

CARSON SCHOLARS FUND | 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



DISCOVERING PROMISE | REWARDING EXCELLENCE



A MESSAGE FROM CANDY CARSON

WOW! 2020 has certainly been a year for the record books! It makes one ponder about the coincidence of the number and the hindsight of 20/20 vision. What lessons will we ultimately learn from our experiences in 2020 and how it will change the world in which we live?

In the 1990s, our educational system was not keeping up with the rest of the world, especially in math and science. This led to the founding of the Carson Scholars Fund (CSF). While we have seen some improvement and a push to strengthen STEM education in our classrooms, the Covid crisis of 2020 has put the US and every other country under a microscope. It made me reflect on what we are doing at the CSF and why it is not only still relevant, but critical to our culture and the future of our country.

In 2021 we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our first scholarship awards ceremony! The first time we awarded scholarships, we started locally and had 25 phenomenal scholars in the state of Maryland. As of today, we have awarded over 9,300 scholarships in all 50 states to exceptional young people who show both academic excellence and exceptional altruistic actions.

I believe that recognizing and rewarding young people, as early as 4th grade, is not only still relevant, but more critical than ever today. This year we have seen a world where change is inevitable. We look to our leaders to problem solve in every field. Our healers are having to often shift from their specialties to respond to the most critical patients. Our educators are having to learn to provide meaningful and effective lessons online and our business leaders are having to make decisions to produce and distribute products that were outside of their realm. Developing strong and compassionate leaders is critical, especially in times when the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Many of the leaders who have come to the forefront are past and present Carson Scholars. Our youngest scholars are helping those who are most vulnerable, tutoring their peers, and providing music for seniors to lift their spirits. Our alumni are now active medical, business, educational and entrepreneurial leaders.

For more than 20 years we have been opening Ben Carson and Think Big Reading Rooms around the country. Over \$3.1 million has been invested in the literacy program, more than 105,000 high-interest and award-winning books have been purchased and 231 reading rooms have been created! Our reading rooms hold a special place in my heart and anyone who knows me knows I could talk about them forever. Seeing and hearing from our youngest learners and sensing their heartfelt gratitude as they express what these rooms as safe havens to travel on private adventures mean to them is very powerful.

We know we cannot do what we do without the generosity and support of countless individuals, organizations and CSF friends. Your support and generosity allow us to put 90 cents of every dollar donated directly into our programs! This year we truly saw what resiliency and commitment look like. When the world shifted, you continued to come through for our youth. For that we are eternally blessed and grateful!

Sending virtual hugs! I really miss not being able to see everyone and give real hugs! Stay well!

Sincerely,

Candy Carson, CSF Co-Founder

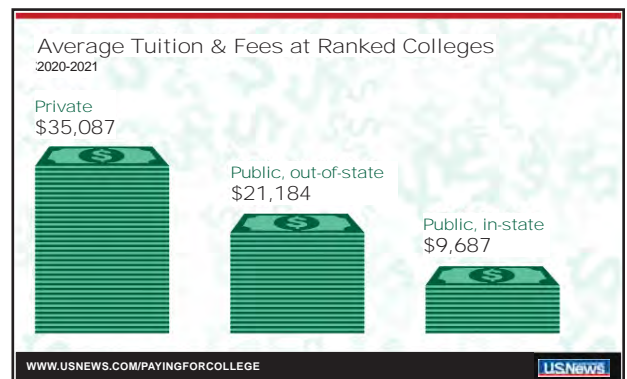


ABOUT THE CARSON SCHOLARS FUND

The Carson Scholars Fund (CSF) was co-founded by Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, now retired world-renowned neurosurgeon, and his wife, Candy, in 1994. The CSF seeks to empower America's youth to define themselves, not based on limitations and obstacles, but on their innate abilities and humanitarian qualities. The fact that there is an education crisis in the United States is well documented. Upon seeing studies related to this and visiting schools in person, the Carsons knew that recognition of a problem without action was unacceptable. The Carsons' own experiences as youth, who acknowledge facing both barriers and the influence of mentors, were powerful forces in the creation of the CSF.

CARSON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Carson Scholars Program is founded on the principle that all students have the ability to learn, achieve, and grow. The program partners with educators to identify and reward promising students who choose to persevere and influence their peers in a positive way. During the scholarship cycle, educators may nominate students enrolled in grades 4-11, who possess a 3.75 GPA and participate in humanitarian activities. As an educator is an influencer in the life of a child, peers are often the greatest influencers. Carson Scholars are role models amongst their peers shaping positive behaviors within a school culture. The scholarship program encourages a college-going mindset and honors scholars with a \$1,000 scholarship to be invested towards their college education, along with a recognition package which provides both a tangible reward and visual acknowledgement.



THE BEN CARSON READING PROJECT

The Ben Carson Reading Project is dedicated to combatting illiteracy and promoting leisure reading as a key to unlocking a child's full potential. The effects of reading on a child's development are vast and easily researched. In addition to the learning component, allowing a child to transport themselves to a different place through a book can be transformative.

Launched in 2000, the Ben Carson Reading Project provides funding and support to create literacy-enriched environments where kids can escape into the world of books only limited by their imaginations. Each room is decorated and furnished to provide an inviting escape from the everyday pressures too many of this country's children face. In a reading room, students have the freedom to self-select their own books. When a child has a choice of what to read, it encourages them to read more.

According to www.healthline.com, "A growing body of research indicates that reading literally changes your mind. Using MRI scans, researchers have confirmed that reading involves a complex network of circuits and signals in the brain. As your reading ability matures, those networks also get stronger and more sophisticated."

Oct 15, 2019



THE BEN CARSON READING PROJECT

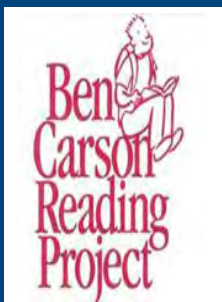


"The Carson Reading Room has been such a gift to our school community. Scholars who would not traditionally have access to rich literature and nonfiction text are now able to spend time diving deep into a book, while strengthening their love of reading!"

- Principal Valerie Douglas, *Scholarship Prep Oceanside*

\$3,100,000⁺

invested in the reading room program



115,000⁺

books purchased

106,000⁺

student participants





NEW READING ROOM LOCATIONS

CALIFORNIA

Rock Springs Elementary
Escondido
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Conway Elementary
Escondido
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Juniper Elementary
Escondido
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Pioneer Elementary
Escondido
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Maie Ellis Elementary
Fallbrook
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Live Oak Elementary
Fallbrook
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Knob Hill Elementary
San Marcos
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Scholarship Prep- South Bay
Wilmington
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Discovery Elementary
San Marcos
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Orange Glen Elementary
Escondido
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Warner Elementary
30th reading room sponsored by the Gagon Trust
Warner Springs
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Garden Road Elementary
Poway
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Edison Elementary – *230th reading room*
San Diego
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

Fallbrook STEM Academy
Fallbrook
Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust

FLORIDA

Forest Hill Elementary
West Palm Beach
BallenIsles Charities Foundation

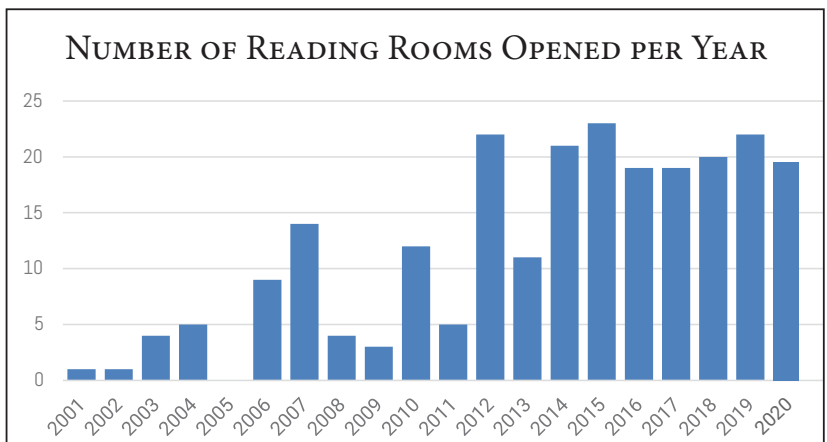
Clifford O. Taylor/Kirklane Elementary
Palm Springs
Mark Foley & Donna Foley Winterson

Opportunity Inc.
West Palm Beach
Palm Beach County Chapter of the CSF

Northboro Elementary
West Palm Beach
Rybovich Boat Company

TENNESSEE

Dalewood Middle
Chattanooga
Rotary Club of Downtown Chattanooga





SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

\$7,600,000+

has been paid out on behalf of Carson Scholars

780+

colleges/universities
have had
Carson Scholars

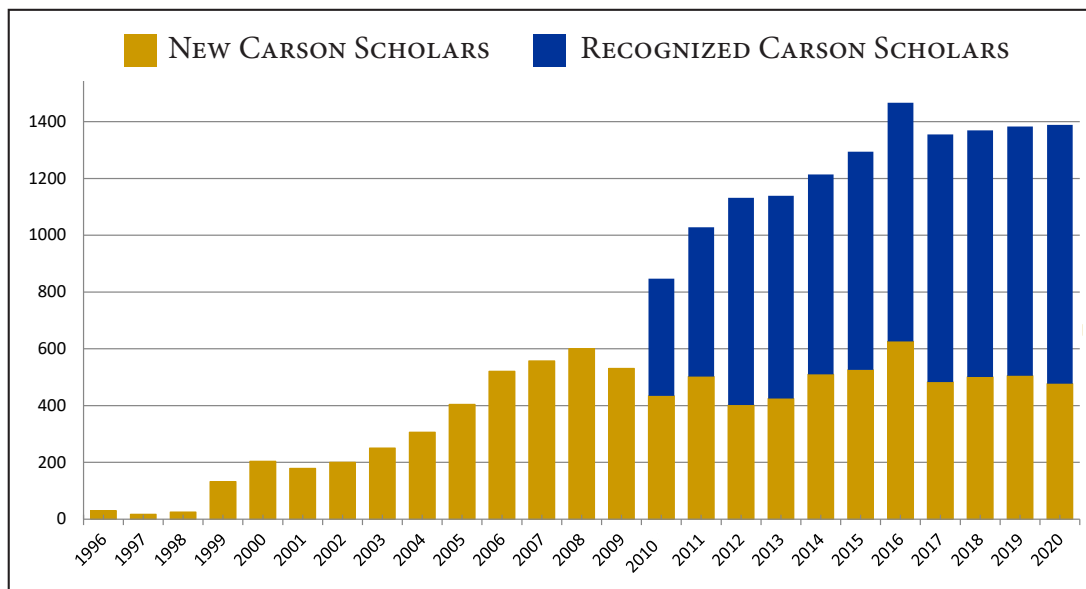
477 / 912

new / recognized
Carson Scholars in 2020



our alumni network has

6,700+
members





MEET ABIGAIL YOON

Food Insecurity affects over 17 million U.S. households each year. Abigail Yoon, a high school senior and 2020 Carson Scholar from Greenville, North Carolina, founded the Sustainable Hunger Initiative to support those affected by food insecurity. This program provides access to healthy food, fitness and nutrition education, and community outreach for marginalized communities. Abby's goal is to provide a solution that addresses the intersectionality between residential and financial segregation.

As the executive director of the Sustainable Hunger Initiative, Abby has a lot of responsibilities. She coordinates and directs an annual Fitness and Nutrition Program, providing free hands-on cooking, swimming, and nature classes for local at-risk youth; weekly pick-ups of excess food from local stores and an annual community

fundraiser and food-drive; several local Community Gardens that provide year-round, free fresh produce, nutrition education, safe outdoor classroom spaces, and service engagement for communities. The Gardens lead sustainable farming methods (e.g., composting, eliminating pesticide use) and feature informational nutrition signage, food demos, tastings, and walk-in tours. In addition, she maintains and expands partnerships with 20+ organizations, including the national FoodMASTER Network, to foster collaboration in bringing health justice.

Since its inception in 2017, Abby's program has donated 33,000+ pounds of diverse foods to hundreds of families, engaged 17,500+ youth in service and nutrition education, and raised \$65,000 to fund more youth-led projects focusing on community needs.

HALL OF FAME MEMBERS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



MICHAEL KOCHIS
2009 Carson Scholar

Michael was one of the 20 Carson Scholar Alumni inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2016. This year, he earned his MD with honors at Harvard Medical School. While at Harvard, Michael was awarded a Zukerman Fellowship to pursue a master's degree at the Graduate School of Education.

Michael is working as a surgical resident at Massachusetts General Hospital. He believes that his experiences gave him the chance to strive to master the skills of not just operating on the human body, but also caring for the human person.



BEN BARSAM
2007 Carson Scholar

In 2016, Ben was studying history at the U.S. Naval Academy where he was a midshipman. In 2018, he graduated from the Naval Academy and completed an accelerated M.A. in History at the University of Maryland. He moved to San Diego, CA to check into his first navy unit. Ben tries to remain balanced and well-rounded and continues to dedicate his time and resources to his community. He just received his 10-gallon Red Cross pin for being a platelet donor. Ben recently married his college sweetheart.



ASHLEY ZACHERY-SAVELLA
2008 Carson Scholar

Ashley graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a bachelor's degree in neurobiology, physiology, and biochemistry. Currently, she is a MD-PhD student at the University of Utah. She is doing her Neuroscience PhD where she studies mGluR5 expression in astrocytes in epilepsy.

Ashley was diagnosed with Crohn's disease during her second year of medical school, so now she spends her free time advocating for her fellow disabled graduate students through her program's diversity committee.



2020 VIRTUAL BANQUET

2020 has required flexibility, creative thinking and innovation. So earlier this year, when faced with uncertainty, we took unprecedented action and switched our traditional in-person banquets to host the first ever virtual awards banquet.

On May 9, scholars, families, educators and friends of the CSF tuned in to celebrate the superpowers of the 2020 Carson Scholars. The superhero theme, which had been planned for the 2020 banquets, took on new meaning in light of the pandemic as we celebrated the intellectual skills and caring nature of our scholars.

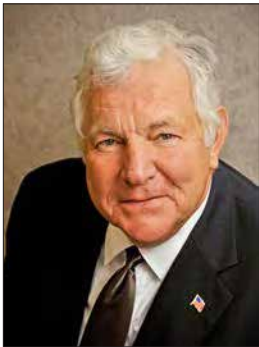
During the welcome, Dr. and Mrs. Carson highlighted the similarities between our scholars and superheroes – selflessness, perseverance, creativity, strong work ethic, and intelligence – that are evident in normal circumstances, but which became even more apparent through actions taken to help others during the pandemic. They paid homage to the feats, efforts and ingenuity of our scholars and encouraged them to remember and show gratitude to the other superheroes in their lives: their families and educators who helped get them to where they are today. The Carsons thanked educators for their superhuman qualities necessary to rise to the challenge of teaching and mentoring our youth whether in physical or virtual classrooms. In closing, they challenged the students to continue to use their powers for good to make a lasting impact on the world.

Kevin Olusola, Grammy award winning cellist, singer/songwriter and beatboxer of the vocal band, Pentatonix, received the Power of Excellence award and recorded a heartfelt message congratulating the scholars on achieving such incredible feats and for being resilient, tenacious, and the best of what America has to offer. Kevin shared one of the biggest pieces of advice that he was given: *"In life, the most beautiful thing that a person can do is love themselves for the uniqueness that they have and to discover the uniqueness that they have."* He stressed the importance of scholars finding their quirks, passions and talents that come so naturally and using them to form their great life's work. He also advised scholars to never discount the unique things that they'll learn because they'll never know how those may come forward in their futures.



Kevin Olusola
Power of Excellence
Award Honoree

Finally, Kevin encouraged scholars to use creativity, figure out solutions, and continue to do the things they're supposed to do, especially when faced with hardships.



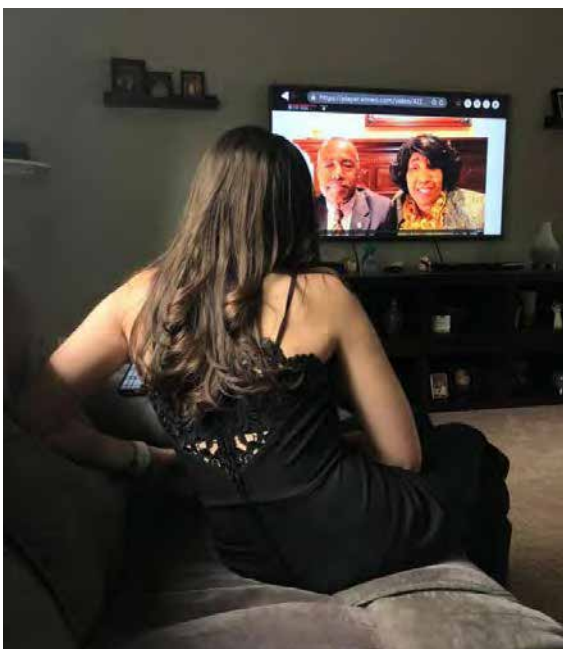
Dr. William Bennett
*Lifetime Achievement
Award Honoree*

Dr. William Bennett, former Secretary of Education and the Nation's first Drug Czar, and Mrs. Elayne Bennett, founder and president of the Best Friends Foundation, were honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Mrs. Bennett encouraged students to see failure as a learning experience and to learn and maintain self-control, as it is the most important key to success. She also implored scholars to treasure their youth and to make it count. Dr. Bennett advised scholars not to dwell on mistakes, but to instead use that force to continue moving forward. Dr. and Mrs. Bennett both spoke on the importance of seeking out admirable people to provide guidance and support. Other key pieces of advice shared were to continue to learn and seek to learn every day; unplug and read good books every night; do things which bring pleasure; and to remember that what you say and how you say it is very important in the world.



Mrs. Elayne Bennett
*Lifetime Achievement
Award Honoree*

Interspersed throughout the banquet were videos from CSF Hall of Fame members Alexandra Vlk, Lisa Stabryla, Megan Rosenberger, and Michael Kochis who offered advice and shared words of encouragement with scholars. A pre-recorded version of Dr. Carson's keynote address encouraged viewers to THINK BIG. To conclude the banquet, all scholars' names and photos were displayed. Since we couldn't celebrate in person, scholars were encouraged to send in photos with their medals and certificates. Many families also posted photos on social media of how they turned the virtual banquet into a special celebration at home.





EVENTS

3RD ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

On Monday, September 23, the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Carson Scholars Fund hosted its 3rd annual Charity Golf Tournament at the beautiful Laurel Valley Golf Club in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

On Friday, December 6, 2019, the Pittsburgh Chapter hosted their holiday celebration to benefit the Carson Scholars Fund. The Chapter, led by President Mrs. Fran Donahue, provided a special evening for their guests, including Dr. & Mrs. Carson, starting with an elegant cocktail hour, live entertainment by musicians Regina Givi and Dan Hanczar, and an exhibition by Tim Chin, pool trick shot artist, and a magnificent dinner. Through their efforts, the Pittsburgh Chapter has funded over 1,442 Carson Scholars in Pittsburgh and surrounding area.





AN EVENING OF INSPIRATION

On January 20, 2020, the Carson Scholars Fund had the great privilege of hosting an intimate affair at the 18th and 21st in Columbia, Maryland. The event coincided with MLK Day and a Day of Service. Proprietors Steve and Patti Wecker generously opened their establishment to us, providing staff, food and signature cocktails. We had a packed house for the event as we hosted over 100 people who came from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Florida, New York, Virginia and Washington, DC.



Dr. Carson addressed the group acknowledging Dr. Martin Luther King's inspirational leadership and how it still resonates within our society today. In his keynote speech later in the evening Dr. Carson reiterated that intelligence alone is not the solitary element of great leadership. While there are many people who may come to mind who are intelligent, if they lack altruism, compassion and a regard for others, their intellect is truly self-serving and not a reflection of leadership. Carson Scholars embody these essential traits of intellect and selflessness.

Our scholars captivated the audience as 5-time Carson Scholar Mark Rosser and 4-time Carson Scholar Erica Egleston performed singing "You Raise Me Up" and "We Are All Made of Stars" respectively. Joe Wyrwas, four-time Carson Scholar and Hall of Fame member, expounded on the impact that being a Carson Scholar had on him as a young man. The fundamentals and traditions of the CSF have influenced both his career and his work as a volunteer with a youth leadership organization in Maryland.

Our gratitude to all who attended, participated, and so generously gave.

FINANCIALS: JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,709,312
Investments – reserved for scholarship commitments	4,676,020
Investments – operating	1,806,480
Investments - reserved for reading rooms	3,287,999
Pledge receivables, net	2,787,985
Other assets	401,497
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 16,669,293

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	38,420
Scholarship commitments	3,426,490
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 3,464,910

NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	4,221,090
With donor restrictions	8,983,293

TOTAL NET ASSETS 13,204,383

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$ 16,669,293



*Special events are presented
net of expenses.

Statement of Activities and Functional Expenses

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Contributions	\$ 638,612	\$ 0	\$ 638,612
Scholarship programs	0	305,274	307,274
Reading project	0	67,500	67,500
Awards event	66,210	0	66,210
Investment return	263,069	(84,903)	178,166
Special events, net expense of \$38,618	86,442	0	86,442
Other revenue, net cost of goods sold of \$5,760	105,968	0	105,968
Net assets released from donor restrictions	2,223,112	(2,223,112)	0
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	3,383,413	(1,935,241)	1,448,172

EXPENSES

Program Service	1,581,229	0	1,581,229
Supporting Services:			
Management and General	105,913	0	105,913
Fundraising	56,208	0	56,208

Total Supporting Services: 162,121 162,121

TOTAL EXPENSES 1,743,350 0 1,743,350

Change in Net Assets 1,640,063 (1,935,241) (295,175)

Net Assets – Beginning of the Year 2,581,027 10,918,534 13,499,561

Net Assets – End of the Year \$ 4,221,090 \$ 8,983,293 \$13,204,383

THANK YOU TO OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

\$20,000 AND ABOVE

Community Foundation of
Greater Chattanooga
Costco Wholesale Corporation
Wes & Toni Guckert
Holland Family Foundation
Israelson Family Foundation, Inc.
James Family Charitable Foundation
Kahlert Foundation, Inc.
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The Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust
Ms. Karen Zeliff

\$10,000 - \$19,999

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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Ronald and Cynthia Gula
Charitable Fund
Mr. David Ross
S&T Bank
Ms. Carol Skrodinsky
The Traffic Group, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Warner

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Mr. & Mrs. Steven H. Adler
Mr. Eugene Badgett
Ms. Roberta Bainum
Bainum Family Foundation Fund
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Bank of America Charitable
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Dr. Stephen Barth
Mr. Ray Bassler
BCT Design Group
BCT, LLC
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Berger
Brethren in Christ Foundation
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Mr. & Mrs. Larry & Patricia Burch
Burns White, LLC
Casa Mia's Restaurant (Nottingham)
Chevron Matching Employee Funds
Chris & Vicky Compton Charitable
Foundation
Coalition for American
Principles
Mr. Leon J. Condon
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Dr. Robert DeMarco

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Mt. Moriah Lodge #116

Dear Carson Scholars Fund,

Thank you for your generous support. Your donation is of insurmountable help towards my goal of going to college to become an engineer. I have always wanted to use my education to figure out ways to improve life for everyone, and I promise you your help will not go to waste. I can't describe how much this means to me, so once again a big THANK YOU!

Sincerely,
George Gilson



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 Mr. Harish Rangacharya
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\$500 - \$999

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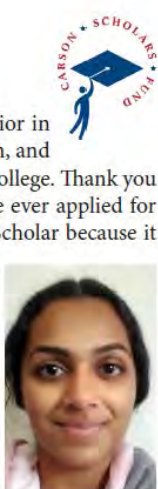
\$250 - \$499

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 Steve & Dawn Wagner
 Mr. Francis Whitney
 Mr. David Wolf

Dear Carson Scholars Fund,

My name is Heer Patel and I am a high school junior in Washington State. My favorite school subject is math, and I want to study computer science or engineering in college. Thank you for your support! This is the first scholarship I have ever applied for and received. I was excited to be named a Carson Scholar because it means a lot that my community service efforts and accomplishments are recognized. Being named a Carson Scholar has made me even more motivated to work hard and better my community! Thank you again for encouraging me and many other future leaders to be the best people they can be.

-Heer Patel





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Candy Carson

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