Message from the President

As I read through this newsletter, the thoughts that come to mind have to do with hope, generosity, joy, achievement, courage, perseverance, community, and teamwork – words describing attributes and ideals we all hope to encounter in our daily lives.

The events of the larger world in the past few weeks have evoked different thoughts and words. It is true. In this world we will have trials, but the kindness and generosity of our donors and friends, and the gratitude and perseverance of our families remind me that there is something greater than these trials. Thank you for doing your part to make the world a better place.

Have a blessed Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

Darla M. Romfo
President

Impressive Outcomes for CSF Alumni

Recognizing that high school graduation is a key predictor of future employment, lifetime earnings, and many other quality of life indicators, we recently surveyed CSF New York alumni who graduated eighth grade in 2011 to see whether they graduated high school on time in 2015 and what they had planned for the future. With 78 percent of these newest alums responding, we found:

- **94 percent graduated high school on time.** In contrast, the most recent on-time graduation rate for New York City public schools is 64.2 percent.
- **90 percent of those who graduated are now enrolled in college.** The vast majority (79 percent) selected four-year colleges, which generally have higher graduation rates than two-year colleges.
- The remaining high school graduates entered the workforce (1.1 percent), the military (1.3 percent) or did not report their plans (7.3 percent).

CSF continues to strengthen our alumni tracking efforts and build our growing alumni network. Eric Bettinger, who teaches economics at Stanford University, currently is undertaking a study of our alumni to measure college entrance and persistence rates, helping to identify ways we can further strengthen our outcomes. We look forward to sharing those results in 2016.

Colleges where CSF New York alumni enrolled this fall include:
- Columbia University
- Fordham University
- John Jay College
- New York University
- Princeton University
- Tulane University
CSF in the *Wall Street Journal*

An *Wall Street Journal* op-ed recently made the case for why Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg would have been better off funding scholarships than making his $100 million gift to the Newark public school system. The piece affirmed what we at CSF already know first-hand: scholarships have “the potential to alter the lives not only of individual students, but entire communities.”

With regard to CSF, the op-ed noted: “In 1998, John Walton and Ted Forstmann each gave $50 million to fund scholarships for low-income children to attend private schools. More than 140,000 students have attended schools with graduation and college matriculation rates that exceed 90 percent instead of going to the failing schools in their neighborhoods.”

The op-ed was written by Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow James Piereson and Independent Women’s Forum Senior Fellow Naomi Schaefer Riley, the author of *Opportunity and Hope*, which chronicles how CSF alumni “were able to turn less than perfect childhood circumstances into successful lives and careers” because of the education their scholarships afforded them.


**CSF Earns Spot on Top-Rated Nonprofit**

CSF earned a spot on GreatNonprofits’ 2015 Top-Rated Nonprofit List, thanks to strong reviews we continue to receive from scholarship families, donors, volunteers, and others. We are gratified to hear all the positive feedback!

One mother shared, “As I write this, I get choked up. Only in my wildest dreams would I be able to provide my son with the great education that he is receiving at Visitation School! The class sizes are small and each child can get individualized attention where they need it most. Because of CSF, my child’s future looks dazzling!”


**Study Shows CSF-Charlotte Alumni Significantly Outperform Peers**

A recent UNC Charlotte Urban Institute study found that CSF-Charlotte alumni who returned to public high schools after using their scholarships at private elementary schools “significantly outperformed a demographically similar population in standardized English and Mathematics exams.” CSF-Charlotte alumni also had higher school attendance rates and lower suspension rates than their peers. These results point to the strong educational foundation CSF scholarships helped them receive. Read more here: [bit.ly/CSFCoutcomes15](http://bit.ly/CSFCoutcomes15).
CSF Partner Programs Around the Nation

NEW JERSEY

Paul Boudreau, President of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce (left), honoree B.J. Agugliaro, Managing Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, and scholarship recipient Jennifer Mora enjoyed the annual dinner for the Tri-County Scholarship Fund this fall. Tri-County serves students in Morris, Passaic, and Sussex Counties in New Jersey.

BUFFALO

At BISON Children’s Scholarship Fund’s Annual Luncheon, BISON alumna and Canisius College senior Nicole Lowe spoke movingly about how her scholarship led to academic and personal success.

PHILADELPHIA

Students and families gathered at the National Constitution Center for CSF Philadelphia’s Application Launch this November.

CHARLOTTE

CSF-Charlotte Scholar EJ Boakye was one of the speakers at the group’s “Shake, Rattle, and Rock & Roll” event this fall.

SAN FRANCISCO

Families learned about high school opportunities while exploring San Francisco’s Children’s Creativity Museum at the BASIC Fund’s recent Community Fair.

OMAHA

This fall, CSF of Omaha hosted a 5K “Fund Run” to raise money for scholarships.
Team CSF Takes On NYC Marathon

In November, three Team CSF members – Mackenzie Alexander, Kristin Kremers, and Nicholas Semanisin – ran the 2015 TCS New York City Marathon to raise money for Children’s Scholarship Fund.

In addition to running 26.2 miles to fundraise for scholarships, Kristin organized a series of “Sweat for Scholars” fitness workshops in the weeks before the marathon, and donated 100 percent of the ticket sales to CSF.

“Education is at the core of so many important issues affecting our community – from poverty, health, youth pregnancies, crime rates, and so on,” Kristin told us when asked about her motivation for running. “A smarter community makes a stronger community in all these respects.”

Mackenzie added, “So many go without the opportunity for a quality education, so finding a way to bring that to others is huge!”

All told, the marathon team raised enough to fund four full-year scholarships in New York City. To the runners, thank you and congratulations on your persistence in getting to the finish line!

If you are interested in running a marathon or undertaking another fundraising challenge on behalf of CSF, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Erica Bickhart at ebickhart@scholarshipfund.org. Check out our Team CSF page at bit.ly/teamcsf!

CSF New York Parent Survey

This summer, CSF New York parents were invited to participate in our second annual online parent survey to gauge satisfaction with their children’s schools, their experience with CSF, as well as their levels of engagement in their children’s education at school and at home. More than 1,150 parents responded, and the findings showed:

- 98.1 percent of parents said their CSF New York scholarships help them make the best educational choices for their children;
- 96 percent reported they could not afford or are not sure they could afford to send their child to their chosen school without a CSF New York scholarship;
- 87.2 percent of parents whose children were previously in public school noticed an improvement in their child’s academic performance/engagement since enrolling in their current school;
- 85 percent reported touring their child’s school before selecting it, and
- 87.2 percent said they help their child with homework all the time or frequently.
CSF Alum Publishes Book, Donates Part of the Proceeds to Scholarships

Nicole Serrato, 28, is a CSF alumna living in Los Angeles who generously plans to donate 10 percent of the profits from her first book of poetry to CSF.

The book, Pieces of the Puzzle, addresses growing up in a rough neighborhood and coming to terms with the death of her mother, who died when Nicole was only six years old. Nicole sees her CSF scholarship as a turning point in her life. Moving to a private school in seventh grade, she was exposed to the poetry of Emily Dickinson and others, and began using writing as a way to heal and sort through her feelings.

“My academics really turned around. At the end of seventh grade, I had A's and B's. I was even voted treasurer of the school," Nicole told us. “I don't know exactly what my future would have been, but I'll tell you what I know for sure – I wouldn't be who I am today or where I am today if I had never received that scholarship. Now I hope that I can help impact someone else's life.”


CSF Celebrates Alumni Success

Last summer, CSF families, alumni, and supporters gathered at the Princeton Club in New York to celebrate the successes of our alumni and wish them well in their college careers.

At the reception, guests had the pleasure of hearing from CSF alumna Julissa Tejeda, a Columbia University engineering student, and Marie Bathelmy, mom of first-grade CSF Scholar Gabriel.

Our CSF alumni impressed everyone with their talent and determination. Thank you for making their success stories possible!

CSF's Champions for Children Celebration
6:00-8:30 PM
Bryant Park Grill,
25 West 40th Street
Honoring
Mr. Lewis S. Ranieri, Chairman of Tomorrow's Hope Foundation and Chairman and President of Ranieri & Co., Inc.
and
NY Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, co-sponsor of the 2015 NY Education Tax Credit Legislation

Save the Date - Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Sarah Johnson (left) enjoyed chatting with CSF alumni Audrey Toribio (Fordham University) and Mary Zhuo Ke (University of Pennsylvania).

At the alumni reception, CSF alum and NYU nursing student Andrew Fernandez (center) posed with his aunt, Candela, and Sarah Jane Gibbons.

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I want to say thank you to the supporters who make it possible for children to attend schools where they can receive a quality education. You took a risk by investing in my future. If you hadn't taken that risk, I wouldn't have had this opportunity and I wouldn't be taking a risk on myself.

-CSF Alumna Julissa Tejeda, Columbia University '18