Building the Future

2017–2018 Annual Report
Dear Friends,

To build the future of our community, there is no better place to start than with our scholars. Alassane and Kawthar, who are featured on the front cover, are two students who are planning their futures at Philadelphia Futures. Through our programming, they are developing critical skills that will help them as they journey to and through college.

From mentoring to career readiness, academic enrichment to campus support, each of our programs is an essential “building block” of our students’ futures.

In 2017–2018, Philadelphia Futures made a deliberate effort to build the future by adding two new partner colleges, expanding major programs, and increasing scholarship opportunities.

The building block most essential to our success, however, is the dedicated support from individuals and institutions. Philadelphia Futures benefits from a deep and broad network of donors, volunteers, college partners, mentors, internship hosts, college administrators, and others who work with us to break down the barriers that prevent low-income, first-generation-to-college students from achieving college and career success. We remain grateful for your unwavering loyalty and inspiring generosity.

Our scholars and their success require that we work relentlessly towards a future where educational equity is achieved for all. Join us on this journey by giving of your time, your talent, or your treasure — we welcome your partnership.

Thank you for supporting our students as they build their futures.

Sincerely,

Sara Woods
Executive Director
Philadelphia Futures offers direct service and community impact programs designed to provide Philadelphia’s low-income, first-generation-to-college students with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college. We transform lives by breaking down the barriers that have historically excluded these students from achieving college and career success.

Join us as we work together to assist our inspiring students as they build their futures.

**Building the Future Through Direct Service: Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection**

Since its inception in 1989, Sponsor-A-Scholar has provided services to low-income, first-generation-to-college students starting in ninth grade through college graduation. Scholars are provided with a comprehensive range of tools, resources, and opportunities to ensure entry to and success in college, including: after-school enrichment programs, career opportunity exposure, SAT preparation, visits to college campuses, and financial assistance. Sponsor-A-Scholar also provides meaningful, personal support by matching long-term volunteer mentors who serve as social and professional role models for students.

Established in 2013, College Connection meets the college guidance needs of students who have a strong academic foundation, but require tailored support to navigate the admissions process and persist through college. College Connection students work closely with Philadelphia Futures to identify colleges and universities that best suit their academic, financial, and social needs. College Connection serves students beginning in eleventh grade through college graduation.

Once in college, Philadelphia Futures scholars are provided with intensive, individualized support to ensure academic, personal, and financial issues are addressed before they become barriers to success.

**Building the Future Through Community Engagement: Outreach Futures, Step Up to College, and the Charles E. Ellis Trust for Girls**

The Outreach Futures initiative brings our skills, expertise, resources, and networks to the broader community. Working in collaboration with high schools and community-based organizations through workshops, professional development sessions, and print and digital media, Outreach Futures offers critically needed information about the college admissions and financial aid processes to Philadelphia students and their families who otherwise would not have access to these services. One of our most essential offerings is the Step Up to College Guide — available in print, through Step Up to College digital resources, and as a smartphone application.

Philadelphia Futures also serves as the administrator of the Charles E. Ellis Trust for Girls, which provides grants to young women of limited financial means who live in single-parent households, to help them enhance their high school experience and prepare for postsecondary success.
The foundation upon which Philadelphia Futures’ other building blocks rest are our mentors and other volunteers who serve as a network of support for our scholars. Philadelphia Futures’ volunteers provide the guidance and encouragement necessary to aid students in the college admissions process and beyond.

**Sponsor-A-Scholar Mentors**

Sponsor-A-Scholar (SAS) has served more than 1,150 first-generation-to-college students since its inception in 1989. SAS provides an array of comprehensive and personalized services, of which one of the most impactful is the mentorship program.

SAS mentors are supportive adults who serve as role models, advocates, and cheerleaders to college-bound high school students. A mentor opens doors to new social, cultural, and educational experiences, and provides professional networks for a student. Each mentor is matched with an individual SAS student and asked to commit to that student through the critical first year of college.

Mentors are an integral part of our students’ success and many of those relationships last a lifetime. SAS mentors support their students through all life experiences. Some have helped students pack for college and then unpack in a new dorm room. Some have helped introduce students to their future careers. Some have invited students to their weddings and embraced entire families. All have found ways to enrich students’ lives.

Philadelphia Futures hosts twice-yearly Mentor Roundtables designed to provide mentors with support and resources. These events include scientific and academic experts and offer mentors evidence-based approaches to their work.

In 2017–2018, 148 mentors served 138 mentees in the Sponsor-A-Scholar program. 42 of these mentors were new to the program.

“It truly is a joy and pleasure to assist with such a dedicated, professional, energetic, motivated, and kind team of staff, students, and volunteers who achieve phenomenal results year in and year out. Thank you for letting me be a small part of the success story.”

— John Metzger, College Guidance Volunteer
Program Volunteers

In addition to mentoring, Philadelphia Futures offers a range of volunteer opportunities, each of which provides an essential building block for our students’ success:

- **Tutors** provide weekly one-to-one or group academic tutoring to high school students in a variety of subject areas.
- **Club Advisors** lead or help to support regular (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) enrichment sessions on subjects such as Robotics and Speech and Drama.
- **Career Panelists** speak to students about the pathways to success in various fields at scheduled career events throughout the year.
- **Remote Writing Coaches** assist scholars with writing college admission and scholarship essays through the innovative use of technology.
- **Application Reviewers** assess and strengthen students’ college applications.
- **Mock Interviewers** prepare scholars for college admissions, internship, and job interviews.
- **Career Day Hosts** are individuals and businesses across the city that host scholars for a day of job shadowing, enabling them to explore a variety of career options.
- **Translators** support activities, meetings, events, and publications to help make sure our messaging is inclusive and understood by all of our families.
- **Real Scholars Read** volunteers lead small group discussions, facilitate read-aloud sessions, and work one-to-one with students on reading comprehension.

The tutoring program achieved a record high 140 service hours in 2017–2018, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated volunteer tutors.

Two drop-in writing center days were added for help with writing assignments.

**Nineteen students** visited drop-in math tutoring, and **24 students** regularly utilized drop-in writing tutoring.
Building Block 2

Academic Enrichment

The goal of Philadelphia Futures’ academic programs is to provide students with the supports, enrichment, and interventions to help them gain the scholarly skills they need for college success and beyond. Support is focused on a few key areas which research shows is most needed for college success: math, science, critical reading and writing, and study skills.

**Academic Skill Building**

Philadelphia Futures has developed a complex academic skills scaffold to ensure students revisit key skills over time, in new ways, with increased rigor and complexity. For example, courses are designed to build strong writing skills, starting with clear and supported paragraphs, then essays, then literary criticism, then personal statements, then nonfiction reading and writing, then SAT preparation.

Academic enrichment begins with required courses that meet once a week during the school year, and for five weeks on college campuses during the summer. Individual support is available through one-to-one or drop-in tutoring, and use of an onsite computer lab, which we hope to modernize and expand in the coming year.

Participants in Philadelphia Futures’ 2018 SAT prep course demonstrated an average growth of 107.5 points from their fall PSAT to their SAT Superscore, well above the national average growth of 61 points.

82% of our students scored higher than or equal to the national average of 1050 for their SAT Superscore.

48% of our students scored higher than or equal to 1200 for their SAT Superscore.
In addition to required academic courses, Philadelphia Futures offers a collection of clubs that provide optional enrichment, including:

- **Robotics Team**: In partnership with the Philadelphia maker-space NextFab, students work together to design, build, and test an underwater robot to compete in a national program sponsored by the U.S. Navy.

- **Speech and Drama**: Students read and perform plays, attend live performances, discuss theatrical and acting techniques, and develop skills for effective public speaking. In 2017–2018, students performed an adaptation of *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *Red Velvet* by Lolita Chakrabarti, the story of the first African-American actor to portray Othello in London.

- **Stock Market Club**: Facilitated by students at Temple University’s Fox School of Business, students learn the business of finance, including stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Students participate in the Stock Market Game, where teams manage a mock portfolio of $100,000 to invest in a statewide competition.

- **Book Club**: Students read books of various genres and then come together to discuss, seminar-style, the themes, plot, writing techniques, and relevance to their lives. In 2017–2018, Book Club members read and discussed a rich assortment of texts, including:
  - *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
  - *Drown* by Junot Diaz
  - *I Am the Messenger* by Mark Zusak
  - *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline
  - *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
  - *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
  - *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera

Two new enrichment activities in 2017–2018:

### National Parks Service Internship

Philadelphia Futures partnered with the National Parks Service to provide an internship experience for 18 freshmen and sophomores in high school. Students met monthly, on site at Independence National Park, where they learned about history, storytelling, whose story is being told and whose is not, public speaking, and more. The NPS fully funded the effort: they provided students with transportation, snacks, and a nationally-acclaimed instructor. The program will expand in 2018–2019 to include a “Second Year Intern” program for students who completed the program to serve as teaching assistants. This program serves as academic and cultural enrichment for our students, but also as a career exploration opportunity.

### Mock Trial

Led by Drexel University Kline School of Law student Kimberly Kaelin, students met weekly to hone their arguments for a mock criminal trial. The semester culminated in a mock trial proceeding with the Honorable Sheila Woods-Skipper, President Judge, Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District of Pennsylvania presiding. Students gained valuable experience and received targeted feedback from Judge Woods-Skipper on their presentation skills. Several students said the experience shifted their interest and career trajectory towards law.

“Mock Trial required a lot of time and effort, yet was one of the best experiences! Working with a team to analyze a criminal case challenged my analytical skills, but kept me excited the whole time.”

– **SAMIRA CHHETRI**, Sponsor-A-Scholar Class of 2019
Philadelphia Futures’ expert college guidance program offers the specialized support required to ensure equitable college access for low-income, first-generation-to-college students.

Application Lab

Application Lab is a course offered to all Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection seniors, designed to support students in submitting all the necessary documentation for admission to college and for college scholarship opportunities. Philadelphia Futures staff provides guidance, support, and feedback throughout the application process. Families are invited to a special session where staff assist with submitting all financial aid-related paperwork.

To complete the course, every Philadelphia Futures senior must complete the following tasks:

• attend at least two college visits;
• attend at least one admissions information session at the Philadelphia Futures office;
• seek out writing support (either two drop-in writing sessions or working with a Remote Writing Coach); and
• complete and submit five college applications and at least two scholarship applications.

NEW IN 2017–2018: After a survey showed that more than 30% of our students did not have reliable access to technology, Philadelphia Futures moved class to the computer labs at Temple University’s Center City Campus. The additional investment proved effective, allowing students to have reliable internet access and focused time each week to complete their applications.

College Admissions Marathon

The College Admissions Marathon is a two-week, writing-intensive program designed to support students in the college application process through:

• researching colleges to identify academic fit;
• hearing directly from college admissions representatives to discover what they are looking for;
• practicing through mock admissions interviews and honing networking skills;
• learning about financial fit, and developing a financial fit strategy; and
• completing their personal statement.
Outreach Futures

Philadelphia Futures shares its expertise with the larger Philadelphia community through the Outreach Futures initiative, which is designed to engage students, families, guidance counselors, educators, and other youth-serving professionals who are supporting students’ college aspirations. The program offers workshops that focus on navigating the college admissions and financial aid processes, and provides strategies for college retention.

Other key services include:

• **Step Up to College resources**: the print edition of the *Step Up to College Guide*, the Step Up to College video series, and the Step Up to College mobile app;
• high school and community-based organization collaborative relationships; and
• consulting services and professional development workshops.

NEW TO MARATHON IN SUMMER 2018: The Saturday closing dessert reception included students’ families as well as mentors; writing time at Haverford College extended from three days to four days; and an added “Financial Fit” day that included workshops at Drexel University, co-facilitated by Drexel admissions and financial aid staff.

“Every aspect of the College Admissions Marathon helped to prepare me for the college application process. Features like learning about the rules of conduct during college interviews as well as drafting — and completing — a personal statement with the help of a professional writing coach put me far ahead of the game in the application process. The Marathon also created a space that allowed me to build even better relationships with my peers from Philadelphia Futures. The Marathon equipped me with the tools to tackle the college application process so that I do not become overwhelmed.”

— Joan Darkey, Sponsor-A-Scholar Class of 2019

Step Up to College

In October 2017, Philadelphia Futures released the 28th edition of *Step Up to College: Philadelphia’s Guide to the College Preparation, Application, Admissions, and Financial Aid Processes* — a 68-page publication designed to usher high school students in grades nine through twelve, and their support teams, through each stage of the college admissions and financial aid processes. Philadelphia Futures distributes 42,000 print copies of *Step Up to College* to every public, public charter, and parochial high school in Philadelphia, the Free Library of Philadelphia, government offices, and community-based organizations. *Step Up to College* is available without cost to eliminate any barriers to access, and also as a free mobile app from the App Store and Google Play.
Philadelphia Futures’ support continues well after students receive their high school diplomas. The depth and duration of our services distinguishes Philadelphia Futures from other college access programs. With the goal of college persistence in mind, Philadelphia Futures has developed an intensive advising protocol, as well as research-based programs and partnerships to ensure our students’ success through graduation.

Office of College Success

To meet the challenges that low-income, first-generation-to-college students often confront while earning their college degrees, our College Success Advisors assist Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection students throughout their college years. We provide ongoing guidance and financial resources for students as they earn their degrees and begin their careers. Philadelphia Futures staff regularly provides intensive, individualized guidance to collegians on academic, personal, and financial issues, removing obstacles before they become barriers to success.

Individualized Academic and Personal Support

The Office of College Success provides personalized guidance concerning academic, social, and personal issues, including accessing on-campus resources for tutoring and counseling; managing time, stress, and family problems; setting goals; and communicating with professors and administrators. A policy of proactive advising enables College Success staff to provide early intervention to struggling students.

Students participate in twice-yearly mandatory meetings to monitor grades, review progress toward academic and career goals, and troubleshoot problems as they arise. The College Success staff keeps in touch regularly via phone, email, campus visits, and social media pages.
College Partners

Philadelphia Futures has formed groundbreaking, strategic partnerships with eleven colleges and universities that understand the value of a diverse student body, share our dedication to equal access to education, and commit to providing our Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection students with comprehensive on-campus support and significant financial aid packages.

Philadelphia Futures established its first college partnership with Gettysburg College in 2001. Since that time, the partnership program has grown to include Albright College, Arcadia University, Dickinson College, Drexel University, Franklin & Marshall College, Haverford College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Penn State University, and Temple University.

Our partner colleges have made more than $44.9 million in institutional aid available to Philadelphia Futures’ students and have provided significant on-campus services to support their college success. Our students who attend partner colleges succeed in record numbers — the projected graduation rate for students enrolled at partner colleges is 88%.

The relationships Philadelphia Futures shares with our partner schools are mutually beneficial — colleges and universities have a more diverse student body and the ability to offer a richer educational experience to all students, and our students receive life-changing opportunities.

In January 2018, Albright College joined as the tenth partner in Philadelphia Futures’ College Partner program. Albright provides a vibrant, diverse, and student-centered campus climate, with a test-optional admissions pathway. Albright admissions worked closely with the Philadelphia Futures College Access staff in fall 2017 to connect with our students, provide additional context and application support, and build relationships through on-site admissions interviews at the Philadelphia Futures office.

In May 2018, Temple University became our eleventh College Partner. The Brook J. Lenfest Foundation has partnered with Temple University and Philadelphia Futures to offer three of our students each year a renewable yearly scholarship of $15,000. Supports for Lenfest Scholars include a designated scholar advisor and required meetings with Temple financial aid. A longtime collaborator with Philadelphia Futures, Temple’s research opportunities, diversity, prime urban location, and strong academic programs offer an unparalleled experience for our scholars, close to home.

In 2017–2018, Philadelphia Futures scholars enrolled at our partner colleges received $4.91 million in financial aid.
Philadelphia Futures’ guiding principle is that a college education is the portal to economic self-sufficiency and a satisfying life. Our job shadowing opportunities, career exploration course, career panels, and internships provide low-income, first-generation-to-college students with increased exposure and access to career opportunities.

**Career Futures Internship Program**

The goal of our Career Futures program is to provide students with meaningful internship experiences that offer career exposure and opportunity. Philadelphia Futures has partnered with local employers to provide industry-relevant experience and clearly defined skill development to students, along with an on-site mentor. Philadelphia Futures matches students with potential employers; matched students then interview with and are selected by employers for paid internships that last a minimum of six weeks.

Philadelphia Futures provides internship success training for any student who has a summer internship, including students who secured internships through their schools or elsewhere. The training covers corporate culture, professional dress, networking, professional communication, and other skills for success.

Internship hosts have included:

1. ARIA Health
2. InstaMed
3. Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
4. Esperanza Health Center
5. Glenmede Investment and Wealth Management
6. KPMG
7. Independence Seaport Museum
8. BDT Leadership Solutions
9. PACY Public Citizens for Children and Youth
10. Lincoln Financial Group
11. Macquarie
12. Stradley Ronon

Career Futures matched 20 students with internships at 13 employers in Summer 2017 and 21 students with 13 employers in Summer 2018.
Career Development Strategy

Philadelphia Futures’ intentional career strategy ensures students complete our program career-ready. We provide opportunities to develop essential workplace skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation, to explore careers in a variety of sectors, and to gain direct experience on a job site. Philadelphia Futures offers the following multi-pronged approach to increase our students post-graduate success:

- **Career Panels** help expose students to a variety of career choices and offer them insight into the pathways to securing a position in a particular field. Professionals from various industries, including marketing, communications, healthcare, academia, and legal services, present to students in panel settings.

- **Mock Interviews** offer formal opportunities to practice interview skills such as business-appropriate dress, preparing résumés, and interviewing techniques. Students are provided with constructive criticism following each mock interview.

- **Career Days** are gender-specific and coordinated by our Young Men’s Initiative and our Young Women Rising groups. Students prepare by researching participating companies, submitting job applications, attending professional development workshops, and being fitted for professional attire. Students are able to job-shadow at a diverse range of local employers, then attend a networking luncheon.

- **The Internship Success Training Program** is held at the beginning of the summer and is designed to offer our students intensive guidance on office etiquette, professional dress, and basic office orientation to help maximize their internship experiences. The program is taught by Philadelphia Futures staff and hiring managers from local businesses.

Macquarie Group Foundation Invests in Expanded Career Readiness

In March 2018, Philadelphia Futures received a three-year grant from Macquarie Group Foundation to support an expanded focus on career readiness. Philadelphia Futures will hire a new Director of Career Initiatives who will lead the Career Readiness Strategy. Our goal is to provide career exposure through workshops, career panels, internship and externship experiences, and career interest inventories. This generous gift will help guide students in making sound choices regarding college majors and careers.
Measuring Impact

For the Period July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018

Fiscal accountability and program evaluation are core values of our organization. By measuring and sharing our results, we are transparent in all we do. We are pleased to report our key financial and program activities and results for 2017–2018.

Program Performance and Results

Pre-College Programs

Sponsor-A-Scholar

• 160 high school students from 24 Philadelphia public high schools participated in the SAS Program.

• 100% of the SAS Class of 2018 graduated from high school. 100% of the Class was accepted to college, and 98% matriculated in fall 2018.

College Connection

• 88 high school students from 29 Philadelphia public, public charter, and parochial high schools participated in the College Connection Program.

• 98% of the College Connection Class of 2018 graduated from high school. 100% of the Class was accepted to college, and 98% matriculated in fall 2018.

College Success Services

• $190,989 in sponsorship funds, book allowances, and other financial incentives were distributed to over 300 Philadelphia Futures collegians attending 50 colleges and universities.

• 98% of the High School Class of 2017 has matriculated to college. 96% of the High School Class of 2016 returned to college for their sophomore year.

• 51% of our collegians attend partner colleges, receiving $4.91 million in institutional aid. 15 students earned degrees from partner colleges in 2018.

• 34 students earned degrees in 2018. The projected college graduation rate for the Sponsor-A-Scholar High School Class of 2014 is 81%.

White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards

• $27,725 in White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards were made to 150 high school students participating in the Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection programs in recognition of their superior academic performance and commendable character.

Outreach Futures

• 42,000 copies of the Step Up to College Guide were distributed to 102 public, public charter, and parochial high schools, 54 libraries, and 90 community-based organizations and government offices throughout Philadelphia.

• Outreach Futures offered individualized, multi-session programming and guidance to 34 students attending Northeast High School, single-session workshops to 1,319 students, and professional development seminars to 300 student-serving professionals and educators.

The Charles E. Ellis Trust for Girls

• $576,343 in grants were given to 194 girls attending public and public charter high schools to fund academic and personal development programs and school-related needs.

• $557,083 in grants for tuition assistance were made to 89 girls attending independent high schools.

• $566,866 in grants for tuition assistance were made to 201 girls attending parochial high schools.
Thank you.

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Philadelphia Futures is profoundly grateful for each and every gift, every moment of a volunteer’s time, and the many contributions of expertise, resources, and partnership that we receive. You make our work possible.
Get in the Game Fundraiser

On Thursday, April 26, 2018, Phillies players, local media celebrities, sponsors, and many other supporters enjoyed our 17th annual Get in the Game Celebrity Bowling Tournament at South Bowl. The event was hosted by Carlos Santana, first baseman for the Phillies. Five hundred guests enjoyed a red-carpet entrance, bowled in two tournaments, relaxed in an outdoor beer garden, and enthusiastically supported both a raffle and a live auction. To date, Get in the Game has raised over $2 million to support Philadelphia’s low-income, first-generation-to-college students build their futures. “It was amazing to see the City of Philadelphia come together to raise money to send students to college via Philadelphia Futures,” said Carlos Santana. “It was an honor to be a participant for such a great cause.”
A Night with Our Scholars
On Wednesday, November 1, 2017, Philadelphia Futures held Build the Future: A Night with Our Scholars at the University of Pennsylvania’s Van Pelt — Dietrich Library in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Hosted by Philadelphia Futures’ scholars, attendees met and mingled with students, enjoyed performances by the Speech and Drama Club, an informative presentation by the Eastern Futures participants, and an emotional personal essay read aloud by a Class of 2018 scholar. Both a Philadelphia Futures alumnus and a collegian shared how the organization helped them on their journeys to college and career success.

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