



THE BERNIE SCHOLARSHIP
AWARDS PROGRAM

Bernie Scholarship Awards Program

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The Mission of The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program is to provide financial assistance to help offset educational and training expenses for low and moderate income students who live in affordable housing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

21st Annual Awards



On May 19th at the Silver Spring Civic Building 39 scholars were awarded \$1,000 each, bringing the 21-year history to 423 scholarships and award funds to a total of \$469,700.. In 2016 about 50% of the awardees were graduating high school seniors and 50% were other adults. Three awardees were from Edgewood Management housing, five from Rockville Housing Enterprises, five from Scotland Community and the others were from Housing Opportunities Commission. Five were Dreamers, non-U.S. citizen high school students who had attended County public schools for at least the prior 3 years.

Two-time scholar Chevonne Mansfield, currently Communications Director for the American Athletic Conference, inspired the awardees with her remarks by reviewing her career to date and noting that one's career path can take many twists and turns, but what is important is to stay with it and persevere.

Catherine Leggett, Montgomery County's First Lady, was awarded the Community Service award represented by her niece, Amber Okusaga, since Ms. Leggett was called away at the last moment.

Effectiveness Study Shows Promising Results

The results of the first annual Study of our awardees, called an Effectiveness Study to determine how our awardees have done and are doing, has been submitted to the Board from our Consultant, Quick Study Consultants, LLC.

The consultant concluded that the fact that 98% of respondents either completed or are still enrolled in college or training is a significant finding.

The consultant goes on to say that at 4-year public institutions in Maryland the retention rate for African-Americans is 80% and the 6-year graduation rate is 44%. At 2-year institutions in Maryland the 4-year graduation and transfer rate is 34% (Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission).

The consultant recommended that an effort should be made to document the recommend metrics for "how much," going back in time if possible. If that is not possible, these metrics should be reported annually going forward. Additionally, the scholarship application form should become an online form as soon as possible.

Additional work needs to be done in order to make it possible for annual updates of awardees' progress as they pursue their educational goals.

It is intended that the scholarship application be on the organization's website and able to be completed online, and their individual contact information and progress toward their career goals will be annually

updated and cumulative totals easily obtained from their survey responses.

Conclusions/observations from the Effectiveness Study of The Bernie Scholarships:

- 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that The Bernie award was important for their ability to enroll in school
- 2/3 of respondents received a single 1-year award while 1/3 received 2 or more years
- As their initial goal, 56% of respondents sought a Bachelor's degree, 28% sought an Associate's degree, and 9% sought a Master's degree
- 68% of respondents reported attempting credits at 4-year institutions, about half of them at a University System institution. Among the 32% of respondents at 2-year institutions, nearly all were at Montgomery College
- While 39% of respondents came into the program having earned no prior college credits, 32% had earned between 1 and 24 credits, and 28% had earned 25 or more credits. In their 1st year of participation, nearly 50% of students successfully completed 19 or more credits
- 70% of respondents are still enrolled, 28% completed and 2% dropped out
- Among those still enrolled, all had successfully completed at least 15 credits, with 70% having completed between 15 and 60 credits
- Among those still enrolled, all had successfully completed at least 15 credits, with 10% having completed 15-30 credits, 60% having completed between 31 and 60 credits and 30% having completed 61 or more credits
- 58% of respondents who are still enrolled have GPA's of 3.1 or higher
- Nearly 60% of completers attended college in Maryland, with 33% attending out-of-state institutions
- 58% of completers pursued additional degrees; 86% of those pursuing a 2nd degree or credential

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- 43% of those pursuing a 2nd degree or credential were enrolled in programs leading to Master's or Professional Degrees
- Among the 4 individuals who completed or dropped out of a 2nd credential attempt, 75% pursued a 3rd credential and are still engaged in that pursuit
- Roughly half of all respondents (51%) reported being employed with wages, and another 40% reported their employment status as "a student;" among those who completed their initial credential, 92% were employed or continuing their education
- Across the span of years represented in the applications we reviewed, roughly 22% of students listed a 2-year college as their destination, with Montgomery College being the choice of most of these students. Roughly 67% of applicants were headed to four-year institutions - half of them to a University of MD System institutions and half to other 4-year institutions both in state and out of state.

When asked how the Program could be improved, the following suggestions were made by awardees:

- Have the scholarship application online where everything can be done online versus mailing in the application
- Do education and outreach for parents and students about financing education
- Provide a mentor to help guide them for post college...I was a fish out of water after I graduated
- I think the Program could offer more resources. Offering resources like tutoring, I think, would make a huge impact.

Three 2016 Awardees Tell Their Stories

Three 2016 awardees volunteered to speak at the event, sharing their stories of growing up in low-income conditions, some coming to this country without knowledge of the English language. Each demonstrated a strong resolve to get an education.



Jocelin Leukeu

Jocelin Leukeu, Geraldin's twin brother, is also a sophomore at Montgomery College. This fall he will attend the University of Maryland College Park and complete a Bachelors degree in Biology in 2018. His goal is to graduate from college with minimal debt, to avoid struggling financially after college.



Shannel McBride

Shannel McBride is currently a student at Montgomery College, where she expects to complete an Arts and Teaching degree (AAT) in 2018. Then she will pursue a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, hoping to complete it in 2021. She hopes to find a partnership with MCPS so that she can complete student teaching while working. She chose a teaching career because she enjoys working



Phallon Thompson

Phallon Thompson will graduate from John F. Kennedy High School in June. This fall she will attend Trinity University in Washington, D.C., to complete a Bachelors degree in Communications and International Affairs in 2020. Her long-term goal is to be an Entertainment Lawyer and Political Journalist, hopefully by 2025. She chose this goal because she's curious about how our country works and how foreign countries operate, and she wants to discover how one part of the world affects the other.

Montgomery County's Volunteer Center Newsletter Features The Bernie Scholarships

Our nonprofit was honored by the Montgomery County Volunteer Center in its July/August 2016 newsletter! We were the Spotlighted Organization of the newsletter, with a program description, 2016 awardees' photo and a quote from Board member/volunteer Marilyn Joy Leeseberg:

"I enjoy volunteering for The Bernie because I admire the students who are working so hard to gain an education. I also feel that these students will go on to help others in ways that I can't even imagine. I feel like I'm contributing to the greater community for years into the future by supporting scholars today."

PROGRESS REPORTS from some 2015 awardees

Thank you for checking in on my process! I'm happy to say I have completed my Master's in HRM at SNHU last month! I'm currently working as a HR Manager for a small company in Gaithersburg. Now I'm working towards trying to purchase a my first home in the Montgomery county area. Thank you for the support it please let me know if you need anything else.

Nithya Hyson

Yes, I am enrolled at the universities at shady grove, in the university of Maryland college park Criminal Justice program. I registered for 15 credits (5 classes) this fall at USG. So I am already enrolled. And actually today I have an interview for a student worker position at Career and intern services, so hopefully that goes well. This fall I am hoping to find a job to help me pay some of my fees and necessities.

This summer I was not able to work. I was in the Montgomery County Police Cadet Academy which took up most of my time. The Academy was a rewarding experience and I was glad I got to be a part of it.

Thanks again for everything,

Geraldin Landry Leukeu

Yes I am still currently enrolled and I am still majoring in psychology with a pre occupational therapy emphasis. I will be entering my junior year this year and I can't wait to start. I shadowed a occupational therapist this summer and which is need for grad school. I will be a residential assistant while at Bethany college; being a resident assistant is like being a Procter and I do get paid as well. .

Thank you for thinking about me and also I thank the Bernie scholarship program and it's donors for helping me pursue my dreams.

Sincerely,

Korey Platt

I hope this email reaches you well! Yes, I am currently enrolled at the University of Maryland Baltimore School of Nursing, and I expect to graduate next fall 2017. Upon graduation, I intend to work in an ICU unit at a local hospital so that I may gain experience and simultaneously, fulfill the requirements of the CRNA program (a graduate program), and God willing, earn acceptance into a CRNA program.

This summer, I am focused on spending some much needed time with my family. During the semester, I was unable to spend time with my family due to the nature of Nursing Schools' tedious course work and multiple obligations. I am the oldest of 6 daughters, so I have been busy helping them with summer school projects, field trips, etc. I also made it a habit to study at least 5 hours per week to get ahead for next semester.

Best,

Idman Guled

I am doing pretty well, thank you for checking. I am currently enrolled in University of Maryland Eastern Shore for a major in Telecommunications and a minor in Political Science. Unfortunately, I have not been employed this summer but I will pursue a job in the Telecommunications department on campus once this semester begins. I will keep in contact with you to update you on my progress throughout the school year. Thank you again.

Best Regards,

Phallon Kennedy Thompson

The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program relies on individual donations from the community, in order to enable needy applicants to attend college and vocational training. Unfortunately, we receive more applications than we can fund, and we would also like to increase the amount of funding awards to our low-income applicants. Donations make the difference for our awardees!

The Bernie Scholarship Fund is a component fund of The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (CFNCR), under the care of its Montgomery County arm. As CFNCR is recognized as a 501(c)3 organization, all contributions to the Bernie Scholarship Fund are eligible for tax deductibility as charitable contributions.

Please mail your 501(c)(3) tax-deductible donation to:

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