

BCF Welcomes the 2016 High Hopes
Scholarship Recipients

27 scholars selected from over 100 applicants



Front row: Felipe Leon, Donna Ramirez-Cruz, Jessaly Sinchico Andrango, Emily Maciel, Kristian Overbey, Carena Ridgeway, Alexandria Miles, Katherine Pham, Laila Bendrai **2nd row:** Emily Lam, Alejandra Leon Herrera, Ernesto Garcia, Jr., Wun-Ci (Alice) Hou, Rogelio Castro, Jacari Trent-Pontoon, Daan Reyes, Felipe Leon, Jeffrey Yu **Back row:** Bryant Monroe, Andrew Pongtananon, Daniel Jones, Jeremy Jones, Ana Hernandez-Tijero, Bubaccr Kora (Missing from photo: Aia Abushareefh, Angel Robinson, Mi'Anna Wiggins)

The smiles were broad and plentiful at the Berkeley City Club on June 13, as the Berkeley Community Fund (BCF) welcomed twenty-seven graduating seniors from Berkeley High School into our High Hopes Scholarship Program. The recipients were selected from a pool of over 100 applicants, a number that grows every year as more learn about the program. Meeting these students and learning about their hard work, accomplishments and ambitions never fails to renew one's faith in humanity. It is a joy to work with them and to provide additional opportunities to help them reach their full potential.

The evening's keynote speaker, Dr. John Matsui, has seen first-hand how supporting students who are first-generation-to-college, from

underrepresented groups, and from low-income families makes a remarkable difference. He has made it his life's work to "level the playing field for individuals who do not fit the historical profile of success" and to help them become leaders in their careers. A graduate of Berkeley High School, Merritt College, UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara, Dr. Matsui co-founded and is director of the Biology Scholars Program at UC Berkeley. The program has helped over 3,000 Cal students pursue and succeed in science-related careers since 1991 and is a model for similar programs across the country.

Dr. Matsui spoke of the importance of diversity on college campuses, especially in medical fields, to ensure that disparities of minority communities are ad-

ressed. He advised the scholars to remember their roots and to look for advocates who will genuinely help them succeed. The scholars did not have to look far – the room was filled with advocates, including the mentors who have volunteered to partner with them during the next four years to support them in staying on course to earn their degrees.

BCF is grateful for all the donors and mentors who are helping us open doors of opportunity to support each scholar's success. With this new class, 110 Berkeley youth are active in our program, attending schools across the country. Over 90% of the scholars we've supported since 2008 have graduated or are persisting towards earning a bachelor's degree, three times the national average for first generation and low-income youth!

Congratulations
to our 2016
Graduates!

Yesenia Canada, 2012
BA, English
UCLA

Iris Casanova, 2010
BA, Latin American and
Latino Studies
UC Santa Cruz

Jamila Espinosa, 2012
BA, Sociology and Latin
American Studies
Pomona College

Leslie Gonzalez, 2012
BA, Legal Studies and
Anthropology
UC Santa Cruz

Jay Gupta, 2012
BS, Molecular and Cell
Biology and Psychology
UC Berkeley

Raymok Ketema, 2011
BA, Philosophy and Black
Studies
UC Santa Barbara

Marissa McMahan, 2012
BA, Afrikana Studies
Agnes Scott College

Christian Merino, 2011
BS, Physics
UC Berkeley

Juwan Rohan, 2012
BS, Psychology
Colorado College

Jose Saavedra, 2012
BS, Cognitive Science
UC Merced

Meagan Scott, 2012
BS, Psychology
St. Mary's College of
California

Quan Tran, 2012
BS, Molecular and
Cell Biology
UC Berkeley

Nancy Yu, 2012
BA, Public Health Policy
UC Irvine

Flora Ziprin, 2012
BS, Psychology
UCLA

Huge Thanks
for Career Day
at IAC

Media and Internet giant IAC has been a major supporter of the Berkeley Community Fund since 2008, when one of its operating businesses established the Ask.com scholarship. IAC's local executives reached out earlier this year and said they wanted to do more than provide scholarship funds. Three months later, IAC hosted a wonderful career preparation day for our scholars. The HR director, recruiters and company executives gave career advice, shared personal stories about their own career paths, and offered insider hiring tips on what employers look for in job candidates, resume writing, maintaining LinkedIn profiles and social media presence, and creating and controlling one's personal brand. It was a special day for BCF scholars, who enjoyed meeting C-suite execs and were treated like VIPs.

25th
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

Honoring the past
Shaping the future

Join us at the historic UC Theatre on October 8 to celebrate our 25 years of serving the Berkeley community. The festive event will feature fabulous food by California Rose, live music by Steve Meckfessel and friends, and will honor Skip Battle with the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Award. Don't miss this special evening, where we will also honor Dorothy Walker, Martin Paley, Jessica Pers and Narsai David for their stalwart support of BCF from its earliest days

SINGLE TICKETS are available for \$250
Purchase a **TABLE FOR EIGHT** for \$2500

Tickets may be purchased online at www.berkfund25.org or by phone (510) 542-2126.

Behind the Scenes at BCF

Ann Marie Callegari, Mia Gittlen and Kad Smith join our Board of Directors

My twin sons Cole and Lucas just graduated from Berkeley High School and are off to UVA and UNC in mid-August. Like their BHS classmates who comprise our group of new High Hopes Scholars, my boys are very much looking forward to their college adventure. I’m excited



Chuck Fanning

for and proud of all of them. After spending a little time with the BCF scholars at our scholarship ceremony and summer orientation, they’re beginning to feel like part of my extended family. These students are truly inspiring and so thankful for the support you provide through the BCF. BCF alumni and upper classmen led a fabulous all-day transition-to-college program in June at BHS. They filled the day with practical, yet fun, workshops based on true-life experiences (e.g., a budgeting workshop that included a

“name the price” competition for various college expense items). The day’s proceedings reminded me of the challenges BCF scholars face, given that most are in the first generation in their family to go to college. The contrast with my own sons, and the resources and experience they are able to draw



Mia Gittlen

on, has been illuminating and will inspire and drive my work as BCF president in the year ahead. I look forward to it. I also look forward to working with our newest board members: Ann Marie Callegari, Mia Gittlen and Kad Smith. Each brings unique experience and diverse perspectives to BCF. Ann was first introduced to BCF through her son, Morris, who was a BCF scholar and inspiration for her to return to UC Berkeley to complete her bachelor’s degree. Before joining the board, Ann, who is

a supervisor in BUSD’s Office of Family Engagement and Equity, volunteered with BCF as a mentor and interviewer. Mia has a broad background in education, nonprofits and small business. A graduate of Berkeley High School, UC Berkeley and Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, she taught middle school for many years and is currently the staffer for the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP) renewal



Kad Smith

campaign. Mia is well versed in student development and youth issues, capital campaign management, grant writing, government and public relations and small business management. I appreciate how Mia rallies the Berkeley business community around our work. Kad is also a Berkeley High School graduate who has packed significant experience into his young life. Some of you might know the University of San Francisco grad from his membership on the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club, the steering committee of

Berkeley’s Climate Action Coalition, or Berkeley’s Community Health Commission. Kad also volunteers as a lead advisor to the Berkeley delegation of the highly respected YMCA Youth and Government Program. By day, he works for CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, where he’s involved in Cohort Leadership Programs. I send enormous thanks to two wonderful long-time members who recently stepped



Ann Marie Callegari

off our board: Michael Traynor and Amrita Singhal each dedicated over nine years of service to our board, providing invaluable guidance and continuity while we changed our focus to providing scholarships for Berkeley youth. They have also been instrumental in changing the lives of scholars they funded and mentored. While Michael and Amrita have assured us they will stay connected to BCF in the years ahead, we will certainly miss them at our board events. Thank you Michael and Amrita! — Chuck Fanning, President

Building a Network of New Leaders

High Hopes scholars, alumni and mentors create and lead summer workshops

Upon joining the BCF in the summer of 2014, our College Success Manager Lynn Walker was tasked with reaching out and getting to know the scholars in our program. One by one, she listened to their unique perspectives on their college experiences, heard their concerns, gave advice and connected them to resources and to one another. Lynn quickly realized what a powerful resource the scholars were in their own right and invited them to help plan BCF events and workshops. The collaboration has grown to include alumni scholars, mentors, many board members and friends of BCF. During the

“It is beautiful to see how our organization has been growing, not only in numbers, but the relationships between students, mentors and BCF alumni scholars.” — Fatima Rodriguez, BCF Alumna

past two summers, they’ve created and led engaging and highly practical transition-to-college workshops for our newest scholars. The upper classmen and alumni appreciate the opportunity to go full circle and start giving back to their community. They also find it intellectually and socially gratifying. As BCF alumna Fatima Rodriguez-Ortiz observed, “It is beautiful to see how our organization has been growing, not only in numbers, but the relationships between students, mentors and BCF alumni scholars.” Fatima, a recent graduate of UC Santa Cruz, has been working as a program assistant with BCF for the past



Clockwise from left: Bubacarr Kora and college success manager Lynn Walker; mentor Melinda Haag and Alejandra Leon Herrera; mentor Ross Fraser and Ernesto Garcia; Wun-Ci Hou and mentor Bora Reed.

few months and played a key role in organizing this year’s orientation. Fellow alumni and scholars Eric Jung, Pamela Rodriguez-Ortiz, Wessede Barrett, Sequoia Johnson, Omar Aguilar Martinez, Aida Marin, Thafir Elzofri, and Monte Metal

joined her, sharing the wisdom gained from their recent experiences at public and private colleges across the country. Mentors Gwen Austin, Jackie Leventhal, and Lee Dorado along with board members Susie Goodin and Mia Gittlen

also volunteered many hours to ensure this year’s workshops were a success. The team developed workshops such as “I Am Proud to Be,” which covered what it means to be a first generation college student, how to find communities of support on campus, how to self-advocate and how to overcome obstacles. “One Step Ahead” gave students an awareness of experiences in college that might cause them to question their values and strategies for managing such experiences in a safe and thoughtful way. “Creating a College Budget” taught perennially important skills through exercises that included a fun game that reinforced how to be intelligent about spending money. New mentors joined the orientation, too, attending a workshop with their mentees that gave welcome advice on how to establish a good mentor-scholar relationship. They are planning more social events, such as the hike in Tilden Park led by BCF’s 2014 Benjamin Ide Wheeler recipient, mountaineer, and environmental scientist Dr. Arlene Blum.

Special thanks to Artist and Craftsman, an art supply store on Shattuck Ave., for generously donating beautiful pen sets, sketchbooks and more to give as raffle prizes at our orientation.



BCF Hike with Dr. Arlene Blum on Seaview Trail, Tilden Park

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