



## **Bernie Scholarship Awards Program 2016 Winter Newsletter**

*The Mission of The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program (BSAP) 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.*

### **Chevonne Mansfield to be the featured speaker at May 19 awards event**



Two-time scholarship recipient, who went on to earn both bachelors and master’s degrees, will be the Keynote Speaker at the May 19th 2016 Awards

Celebration. Chevonne has since worked her way up to the Director of Communications for The American Athletic Conference (University of Connecticut, Temple University, Navy, and Houston etc.). All are welcome to come hear Ms. Mansfield tell her life story of how hard work, education and dedication have paid off for her.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS EVENT**  
**MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>**  
**5:30PM**  
**SILVER SPRING CIVIC BUILDING**  
**1 FEDERAL PLAZE**

### **Where are they now?**

### **How well have our scholar done?**

### **Effectiveness Study to Provide Insights**

The BSAP currently awards between 30 and 50 scholarships annually to low-income residents of affordable housing in Montgomery County. This has resulted in 384 scholarships since its inception in 1996 with \$430,702 being awarded to graduating high school students and other adults heading for college or vocational training. Despite this impressive history, the program annually has more applicants than funds permit to receive awards.

In addition to our supporters, the Bernie Scholarship Awards Program seeks grants to fund scholarships for our low-income scholars. When we apply for grants to help fund our Program’s activities, we are asked, “How have your scholarship recipients fared in their academic pursuits?” Other than responding with individual case studies, we have been unable to give good solid numbers on how our recipients have done. To learn how our recipients have done and how can we increase the effectiveness of our scholarship program, the Board has decided to undertake an Effectiveness Study.

A Steering Committee was appointed to:

- Oversee the conduct of the Effectiveness Study
- Make administrative decisions on the conduct of the Study
- Generate additional funding to complete the Study
- Make recommendations to the Bernie Board based on outcomes from the Study

The Steering Committee has a representative from Montgomery College, Rodney Redmond, PhD, two current members of the Board--Bernie Tetreault and Jaqueline Dennard--and two representatives with particular expertise that is helpful to the Study--Ms. Claudia Moy, PhD and Ms. Elizabeth Lee, MS.

Rather than expend funds that could be used for scholarships, the Board decided to apply for funds to cover the cost of the Study. The Montgomery County Bar Foundation Endowment Committee and Westat Corporation in Rockville financed the Study.

With funding assured, the Steering Committee sought an experienced outcomes-oriented consultant to conduct the Study and retained QuickStudy Consultants LLC from Baltimore. A work plan was finalized using awardees' data from 2012 through 2015, and a questionnaire was developed.

Quick Study's first task was to establish communication with past awardees using a new email database and social media accounts that it created for the Bernie Program. As part of this process, Quick Study actively sought and received interest from several former awardees who reviewed a first draft of the survey.

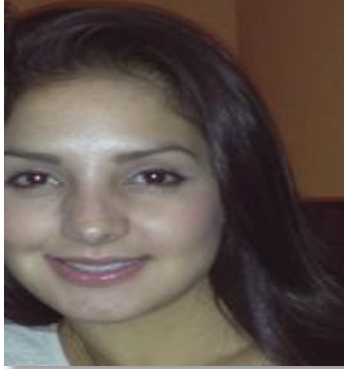
Next, the consultants worked with the Steering Committee to establish performance outcomes

that would drive the development of survey questions using a framework known as Results-Based Accountability (RBA). This framework encourages organizations concerned with improving performance to develop outcomes in the following categories: (1) How much did we do? (e.g., how many scholarships have we awarded? how much money has been spent?); (2) How well did we do? (e.g., did the recipients complete a college degree or vocational certificate?); and (3) Are they better off? (e.g., did the graduates get jobs? Are they employed in workforce areas of high need?). A brief survey was developed in Google Forms, and that survey is currently being distributed to current and prior recipients via the channels mentioned above.

While this work progresses, Quick Study is also analyzing the applications of the 2012-2015 recipients with the goal of providing a baseline from which to evaluate the survey results. In addition to the online survey document itself, the end-products for the Bernie Program will include: (1) a dashboard of its RBA outcomes that can be used to educate funders, potential partners and other decision-makers and be easily updated annually; an (2) an email database and social media presence that can be used to stay in touch with and connect awardees going forward. Connect with the Bernie Program on LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/in/berniescholarships](http://www.linkedin.com/in/berniescholarships). Connect with Barbara Hopkins, Quick Study's Principal, at [www.quickstudyconsulting.com](http://www.quickstudyconsulting.com).

Results of the initial findings from the Effectiveness Study will be presented at the May 19th Awards Celebration.

## **Susana Posado: Planning for a Future Helping Others**



Succeeding in school is hard enough for those of us who are born and raised in the U.S. We grow up speaking the language and understanding the culture, but even then school can still be a real challenge. Imagine then, coming to the U.S. as a 10-year-old, uprooted from familiar surroundings, friends, and family and having to go to a school where almost everyone else is a native English speaker. That's exactly the situation that Susana Posada found herself in a decade ago.

Susana was born and raised in Colombia, where she had already had to deal with issues that most kids her age never have to confront. Her parents, although not wealthy, were better off than most. At a time when the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (better known as FARC) was carrying out kidnappings and other acts of terror, she grew up fearing for her and her family's safety, and that affected her every day. These concerns became all too real when her father was kidnapped. Although he was eventually released, he had to leave the country and obtain political asylum in the U.S. Susana, her mother, and three-year-old sister followed

two years later, arriving in Miami but moving to Maryland soon thereafter.

The way Susana responded to these challenges is a testimonial to her skills and perseverance and her family members who encouraged her. Her family never doubted that, despite the odds, she would succeed. She has proven them right and has actually exceeded their expectations.

Despite moving several times, attending three different high schools, and having to learn English at the same time as she was trying to master her academic courses, Susana did well in her studies and graduated from James Hubert Blake High School with grades well above average. In addition, she also served an internship with the Montgomery County Police Department, while working two part-time jobs. She also accumulated almost 120 Student Service Learning (community service) hours by doing things like road cleaning, helping at church events, and working with children in her community. Moreover, she used her native Spanish knowledge to assist teachers and tutor other students who needed help, earning nine college credits in advanced placement (AP) Spanish along the way.

Partly because of the difficulties she faced as a teenager adjusting to a totally new environment, Susana realized early on that many people, especially younger people, have to cope with problems every day that neither they nor their families or schools have the resources to address. So she decided that one thing she could do that would be both professionally rewarding and fill a real need was to work with others, especially teens, to help them deal with these challenges.

Through her housing counselor, Susana's mom found out about The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program. She applied and was selected as one of the 2011 awardees. The help she received got her started toward her long-term goal and, coupled with other aid and part-time jobs, has allowed her to complete her first year of college without the need for student loans.

To get where she wants to go, Susana developed a three-step plan: She enrolled in Montgomery College to study Psychology, will transfer to the University of Maryland to earn her B.S. degree, and then Susana plans to attend medical school to become a psychiatrist. She is already well on her way to completing the first step. She took a heavy course load in the Fall Semester, but still attained a 3.4 GPA and is earning all A's so far in the Spring Semester.

*Thank you for your support of the 2016 Scholarship Awards!!! Please mail your 501(c)(3) tax-deductible donation to:*

**The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program  
P.O. Box 2514  
Rockville, MD 20847**

Along with her high AP credits she is on track to enter University of Maryland in the spring of 2013. So whatever the future holds, Susana will know how to deal with it and, more importantly, know how to help others do the same.

### **Bernie Scholarship Awards Program is looking for Past Awardees to Participate in Effectiveness Study**

Bernie Scholarship Awards Program Is Looking for Past Awardees to Participate in Effectiveness Survey

If you are a past scholarship recipient, or know someone who is, please email us at [berniescholarship@gmail.com](mailto:berniescholarship@gmail.com) and provide the scholarship recipient's name and preferred email address, so that a copy of the survey can be sent to him or her as soon as possible.