

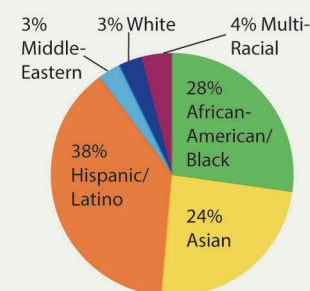
Let's help more  
students succeed!

Donate to our new  
**High Hopes 100 Initiative**  
to advance the futures of  
Berkeley youth.

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#### INITIATIVE GOALS

Raise \$2 million by 2016  
to fund **100** scholarships  
**100** Enrolled Scholars  
**100%** Graduation Rate



DIVERSITY OF OUR SCHOLARS  
2008-2014

We've helped support a diverse group of 114 Berkeley high school students through college since 2008. With our powerful combination of financial and mentoring support, 87 percent have graduated or are still on track to do so, compared to a 27 percent graduation rate more typical of students in our scholars' demographic group. **OUR PROGRAM WORKS!**

## Hard Work Pays Off

FOUR HIGH HOPES SCHOLARS WERE AMONG THE FIRST GRADUATES OF BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL (BHS) BRIDGE PROGRAM

When the Berkeley Community Fund evaluates applications for our scholarships, we consider financial need, grades, recommendations, and evidence of grit and determination. A key question we ask is, "Is this student ready for the rigors of college?" Thanks to the Bridge program at Berkeley High, the answer was "Yes" for four of our newest scholars.



YAKIRA EVANS  
UC MERCED



JULIA MACIEL  
SAN JOSE STATE



KATHERINE  
ACOSTA-HERNANDEZ  
UC RIVERSIDE



NUHA AL AMMARI  
SAN FRANCISCO STATE

**YAKIRA EVANS** is a first-generation college student whose family has always encouraged her to set her sights on higher education. Families of first generation students (those whose parents did not attend college) often have limited insight into the college experience and face challenges helping their children get into and succeed in college. Yakira took advantage of Berkeley High's Bridge program, one of several preparatory programs in the city of Berkeley that provide support for youth like her. Other programs include RISE, an after school program on the Berkeley High School campus, and Y-Scholars, a highly-regarded program of the YMCA-PG&E Teen Center. All offer a mix of counseling, advising, tutoring and enrichment services to help their participants succeed in high school and to access post-secondary educational opportunities.

While Y-Scholars and RISE students have long been recipients of High Hopes Scholarships, 2014 was the first year that Bridge participants applied. We awarded scholarships to four—**Yakira Evans, Julia Maciel, Katherine Acosta-Hernandez, and Nuha Al Ammari.**

The Bridge program, founded in 2010, recruits incoming freshman in the spring of their 8th grade year. Bridge students invest between 150 and 250 additional academic hours per year in their education. This begins with a summer session prior to the start of 9th grade. It continues with daily afternoon meetings, weekend

study sessions, regular tutorials and advising, and additional summer programs throughout their four years at Berkeley High School.

Julia, now a freshman at San Jose State, didn't always appreciate the extra work. She wanted to relax and have fun before high school and protested when her mother told her she'd been accepted into summer Bridge. Julia credits Bridge and the program's coordinator, Jessie Luxford, with shifting her focus from her social life to academics and encouraging her to believe she could attend a four-year college. She's convinced that obstacles can be overcome with the right resources and personal motivation.

Yakira would agree. Today she's a freshman at UC Merced, studying psychology, and is interested in a career helping children overcome traumatic events in their lives. Bridge provided her with homework help, guidance on college research and applications, and a constant push to maintain her grades. The biggest help was learning about the BCF High Hopes Scholarship and receiving the encouragement to apply. Knowing that there is a local scholarship targeted towards students like her provided an extra incentive to do well.

The majority of the students in Bridge face tremendous financial obstacles as they look to parlay their accomplishments into college degrees. Despite receiving federal student aid and Cal Grants, many of these students still have significant costs to cover. They also need

## SCHOLAR spotLIGHT



**MICHELLE SHANNON**  
MAGGIE GEE SCHOLARSHIP, 2014  
@ SACRAMENTO STATE UNIVERSITY  
**MAJOR** | Computer Engineering

**MICHELLE SHANNON** is laser-focused, determined, curious about the way things work, and she's fun. Today it is hard to imagine that four years ago she was drifting at Berkeley High, failing most of her classes. Michelle transferred to Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech) at the start of her

junior year when, as she puts it, "I woke up and decided to pursue my love of computers and technology." Her focus resulted in report cards of almost straight-As in her junior and senior years of high school. (Add resilient to the long list of adjectives that describe Michelle!) She is majoring in computer engineering at Sacramento State University as the 2014 Maggie Gee High Hopes Scholar.

Maggie Gee was a trailblazing WWII pilot, physicist, Congressional Gold Medal recipient, political activist and long-time BCF board member who, in a typically generous gesture, bequeathed funds for a High Hopes Scholarship before she passed away in 2013. Like Michelle, she tenaciously pursued her dreams.

Maggie loved Berkeley. She grew up in the flatlands, graduated from Berkeley High and later graduated from UC Berkeley with degrees in physics and math. She served on the boards of the Berkeley Community Fund, the Berkeley Democratic Club, the

California Democratic Party, the Alameda County Democratic Committee and just about every city commission. She was, in her words, "**optimistic about the world and people...I think one small person can make a little bit of change.**"

Maggie certainly would have enjoyed meeting Michelle.

Michelle traces her interest in computers back to when she was eleven years old and decided to deconstruct and repair a broken laptop her mother gave her. She enthusiastically describes her fascination with the sleekness of its interior and all the action contained within. She fixed that computer and loved using it to play video games and explore the program files used to create those games.

As a high school junior, Michelle made up her mind that one day she was going to work at Google or an equally fast-paced tech company with the ability to harness evolving technology. She realized she would need to go to college to achieve that goal. She taught herself some coding and programming, including C++, Java, and HTML, before starting college. Michelle also wants to build and work with circuitry, cars and mechanics and perhaps combine these with her interest in computer technology.

Environmental Science is Michelle's favorite class this semester because it combines the outdoors with a teaching environment. It reminds her of Berkeley's Adventure Playground, where she spent many hours working and building with children. "No other place has children using hammers, saws and paint to express themselves creatively. I had the chance to help them out and be a part of it," she says proudly.

**WHO WE ARE** | The Berkeley Community Fund (BCF) is a 501(C)(3) established in 1991 by a group whose love for Berkeley and a community of hope and equity inspired them to set up a fund to reflect their goals. Since 2007, we have focused on providing scholarships and mentoring support to promising Berkeley High School students attending four-year colleges and universities. We envision a future in which all Berkeley youth succeed in developing to their full potential and in sharing positive, enriched lives with our community and the world.

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2111 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Berkeley, California 94704-1108  
510-542-2126  
info@berkfund.org | berkfund.org

**A Note from Lynn Walker**

**OUR NEW COLLEGE SUCCESS COORDINATOR**



I am three months into my new position as the part-time College Success Coordinator. I feel lucky to be part of a community of passionate individuals dedicated to helping a group of extraordinary students.

Before joining the Berkeley Community Fund, I received my BS in psychology from Carnegie Mellon University and my MS in social work from the University of Texas in Austin. I worked in program development for several government and nonprofit organizations, including the Fire Department of New York and a Bay Area social policy research firm. One of my most rewarding jobs was managing a program for adolescents in the child welfare system in New York City. This experience inspired me to return to youth development and get my certificate in College Admissions and Career Planning from the UC Berkeley Extension program.

I spent the summer getting to know some of our scholars and mentors, beginning with the new scholar orientation in July. Summer was a good time to meet with them face-to-face before they headed off to school. I worked with students to resolve issues with financial aid, developed plans for those who needed help getting back on track, and followed up on issues reported in their spring updates. I also assisted several scholars in reconnecting with their mentors.

This fall, I am focusing on career planning efforts, helping upper classmen develop connections in their fields, polish their resumes, or find internships. Our mentors and board members offer a

rich array of skills, professional knowledge and connections that scholars tap into. *(If you're interested to learn more about this, please contact me at [lynn@berkfund.org](mailto:lynn@berkfund.org).)*

I am also getting to know the alumni of our program, embracing them as continuing members of our community. **Bisrat Tekie** (Sarah Lawrence, 2013) is the first of our former scholars to join our mentor corps. Other recent graduates have been helping us with various projects, including conducting community outreach to Berkeley High School and participating in BCF events.

As part of our community outreach, I recently had the pleasure of speaking to parents at Berkeley High's Bridge program about why their children should apply for a High Hopes Scholarship.

**Fatima Rodriguez-Ortiz** (a 2010 scholarship recipient) joined me to speak about how our program has opened doors for her. This spring she will finish her studies at UC Santa Cruz by working for a nonprofit in Mexico. She encouraged students to find a career path that "speaks to their hearts." I could not have found better words to express my own wishes for all of our High Hopes Scholars.



Jessie Luxford, Bridge Coordinator, with BCF scholars Mika Kubo (2009) and Fatima Rodriguez-Ortiz (2010) at a Bridge summer orientation

Are you interested in helping students like *Yakira, Julia, Katherine, and Nuha* succeed?

**WE'RE RECRUITING MENTORS**  
FOR OUR NEXT CLASS OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS IN 2015.

Visit us at [www.berkfund.org](http://www.berkfund.org) to learn more  
or call **510-542-2126**.

**HARD WORK PAYS OFF...CONTINUED FROM COVER.**

help managing issues like living away from home, new financial pressures, and the feelings of isolation that can often impact students who are either racial or economic minorities on campus. BCF's mentorship program helps extend the essential supports of the Bridge program into the college experience. Jessie Luxford is proud to have had four of their first cohort's class receive High Hopes scholarships.

**21st Annual Dinner Raised More than \$300k for Scholarship Programs**

**WHAT A WONDERFUL CELEBRATION!**

More than 300 friends, old and new, joined us in honoring environmental scientist and mountaineer **Dr. Arlene Blum** with the 2014 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Award at our 21st Annual Berkeley Community Fund Dinner. In her acceptance speech, which received a standing ovation, Dr. Blum shared how important mentors were to her success as a chemist and mountaineer as well as how persistence pays off. Both are important messages to our High Hopes scholars.

Proceeds from the event go to our High Hopes Scholarship Program. We raised over \$300,000, an incredibly inspiring start to our newly launched **High Hopes 100 initiative!** Thank you, everyone, for your generous support in helping our program. As one of our scholars said, "It is so motivational and good to know there are people who believe in me and support my dreams." Events like this remind us how the power of community is instrumental to change as well as what we love about Berkeley.

Special thanks go to BCF co-founder, chairman *emeritus* and Wheeler Medalist (2011) **Narsai David** for emceeding the event once again with great warmth and humor. We were pleased that past Wheeler medalists **Davida Coady, MD** (2005), **Denny Abrams** (2010) and **Susan Medak** (2012) joined the festivities, too.

*Planning is already underway for next year's dinner. Mark your calendar for Thursday, October 8, 2015.*



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** | High Hopes Scholar (2010) Morris Calligari, BCF Executive Director Joleen Ruffin, and BCF Scholar (2010) Nigel Calhoun; 2014 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Award recipient Dr. Arlene Blum; BCF Board President Jessica Pers and board member Amrita Singhal; Daniel Battle, Estrella Tadeo, Jennifer Tetler and board advisor Skip Battle; Davida Coady, MD and Tom Gorham; Susie Schevill, Susie Goodin, Karen McKie, and Anne Van Dyke. (PHOTO CREDITS: NOAH BERGER)

**Oseyi Ikuenobe, Victoria Robinson and Rachelle Owen Join BCF Board of Directors**



We're thrilled to welcome three new directors to our board.

**Oseyi Ikuenobe** worked with BCF as a Haas Board Fellow during the 2013-14 academic year. We valued his insights so much, we invited him to join our board during his final year in the Haas MBA Program. Born in Nigeria, Oseyi

came to Berkeley by way of St. Louis, Missouri. After obtaining a BS in computer science and MS in information management, he spent several years working in the ag-biotech industry. Oseyi was a cabinet member of the United Way of St. Louis Young Leaders Society, received the **30 Under 30 Award** from the *St. Louis Business Journal*, and was a contributing editor for the UK/Nigeria-based *Fashion and Lifestyle*, a quarterly publication with readership on three continents.

**Victoria Robinson** has worked in many facets of fund development over the past 30 years including annual appeals, corporate and foundation fund raising, and major gifts. She has been fortunate to develop her experience in a wide variety of settings, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, San Francisco Opera, Oakland Ballet, Stanford University, UC San Francisco, Jewish Vocational Services, and the Level Playing Field Institute. Over the years she has volunteered for the River City Theater Company, the East Sacramento Heritage Group, Sacramento Country Day School, and Head Royce School. In addition to serving on our board, Victoria also oversees stewardship at St. John's Episcopal Church in Oakland.

The common thread of **Rachelle Owen's** varied careers is a commitment to helping people. She began as a teacher in the Oakland school system before landing a job as the Chief Administrator for Twin Pines Elementary, a private school in Oakland run

by noted philanthropist Margaret Alafi. After moving to the East Coast she continued teaching, this time for a small private school in Greenwich, Connecticut. At 50, she returned to graduate school and received her MSW from the Wurzweiler School of Social Work (at Yeshiva University in NYC. Rachelle later became the Director of Adult & Senior Services for Jewish Family Services of Greenwich. She also found time to volunteer for the Red Cross and spent three weeks in Louisiana serving the Baton Rouge community after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

When she moved back to the Bay Area Rachelle continued her relationship with the Red Cross as the Field Instructor for their USC MSW interns. She also serves on the Executive Board of Bay Area Community Services (BACS), an organization which delivers support services to marginalized adults and teens throughout the East Bay.