

# news

## IMPORTANT DATES

### 2019 AWARDS BANQUETS

**April 7**

Pittsburgh Awards Banquet

**April 13**

West Coast Awards Banquet

**April 23**

Florida Awards Banquet

**April 24**

North Carolina Awards Banquet

**May 5**

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Maryland  
Awards Banquet

**May 11**

Chattanooga/Atlanta  
Awards Banquet

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### SPRING 2019 READING ROOM OPENINGS

**April 3**

**Sterling Elementary**

Pineville, NC

**April 5**

**Shaw Heights Elementary**

Shaw AFB, SC

**April 12**

**Keiller Leadership Academy**

San Diego, CA

**May 7**

**Spring Valley Elementary**

O'Neals, CA

## Congratulations to the 2019 Carson Scholars!

The results are in! The 2019 Carson Scholars have been named! Each year we continue to be impressed by the remarkable applications submitted by students across the country. Everyone who applied is an academic superstar and has much to be proud of ... [Read More](#)

## The Ben Carson Reading Project Asks Book Lovers for Help

On Friday, February 22, the CSF reached a major milestone, the opening of the 200th reading room. While this is a significant accomplishment that we are extremely proud of, we know there is still an enormous amount of work to be done. By the time ... [Read More](#)

## Scholar Spotlight: Valerie Martucci

Valerie Martucci first became a Carson Scholar in 2011 when she was in fifth grade. "I still remember my teacher, Mrs. Jordan, telling me I received the Carson Scholarship. That day truly changed my life ... [Read More](#)

## Are You Graduating in 2019?

As a high school senior we know that you are keeping track of many things to prepare for life after graduation, but don't forget about your Carson scholarship when making college arrangements! A payout of your scholarship can help offset the cost of school ... [Read More](#)

## Our 200<sup>th</sup> Reading Room Celebration!

The countdown to the 200th reading room started back in 2001 when Hall's Cross Roads Elementary opened the very first Carson Scholars Fund Reading Room ... [Read More](#)

## Donor Spotlight: Marlene Young

It seems that Marlene Young was destined to become a supporter and donor at the Carson Scholars Fund. She could not have possibly known that a series of events would ... [Read More](#)

## Update Your Contact Information with Us

It's important that we have the most up-to-date contact information for scholars and alumni as the majority of our communication is done through mail and email. Without that information, you could miss out on scholarship payout forms, banquet information, newsletters and more ... [Read More](#)

# The results are in! The 2019 Carson Scholars have been named!



*Congratulations to the 2019 Carson Scholars!*

Each year we continue to be impressed by the remarkable applications submitted by students across the country. Everyone who applied is an academic superstar and has much to be proud of. This year's applicants were no exception and we are thrilled to share that the 2019 class of Carson Scholars is, once again, exceptional.

Across the nation, 505 students are receiving the designation of 2019 Carson Scholars. They will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship, a recognition package and an invitation to a regional awards banquet. In addition

to this outstanding group, 878 students earned the title of 2019 Recognized Scholars. These students continue to exhibit the qualities of Carson Scholars by maintaining academic excellence and humanitarianism, and they will be honored with a recognition package and an invitation to an awards banquet.

These students volunteer with hospitals, voter registration drives, food pantries and science labs. They use their voices to raise awareness for causes they believe in, constantly working to make the world a better place. They've started their own nonprofits and companies to help those in need. They are fundraisers who rally other students and community members to donate to the most worthy of causes. They are inventors, scientists, teachers, healers and leaders. Some have overcome tremendous hardships but still manage to excel academically and give their time and talents to help others. It's not unusual for the youngest students to have over 100 hours of service and the oldest students to have logged more than 500 hours. Many of these students will graduate from high school with technical certifications and college credits; some will even earn a high school and college diploma at the same time!

We are beyond proud to name these students 2019 Carson Scholars. View the [complete list of new scholars](#) and the [complete list of recognized scholars](#).

To celebrate this year's 1,383 Carson Scholars, we will be hosting six regional awards banquets this spring. To attend a banquet, please visit our [Tickets](#) page. If you are interested in sponsoring a banquet, please visit our [Banquet Sponsorship](#) page.

We will celebrate all of our 2019 scholars at these upcoming banquets:

- **Sunday, April 7 - Pittsburgh Awards Banquet**
- **Saturday, April 13 - West Coast Awards Banquet**
- **Tuesday, April 23 - Florida Awards Banquet**
- **Wednesday, April 24 - North Carolina Awards Banquet**
- **Sunday, May 5 - Maryland Awards Banquet**
- **Saturday, May 11 - Chattanooga/Atlanta Awards Banquet**

Additionally, we owe our thanks to the hundreds of donors who supported these young leaders. Thank you to all of our school partners who nominated their students. Last but not least, we extend our gratitude to our volunteers who spent hundreds of hours scoring applications. Without all of these supporters, our mission would not be possible.

Congratulations to all of our 2019 Carson Scholars! We hope to meet each of you this spring!





## The Ben Carson Reading Project Is Asking Book Lovers for Help

On Friday, February 22, the CSF reached a major milestone – the opening of the 200th reading room. While this is a significant accomplishment that we are extremely proud of, we know there is still an enormous amount of work to be done. By the time you settle in tonight for a bedtime story, 7,000 U.S. students will have dropped out of school. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), that's one student every 26 seconds or 1.2 million students per year. Studies have shown students who don't read proficiently by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers. The CSF has long recognized this tragedy and has worked tirelessly to create reading rooms, literacy-enriched environments, where students can develop their reading skills to become proficient and enthusiastic readers.

Now in its 19th year, the Ben Carson Reading Project is asking book lovers for help. Our reading rooms are aging and some of our school partners need to replace tattered furniture and worn, dog-eared books. Please consider sharing your love of literacy by making a donation today. Your gift will provide young children access to high-interest books, which is critical for their growth and development.

[Click here](#) to donate, or if you prefer, checks can be mailed to the Carson Scholars Fund, 305 W. Chesapeake Ave., Ste. 310, Towson, MD 21204.

## READING ROOMS



### **Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust**

Chesterton Elementary School  
San Diego, CA

Knob Hill Elementary School  
San Marcos, CA

La Mirada Academy  
San Marcos, CA

L. R. Green Elementary School  
Escondido, CA

San Marcos Elementary School  
San Marcos, CA

Thomas Edison Elementary School  
Glendale, CA

### **Palm Beach County Chapter of the CSF**

C. O. Taylor/Kirklane Elementary  
Palm Springs, FL

*Sponsored by Mark Foley and  
Donna Foley Winterson*

Forest Hill Elementary School  
West Palm Beach, FL

*Sponsored by BallenIsles  
Charities Foundation*

Opportunity Early Childhood  
Education & Family Center  
West Palm Beach, FL

*Sponsored by Palm Beach County  
Chapter of the CSF*

### **The Rotary Club of Chattanooga**

Dalewood Middle School  
Chattanooga, TN



# Scholar Spotlight: Valerie Martucci, First Generation College Student



Valerie Martucci first became a Carson Scholar in 2011 when she was in fifth grade. "I still remember my teacher, Mrs. Jordan, telling me I received the Carson Scholarship. That day truly changed my life as I realized I can do anything in the world I want with hard work and dedication," Valerie wrote in a New Year's Day letter to the Carson Scholars Fund.

By the time Valerie graduated high school in 2017, she would be a 7-time Carson Scholar. But, Valerie's senior year was not your typical senior year, though not unheard of for a Carson Scholar. Valerie simultaneously completed eleventh grade, twelfth grade and her first year of college.

Today, Valerie is in her third year at the University of Virginia at Wise where she is a first generation college student studying biochemistry and public health. Valerie said, "It is hard coming from a family who has never completed college, to realize I can become a doctor and change the lives of people around me. With the help of my amazing family and your program, my mindset has changed."

Valerie, who claims a general love of learning and helping others, dreams of studying osteopathic medicine. Having grown up in rural areas and on military bases, she saw first-hand the need for doctors who understand the nuances of a rural practitioner, hoping to become one herself. "While I

am currently unsure of what specialty I would like to choose in medical school, I do know that this dream would never have been achievable without the confidence your scholarship has given me," wrote Valerie.

Having grown up in circumstances similar to Dr. Ben Carson, Valerie is hopeful one day she will "become a caring and influential physician" like him. She said of both Dr. and Mrs. Carson, "while studying and looking ahead to medical school, I am always inspired by your generosity and philanthropy." Valerie also feels her fellow scholars have inspired her through their scholastic achievements and servant leadership. "In the future I want to give back to my community and help children realize their dreams are achievable through hard work," said Valerie.

"Through scholarship foundations like yours I have been blessed to have my college paid for," said Valerie, echoing the reality of many college-bound students, "which is the only way I could have afforded school." Currently, for students like Valerie, who are six or more time Carson Scholars, college is made more affordable through the generosity of the Richard Lumsden Foundation. The Foundation provides a \$1,000 scholarship bonus the year of their high school graduation. This year, 56 students will receive the additional gift bringing the total number of scholars to receive this honor to 244.

The Carson Scholars Fund has been recognizing promise and rewarding excellence in scholars like Valerie since 1996. To date the Fund has awarded over 8,800 scholarships nationwide to students in grades 4 through 11 and has paid out over \$6.4 million dollars on behalf of the scholars.

## DO YOU SHOP ON AMAZON?

Now when you shop, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Carson Scholars Fund!

### HOW CAN I SIGN UP?

- Sign in to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) on your desktop or mobile phone browser.
- From your desktop, go to "Your Account" from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to "pick your own charitable organization." Or, from your mobile browser, select "pick your own charitable organization" from the options at the bottom of the page.
- Select **Carson Scholars Fund, Inc.** Shop away!

Support Carson Scholars by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)!

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## Attention: 2019 High School Graduates!

As a high school senior, we know that you are keeping track of many things to prepare for life after graduation, but don't forget about your Carson scholarship when making college arrangements! A payout of your scholarship can help offset the cost of school.

Your scholarship funds will be paid directly to the college or university at which you are a student and can only be used toward the following expenses: tuition, books and/or room and board.

Here are a few things to keep in mind regarding eligibility requirements for payouts:

- You must be enrolled as a full-time student for the upcoming semester
- The college/university must be accredited and within the United States
- You must be enrolled in a bachelor's-degree-track (four-year) program

Your scholarship is a one-time scholarship, but we do offer the option to request a full or partial payout. Students with other scholarships that cover much of their academic expenses often request a partial payout to cover any gaps. We also offer the option to defer a scholarship payout so that the funds may be used for a later semester. Payouts may be deferred for up to three years after high school graduation.

The Carson Scholars Fund will only make payouts twice a year – for the fall and spring semesters. We cannot accommodate payout requests for summer or winter courses.

Scholarship balance statements and Payout Request Forms for the Fall 2019 semester will be distributed to all eligible scholars in late May/early June. This information will be mailed and emailed to you. The Payout Request Form must be completed and submitted to the CSF by the due date on the form. Checks will then be mailed to colleges on the mailing date for the fall semester. All Payout Request Forms received after the due date will be held for payout for the Spring 2019 semester.

If any of your contact information (mailing address, email address, or phone number) has changed since we last heard from you, please contact us! We can only send payout information to contact information that we have in our database. To update your information, call 410.828.1005 or send an email to Jen at [jkuhn@carsonscholars.org](mailto:jkuhn@carsonscholars.org).

## Update Your Contact Information with CSF



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If you think we have an old mailing and/or email address, please email Jen at [jkuhn@carsonscholars.org](mailto:jkuhn@carsonscholars.org) with your new information. Thank you!



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SAVE THE DATE FOR THE

## PITTSBURGH CARSON SCHOLARS CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019  
LAUREL VALLEY GOLF CLUB  
175 PALMER DRIVE | LIGONIER, PENNSYLVANIA



## PITTSBURGH CARSON SCHOLARS CHARITY DINNER

Friday, December 6, 2019  
Pittsburgh Field Club  
121 Field Club Rd, Pittsburgh, PA

For more information or to sponsor an event, please contact Jo Weisgal  
at [jweisgal@carsonscholars.org](mailto:jweisgal@carsonscholars.org) or call 410-828-1005.

HOSTED BY:  
Tudy & Steve Adler,  
Merlynn & Ben Carson, Jr.,  
and Leslie & Kevin Hollins

CELEBRATING BRIGHT FUTURES FOR STUDENTS



Save  
THE  
Date!

CARSON SCHOLARS FUND'S

## 2nd Annual Summer Fundraiser

Local cuisine, cocktails,  
silent auction,  
and dancing!

Thursday, June 20, 2019  
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Historic Savage Mill  
Great Room  
8600 Foundry Street  
Savage, MD

For tickets and more information, visit [www.carsonscholars.org](http://www.carsonscholars.org).

Event sponsored by [The Traffic Group Inc.](http://TheTrafficGroupInc.com)

## 200th Reading Room Celebration!



The countdown to the 200th reading room started back in 2001 when Hall's Cross Roads Elementary opened the very first Ben Carson Reading Room. The countdown became a bit more focused 18 years later when three schools opened their Think Big Reading Rooms in February, making them the 198th, 199th, and 200th reading rooms across the country! This monumental week attracted a very special guest who was able to attend each reading room opening - CSF Co-Founder Mrs. Candy Carson. To experience the reading room openings first-hand through Candy's blog, click the following links:

- [Reading Room 198 - TLC Chula Vista](#)
- [Reading Room 199 - Kavod Elementary](#)
- [Reading Room 200 - Twin Oaks Elementary](#)

On Wednesday, February 20, The Learning Choice Academy in Chula Vista, California eagerly welcomed students, families and distinguished guests to their school as they celebrated the opening of their new Think Big Reading Room, sponsored by the Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust. That afternoon, guests were in for a treat as an 11th grade student read a piece of her writing that thoughtfully illustrated how her passion for reading shaped her throughout the years. Mrs. Carson then took the stage to share her inspirational message to students on how reading can open doors to countless opportunities for these up-and-coming students. The school dedicated an entire room as their Think Big themed room, which was equipped with hundreds of book titles that appealed to each of their students, grades 1-12, and maintained a great balance of comfy reading spots including a cozy tee-pee for the young readers. This room marked the 10th Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon sponsored reading room, which is sure to bring students closer together as they continue their academic pursuits and deepen their love for reading.

Reading room 199 belongs to Kavod Elementary Charter School in San Diego. Together, Principal Greenland and Candy Carson cut the ribbon to the multi-cultural themed Think Big Reading Room on Thursday, February 21. Kavod serves students from many cultures and prides itself on being a dual-language school, teaching their students Hebrew. Therefore, it was only fitting that a good number of their books that filled the shelves were in Hebrew. Beth LeFriant, representing The Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust, was in attendance. She

delighted the student body with a story of how Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon came to America and, through their hard work, eventually wanted to help encourage a love for reading among young students. Kavod has big plans on how they are going to take full advantage of the reading space that includes an exit, which opens to cozy outdoor space where students can grab a seat under the sun and embark on a reading ed-venture!

Friday, February 22 was a special day in San Marcos, California as Twin Oaks Elementary opened their Think Big Reading Room, making it the Carson Scholar Fund's 200th reading room stretching across 23 states and Washington, DC. The milestone featured student book talks, a student song, and a special message from CSF Co-Founder Candy Carson who presented a gift to Twin Oaks Elementary to mark the special occasion. The books gifted to the school were themed around the lives of reading room sponsors Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon. Hundreds of students counted down as Candy Carson and Principal Jacobsen cut the ribbon to their reading space themed, Reading Under the Oaks. A beautiful oak tree painting towers over the reading space, which is nestled nicely in a section of their library. San Marcos Unified School District board members and other guests enjoyed the morning event and marveled how passionate and theatrical Candy Carson's read-a-loud was, which left the young students hungry to read more.





## Donor Spotlight: Marlene Young



Reading Room at her alma mater, Wolfsville Elementary School.

Long before the Fund was to become the brainchild of Dr. and Mrs. Carson, Marlene, her husband Mike and their children heard Dr. Carson speak at Hagerstown Community College, around the time he published *Gifted Hands* in 1990. Dr. Carson's life story made an indelible impression on the young family.

Two decades later, Marlene chaired the Marylanders of Distinction event hosted by the now defunct Maryland Life Magazine where she again met with Dr. Carson who was the honoree. It was no coincidence that their paths would cross again. As Marlene says, "a door of opportunity opened."

The connection to Dr. Carson would be life-changing and lifelong. No one would want to have the circumstance of a grandchild who would require Dr. Carson's "gifted hands," but that is exactly what Marlene needed. During the ultimately successful time her grandson was in Dr. Carson's care, Marlene discovered she shared several of the same passions as the Carsons: education, reading, music, and community philanthropy. Marlene and the Carsons' connection had come full circle.

Marlene believes "you should never lose sight of where you come from." She feels it helps to keep one grounded. She actively practices an attitude of gratitude and her philanthropic philosophy is inspired by a Benjamin Franklin quote, "What good shall I do this day?"

On March 22, Marlene will celebrate what was a very good day in a place very dear to her. Wolfsville Elementary School will celebrate the five-year anniversary of the opening of their Ben Carson Reading Room, which Marlene and her husband sponsored. On the same day, the school will celebrate its 60th anniversary at its current location.

Marlene, who began attending Wolfsville Elementary as a first grader the year after the new school opened, will take part in the anniversary celebration speaking about the reasons behind establishing the Ben Carson Reading Room and all that it means to the children who attend the school. She will also share a congratulatory letter from Candy Carson.

Marlene thought the school would likely display the letter from Candy along with their other Dr. Carson memorabilia. "I would mention that they proudly display in a case (under lock), in their front entrance to the school, a photo of Ben and Candy with me at one of the Carson Scholars Awards Banquets, along with one of Ben's medical coats with his name embroidered on it that I won at an auction many years ago at the Baltimore premier of his movie *Gifted Hands*. I presented and donated the coat to the school at the grand opening of the Ben Carson Reading Room at Wolfsville as a visual reminder to the students to 'Think Big' and to work hard to achieve their dreams," said Marlene.

The Wolfsville reading room is a reflection of the value that the school and the community place on reading and the success that comes from it. It especially reflects Marlene's deep belief in education and community. The theme of the reading room mural, which was painted by renowned artist Yemi, Marlene's native Nigerian friend, is *The Wide, Wild World of Reading*. It includes a diverse lineup of then current students at the school including two of Marlene's great-nieces, which represent five generations of her family who have attended school in the area, as well as Wolfsville community landmarks. Marlene said, "The Ben Carson Reading Room is a prized jewel at the school and in the community. They truly treasure it! And folks are still talking about 'the day Mrs. Carson came to school!'"

As much as Wolfsville Elementary School treasures their reading room, the Carson Scholars Fund treasures Marlene Young and her shared commitment to education and reading. Marlene continues to be actively involved in the reading room making it an annual tradition to be one of their guest readers during National Education Week.

In addition to supporting the Carson Scholars Fund by sponsoring an annual Carson Scholar at Wolfsville Elementary, Marlene and her husband, Mike, have established scholarships at Hood College, and the Community Foundation of Frederick and Washington Counties. Marlene proudly serves as President of Delaplaine Foundation, Inc., which also supports the Summer Reading Clinic at Hood College where, she says, "kids fall in love with reading."

Marlene is also an accomplished musician having seven albums to her credit. In keeping with her motto of "strive to be a blessing to others," all proceeds from the sale of her albums are donated to local nonprofits. To learn more visit [marleneyoung.com](http://marleneyoung.com).



At right: The display case at Wolfsville Elementary School with the photo of Marlene and the Carsons.