Organizational Profile

Founded in 1995 by a group of recent college graduates, Education First is a nonprofit organization that provides college scholarships to low-income youth. The founders of Education First believe that higher education can assist in breaking generational poverty. To promote our mission, we provide both financial and mentoring support to students. Education First targets students who have overcome significant life challenges and are deemed for their achievements.

2015—2016 Education First Board of Directors

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Volunteers

Amy Abeling, Renus Gala, Kristina Lewallen, Mia Ren
Carmel Adrian, Eduardo Garcia, Natalia Lopez, Cheley San Marino
Chris Alexander, Robert Greenish, Mariano, Jessica Sanchez
Carter Amurao, Cristina Spergen, Julia Maksymiou, Miles Lember
Dan Belcher, David Green, Susie MacIntosh, Nia Lan Smith
Lindy Belmar, Jenny Hamilton, Dave Mathes, Jonathan So
Garrett Brouillette, Jeffrey Healy, Peru Montoya, Victor Suarez
Paul Brown, Jon Holcomb, Victor Moritz, Ryan Smith
Kayla Borowski, Stay Halloren, Dan V. Squire, Kevin Sullivan
Vivian Chan, Ben Hune, Maya Nolan, Paul Tan
Amy Cheng, Amanda Jones, Jack O’Brien, Kevin Tsushima
David Cho, Baoi Khan, Donna O’Brien, Catherine Walker
Linda Conway, Kim Konrad, Caleb Pennycook, Carolyn Yu
Lauren Draper, Ryan Kuehl, Megan Petterson, Jeffrey Zhong Wu
Susie Espinosa, Crystal Le, Ashley Prestwood
Lara Fernandez, Kenneth Leong, Lee Reed

Education First is dedicated to providing need-based college scholarships to exceptional seniors attending high schools with historically low percentages of college applicants.

By rewarding students with strength of character, a commitment to learning, and a vision for their future, our aim is to invest in individuals who will positively affect their communities.

Letter from the Board Chair

Education First made history in 2014. Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, Chris Bryan, was hired as full-time Executive Director, becoming the organization’s first-ever paid employee. A confident board also voted to expand Education First to a seventh region in San Diego, California, bringing the nation-wide count from 7 to 16 scholarships awarded annually.

This year, Education First began accepting online scholarship applications and offering college mentoring to scholarship recipients. We saw a 22% increase in total revenue, the highest in five years thanks to individual donations. Regional fundraising events – from wine and beer tastings to a run for the cause – remained steady, accounting for roughly one-third of total revenue.

Looking ahead, we are focused on growing corporate and foundation fundraising, engaging and retaining volunteers, and continuing outreach and communication efforts with past scholarship winners.

I’d like to sincerely thank the donors and volunteers who make our mission possible. Your contributions are creating new opportunities and helping instill confidence in students pursuing higher education.

Education First celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2015. Help us celebrate with your continued support.

Thank you,

Dana Such, Board Chair

2015—2016 Participating High Schools

Seattle
Chief Sealth
Cleveland
Rainier Beach

Portland
David Douglas
Medlin
Hillsboro

San Francisco
Balboa
Mission
Shaywell-Matthew

Los Angeles
Curfett
Jefferson
Manuel arts

San Diego
Crawford
Lincoln
Miramar

Deerfield
North Senior
West

Austin
Eastside Memorial
Reagan
Texas

Boston
City College 2016-2016
Past Scholars — Where are they now?

“I started off at a community College and received three degrees when the attacks of September 11 occurred. Like many Americans I answered the call from my country and joined the military. After serving for four years, I returned to Portland and not only completed a bachelor’s degree at Warner Pacific College, but also received my Master’s in Education at Portland State University and currently teach 8th grade. My advice to scholars is don’t quit, never give up! It’s not easy — you’re meant for so much more. Life is very short — before you know it, it’s over. You will make it, as long as you push yourself, work hard, be thankful, give in support. Watch your time, your influences. Remember who you are, and your struggles. The world cheers for the underdog.” — Jessica Acosta, 1998 Scholarship Recipient, Portland