he worked at a local elementary school’s after-school program, helping students with their homework and spending quality time with them. For a change of pace, he also volunteered each summer to help repair houses in Appalachia.

Given all this, it is no surprise that he has chosen to attend Southern Connecticut State University ('23) in order to major in special needs education, with a goal of working with young children. What might be surprising, though, is that Cole received services during much of his school career to overcome a learning disability. “I had had to work twice as hard as all my peers to achieve the same things they had, but it finally all paid off. My disability has shaped me into the person I have become,” says Cole. The memory of countless teachers who helped him to develop the mindset that he could overcome anything put in his way feeds his desire to be a special needs teacher to help other children achieve this same goal. As a first-year student at Southern Connecticut State, he will dive right into his major with two teaching-related courses. He is also excited about working with the club Best Buddies, where college students are matched with children with disabilities. “Overall, I am really happy here. It is a perfect fit for me.”



A Life-Changing Service Trip for a Phillips Scholar

Phillips Scholar Averey Homer (Marist College '22) and her mother Rebecca Clark teamed up with a missionary group to bring comfort, food and medical support to some of the poorest residents of the Dominican Republic during the summer of 2019. Along with her mother, who is a nurse, Averey assisted in a medical clinic, distributed food into the neighborhoods and spent time with school children and at an orphanage.

Averey writes about this experience, “I have always known how lucky I am for the life that I live, but this was the most eye-opening experience of my life. I have never met more friendly, joyful people, and their culture is nothing short of beautiful. They find happiness in the smallest of things. I will never forget this experience, and, as cliché as it sounds, it has changed how I look at my own life. Not only will I never take for granted the opportunities I have been given, I will never forget how important it is to give back. You are capable of so much more than you think.”

Welcome to Leah Reich



The Phillips Scholarship is pleased to welcome Leah Reich to the staff! Leah serves as Program Manager and Director of Alumni Engagement. She brings many years of experience working at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston in both managerial and direct-service roles. With a strong commitment to students from underserved communities, Leah is excited to work with prospective and current scholars as well as with alumni.

News from the Phillips Scholarship Alumni Council

The Phillips Scholarship Alumni Council has been active now for more than a year and held its first event last June at the Greater Boston Food Bank. The Alumni (and a current Scholar) helped to make possible 6,029 meals by sorting and boxing 7,455 pounds of food. This was a great first service project and a whole lot of fun for the participants.

SAVE THE DATE: The First Alumni Council Career Panel-Networking Event is Tuesday, March 3rd at Northeastern University

Alumni Council Co-Chairs Danny Baer and Steph Livsey and council members Yves Sabato and Samantha Bissell are delighted to invite you to the Phillips Scholarship's upcoming Career Panel. The event will bring together speakers representing various facets of the STEM industry and will offer plenty of time for networking with both current scholars and alumni. We hope to see you at Northeastern on Tuesday, March 3rd from 6:00-8:00 PM. Further information will be shared in the weeks ahead, or contact Leah Reich at Lreich@spscholars.org with questions.

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Words of Thanks

We are very grateful for the generous alumni and parents listed below. It is wonderful to see our former recipients reaching out to help others as they were helped. We offer sincere gratitude to each of them for their contribution.

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