

Think Big!

March
2015

Carson Scholars Fund Newsletter

IMPORTANT DATES

April 11, 2015

Florida Awards Banquet

April 12, 2015

Chattanooga/Atlanta Awards
Banquet

April 19, 2015

19th Annual Maryland Awards
Banquet

April 24, 2015

Battle Creek Awards Banquet

April 25, 2015

Chicago Awards Banquet

May 24, 2015

Pittsburgh Awards Banquet

Spring 2015 Reading Room Openings

Murfreesboro, TN

Reeves-Rogers Elementary
Northfield Elementary

Sacramento, CA

Susan B. Anthony Elementary
John Bidwell Elementary
Abraham Lincoln Elementary
John Still K-8 School
John D. Sloat Elementary

Carmichael, CA

Starr King K-8 School

Oak Lawn, IL

Kolmar School
Sward School

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West Coast Scholars Honored in Orange County

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On February 6, 2015, the Carson Scholars Fund, along with the Paley Foundation, hosted **Children: Our Future Stars**, a black tie gala fundraiser held at the breathtaking and historic Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, FL. The evening was memorable, attracting philanthropists and business leaders from Palm Beach County and beyond... [continue reading](#)

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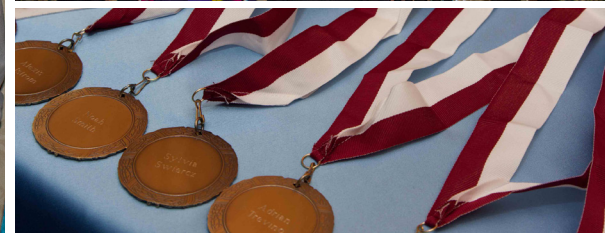
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Announcing the 2015 Carson Scholars!

The Carson Scholars Fund is excited to announce the 2015 Carson Scholars. Over the past couple of months, CSF volunteers have been hard at work reviewing the thousands of applications we received for the prestigious honor of becoming a Carson Scholar. Carson Scholars are awarded with a \$1,000 college scholarship and recognition package.

The winners have been chosen and this year, 526 of the best and brightest students from around the country have been named Carson Scholars. These students were nominated by their school based on their high academic achievement and commitment to their communities. They are young leaders that represent true promise in the future of our country.

Also this year, 769 previous scholarship winners have achieved recognition status. These previous scholars have continued to meet the high standards of the Carson Scholars Fund.

To date, the Carson Scholars Fund has awarded over 6,700 scholarships. This year marked many accomplishments and milestones. We are proud to announce that our 2015 Carson Scholars represent all 50 states and Washington, D.C. We are excited that our Pittsburgh chapter was able to reach their 1,000 Carson Scholar mark! And we are enthusiastic about the growth of our scholarship and recognition program nationwide.

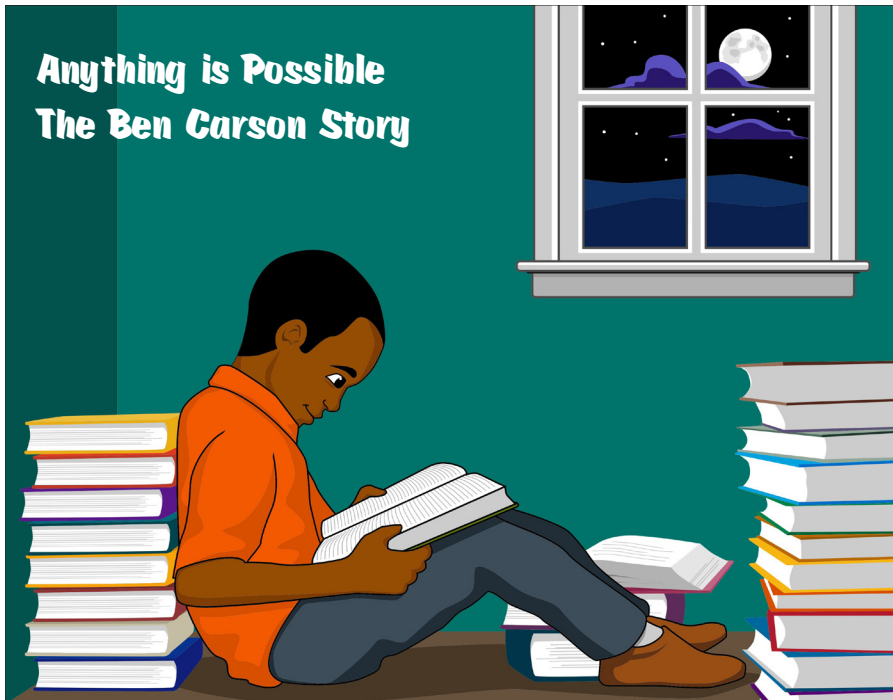


To celebrate the 2015 Carson Scholars, we will be holding seven regional awards banquets. If you are interested in attending one of these events, please visit our [Event Tickets page](#). If you are interested in sponsoring an event, please visit our [Event Sponsorship page](#). Please note, tickets are on a first come, first served basis.

Congratulations to our 2015 Carson Scholars! View the complete list of [new scholars](#) and the complete list of [recognized scholars](#).

Here is a list of upcoming banquets where we will be honoring our 2015 Carson Scholars!

- Tuesday, March 24 – *West Coast Awards Banquet- Already Occurred*
- Saturday, April 11 – *Florida Awards Banquet - SOLD OUT*
- Sunday, April 12 – *Chattanooga/Atlanta Awards Banquet - SOLD OUT*
- Sunday, April 19 – *19th Annual Maryland Awards Banquet - SOLD OUT*
- Friday, April 24 – *Battle Creek Awards Banquet*
- Saturday, April 25 – *Chicago Awards Banquet*
- Sunday, May 24 – *Pittsburgh Awards Banquet*



**AVAILABLE
SOON**

Pre-order your copy of *Anything is Possible, The Ben Carson Story* children's book beginning April 15th.

West Coast Scholars Honored in Orange County

The plunging cliffs leading to crystal blue water in Dana Point, CA were a majestic setting for the Sixth Annual West Coast Carson Scholars Awards Banquet. Students and families from all over the West Coast gathered to celebrate high academic achievement. Union Bank's Robbin Narike Preciado expertly led the festivities for the evening, emphasizing Union Bank's ongoing commitment to education. Many impressive Carson Scholars participated in the evening's program. Channing Lee not only led the Pledge of Allegiance, but also positively dazzled guests during dinner with her extensive talents on the piano. Channing is just in eighth grade! Jasmine Westerdahl, another gifted and multi-faceted student, gave the blessing. Adorable Arthi Haripriyan also provided a piano performance at dinner followed by Antony Alvarado's personally moving introduction of Dr. Ben Carson. The program featured a video presentation highlighting Carson Scholar Alumni and a sneak-peak at an upcoming children's book, *Anything is Possible: The Ben Carson Story*.

Dr. Carson was welcomed with an ovation by the remarkable audience. He shared the importance of utilizing one's talents to positively impact the world. Dr. Carson encouraged the scholars to seek creative solutions and to persevere in life. He took time to share the meaning behind every letter in "THINK BIG" so that his philosophy could guide scholars in the future. Next, Dr. Carson placed medals on the 2015 Carson Scholars while Robbin Narike Preciado shared their impressive accomplishments. CSF supporter, Beth LeFriant, handed certificates to the academic superstars. The night finished on a high note with a scholar photograph keepsake.



Sincere thanks to everyone who made this day possible:

Union Bank
Mr. John W. Amerman
Domenico Brunetto Family
Costco Wholesale
Ms. Joanne Curran
Mr. Stanley and Mrs. Monique Friedman
Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Gosney
Ms. Tiffany Green
Mr. Richard Herron

Ms. Karyn Jackson
Mr. John and Mrs. Carole Jebens
Mrs. Doreen Khumalo
Ms. Beth LeFriant
Robbin Narike Preciado
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Pescio and the Pescio Family
Tucker Family Foundation
Mr. Matthew and Mrs. Jayneann Wikler

And especially the teachers and administrators responsible for inspiring the Carson Scholars

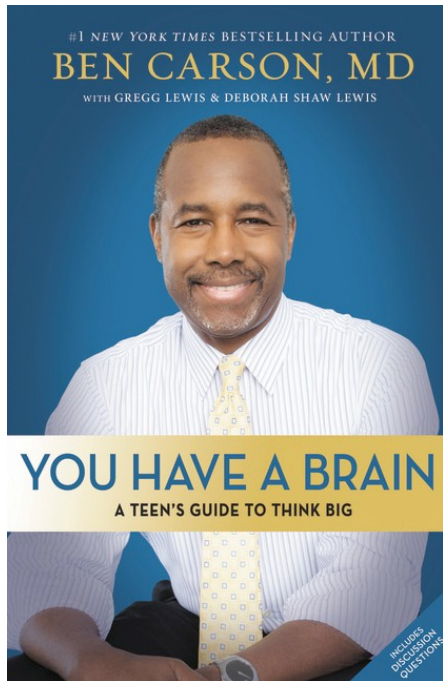
Alumni Spotlight - Odalis Lopez



Odalis Lopez, a 2010 Carson Scholar, graduated from the National Academy Foundation High School in Baltimore, MD in 2011 as Valedictorian of her class. She was awarded 17 scholarships from various organizations and funds including the College Bound Foundation, Baltimore Ravens and Baltimore City District 46 Delegates, to name a few.

Currently, Odalis is pursuing a major in communications, with a concentration in public relations, and a minor in Spanish at the University of Maryland, College Park. She has earned the Dean's List four semesters and is a member of the Honors College at the university. Throughout college, Odalis has participated in leadership roles for various organizations including the Latino Student Union, Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. and the La Familia Mentoring Program.

Furthermore, Odalis was admitted into the Final Talent Pool of the T. Howard Foundation in 2013. She has interned with HBO Latino and Multicultural Marketing Department during the summers of 2013 and 2014. Most impressively, Odalis was among one of ten scholarship recipients to receive the 2014-2015 Scott Weiss Scholarship. The T. Howard Foundation announced the recipients in early 2015 for the scholarship, which is an annual merit-based award granted to eligible alumni of T. Howard Foundation's Internship Program. Congratulations Odalis!



This just in!

In *You Have a Brain: A Teen's Guide to Think Big*, Dr. Carson unpacks the eight important parts of Thinking Big — Talent, Honesty, Insight, Niceness, Knowledge, Books, In-Depth learning, and God — and presents the stories of people who demonstrated those things in his life. By applying the idea of T.H.I.N.K. B.I.G. to your life, and by looking at those around you as well, you too can overcome obstacles and work toward achieving your dreams.

\$15

Visit our website to purchase

Reading Room Recap

As the snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils begin to dot the landscape, so do Ben Carson Reading Rooms. Spring is a time of new beginnings and ten schools across the nation will begin a new chapter with the opening of their school's Ben Carson Reading Room. The reading rooms slated to open in April include:

Monday, April 13 – Murfreesboro, TN

Reeves-Rogers Elementary School
Northfield Elementary School

Sponsored by: The Deaver Phoenix Foundation, Inc.

Tuesday, April 21 – Sacramento, CA

Susan B. Anthony Elementary School
John Bidwell Elementary School
Abraham Lincoln Elementary School
John Still K – 8 School
John D. Sloat Elementary

Sponsored by: Richard Lumsden Foundation

Wednesday, April 22 – Carmichael, CA

Starr King K – 8 School

Sponsored by: Country Club Optimist Club

Thursday, April 23 – Oak Lawn, IL

Kolmar School
Sward School

Sponsored by:  Advocate
Christ Medical Center

Inspiring medicine. Changing lives.



Edmondson Heights Elementary

Reading is fun – especially when it's taking place in a Ben Carson Reading Room - just ask the students at Edmondson Heights Elementary in Baltimore County, Maryland. On February 11, Edmondson Heights Elementary students gathered in the school's gymnasium for a big surprise. For the past several months, the teachers, administrators and parents had been keeping an enormous secret. While students were diligently concentrating on their studies, Ben Carson Reading Room committee members were busy creating a "Wild About Reading" jungle themed room. After the spirited ceremony, students and special guests had the opportunity to experience the reading room first-hand. Adorning the walls are some of the "wildest" characters you could ever meet in a book including Carol from *Where the Wild Things Are*, Gerald from *Giraffes Can't Dance* and Curious George to name just a few. Bean bag chairs, comfy floor pillows and child-sized loveseats have been strategically placed throughout the room making it conducive to leisure reading. With a collection of over 750 books, this room is quickly becoming a favorite with the students. This is the fourth Ben Carson Reading Room to be sponsored by the Hillendale Country Club Ladies Book Club.



Allison Elementary

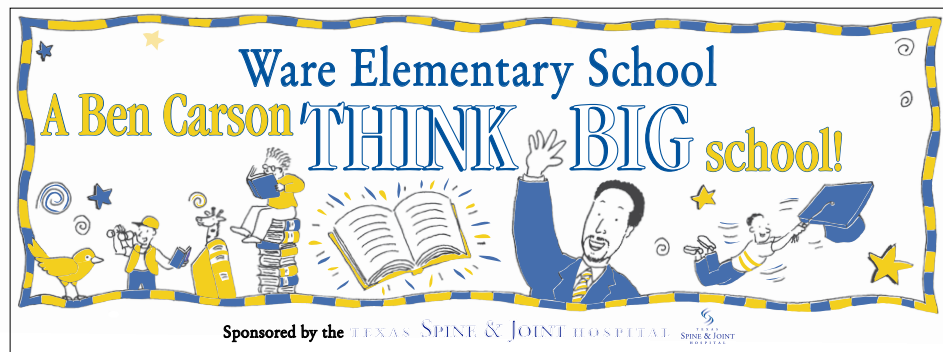
Allison Elementary in Pomona, CA rolled out the “green carpet” for their Ben Carson Reading Room opening Tuesday, March 25. The community came out in full force to help celebrate the special day dedicated to reading. Guests were greeted by student ambassadors and escorted past balloon-filled hallways to the sunny celebration area. School board president, Celeste Polanco, opened the program followed by a cheery welcome from principal Elizabeth Valenzuela. She acknowledged the strong showing from the Pomona Unified School District Board Members and thanked the Wickstrom family for their donation of the Ben Carson Reading Room to the school. Superintendent Richard Martinez shared a bi-lingual inspirational address to the student body and the guests in the audience. He encouraged students to consider reading as their job and to keep their sights on college in the future. Next, sixth grader Deja Love read a passage from *Gifted Hands*. In the special reading she shared the moment when Ben Carson “the class dummy” was able to correctly answer a question in science class. It was life altering for young Ben and was the perfect segue to bring Dr. Carson to the podium. Dr. Carson shared his grade school stories and lessons with the Allison students in the audience. They learned how difficult it was to be considered the dumbest kid in the whole school. He shared some of his favorite books as a young man like *Chip the Dam Builder*. Dr. Carson encouraged the children to prepare for their futures by taking their education and reading seriously. He closed by sharing a story that demonstrates the immense capacity of the human brain. Principal Valenzuela celebrated a number of reading milestones and then called Alejandro Carlos forward to assist with the ribbon cutting. Alejandro is Allison Elementary’s top reader, so it was only fitting that he should cut the ribbon.



The Ben Carson Reading Room immediately captured their interest with an enormous, colorful mural of Dr. Carson and his “THINK BIG” philosophy on the outside wall. Once inside the substantial room, they saw hundreds of brand-new books displayed in colorful bins. Themed carpets with occupations, maps and languages set the tone for reading clusters around the room. There was even a full-sized cushioned reading loft in one corner of the room. As guests poured into the reading haven, students grabbed books and gushed with excitement. Dr. Carson ended his visit with promises from Allison Elementary children that they would cherish this exceptional gift from the Wickstrom family. This reading room was sponsored in loving memory of Dean T. Wickstrom.

Ware Elementary

Ware Elementary in Longview, TX opened on March 26 thanks to the generosity of Texas Spine & Joint Hospital. Check out our website soon for updates!



Black Tie Baltimore

On Saturday, January 24, 2015, the Carson Scholars Fund got dressed up for a great cause! The event, Black Tie Baltimore, was held at the Baltimore Museum of Industry to support three educational nonprofits: The Carson Scholars Fund, the Midtown Academy and Teach for America.



The evening started with an open bar, a DJ playing music, a photo booth from Pixilated, as well as hors d'oeuvres and food from Sascha's. The hors d'oeuvres included curried pumpkin soup with wonton crisp, warmed stuffed brie in a phyllo cup topped with raspberry and almond, as well as chutney bacon straws. The food for the night featured a salad bar with lime cilantro chicken skewers, braised short rib sliders with horseradish crème fraiche with sides of green beans and sweet potato

puree, ham with biscuits and chutney mayonnaise and crabby mac and cheese. To top it off, the desserts featured were golden apple crisp with honey whipped cream, chocolate bread pudding with bourbon caramel sauce and a handcrafted, Baltimore-themed cake with crabs, Old Bay seasoning and the Natty Boh man on it!

Afterwards, all the attendees looking dapper in black tie attire started dancing while Blue Label band took the stage. As stated on the event website, "the members of Blue Label have collectively played over 10,000 live shows and performed half-time shows for the Philadelphia Eagles, as well as pre and post-game performances for the Washington Nationals, Philadelphia Phillies and Philadelphia Flyers." (<http://www.blacktiebaltimore.com/music.html>) They played everything from It's Tricky by Run DMC to Blank Space by Taylor Swift to Don't Stop Believin' by Journey.

The night was filled with networking, food, drinks, music and lots of laughter! We hope all of the Carson Scholars Fund Alumni can join this special event next year!

View more pictures on the event website: <http://www.blacktiebaltimore.com/>

Special thanks to the host of the event and a CSF Board Member, David Ross.



2015 Palm Beach Gala

On February 6, 2015, the Carson Scholars Fund, along with the Paley Foundation, hosted **Children: Our Future Stars**, a black tie gala fundraiser held at the breathtaking and historic Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, FL. The evening was memorable, attracting philanthropists and business leaders from Palm Beach County and beyond. The hosts, Dr. Benjamin Carson and Dr. Dror Paley, were as captivating and impressive as the organizations they represent, telling remarkable stories of how they have helped change the lives of the children they serve.

Talented local news anchor, Shannon Cake, emceed the evening gracefully and began the program by introducing the accomplished Carson Scholar, Victoria Dukharan, for the invocation. There were numerous unique items up for bid during the silent and live auctions, including a rare replica of the Declaration of Independence!



One memorable highlight included a captivating message from Dr. Ben Carson. He took the audience on a scientific journey through the body, explaining with precision what happens when the brain sends a message to the vocal chords in order to elicit a response to a question. Dr. Paley also shared moving stories about the patient's lives he has transformed by giving them the ability to keep their limbs as an alternative to amputation.

However, the real stars of the evening were the children. Students from the Allamanda Elementary School, home to the first Palm Beach County reading room, were represented. In addition, local scholars, as well as the patients of Dr. Paley were also recognized. The evening closed with an electrifying performance from Grammy Award Winner Gloria Gaynor, including a touching performance of 'I Will Survive' with the scholars and patients joining her on stage!

A special thanks to the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Carson Scholars Fund.

