Taking the Next Step
Dear Friends,

It is my privilege to take the next step with Philadelphia Futures.

As I have immersed myself in Philadelphia Futures, I have found deep inspiration from this organization’s dedicated staff, stalwart supporters, and impactful work.

But the greatest inspiration I have found here at Philadelphia Futures is our scholars — high schoolers and collegians, as well as our accomplished alumni. That is why this year’s report features profiles on six exceptional individuals connected to the Philadelphia Futures family, and how they are taking their next steps. I hope you will enjoy getting to know these motivated, enthusiastic scholars as much as I have.

As a teacher and a public interest attorney, I feel passionately that education is a powerful tool for ensuring economic self-sufficiency for all. I look forward to continuing the long legacy of forward-thinking, results-driven work of Philadelphia Futures during this critical time in our nation’s history.

My goal is to encourage, engage, and empower our community to expand the reach of Philadelphia Futures. We rely on a network of dedicated individuals and institutions who partner with us to break down the barriers that prevent low-income, first-generation-to-college students from achieving college and career success. From donors to volunteers, from college partners to mentors, from internship hosts to college administrators — our partners are diverse, innovative, and steadfast. We are grateful for your commitment to our scholars.

I invite you to take this journey with me. Together, we will take the next step and transform lives.

Sincerely,

Sara Woods
Executive Director

Mission
Provide low-income, first-generation-to-college students with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college.

“It is with great confidence that the Board of Directors and I take the next step with Sara Woods as Philadelphia Futures’ new Executive Director. Building on the successes achieved under Joan Mazzotti’s transformative leadership, Sara brings a commitment to educational equity and a track record of results that will continue this upward trajectory.”

– LAURA WILLIAMSON
President of the Philadelphia Futures Board of Directors

[Image of people holding books and smiling]
There is no better time than right now to show Philadelphia’s students that they matter. The direct service and community impact programs offered by Philadelphia Futures are designed to do exactly that, by providing low-income, first-generation-to-college students with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college.

Join us in taking the next step, as we work together to ensure that all of our students succeed in college and in a world premised on respect and dignity.
Tahmir Brown is a Fels High School senior and member of the Sponsor-a-Scholar (SAS) Class of 2018. Tahmir is a well-known presence in the Philadelphia Futures office, and his determination to take the next step to college is evident to all who meet him.

Tahmir says, "Being in Sponsor-A-Scholar, I have learned so many things that my classmates have yet to learn. I have learned about overcoming procrastination, avoiding a closed mindset, how to make the best first impression, how to study strategically, how to write a research paper, and how the college admissions process works. There are so many things Philadelphia Futures has done for me, and I do not think I could ever repay them, but I will be my best self and show the world what a scholar looks like."

More about Tahmir

- He was named “Co-Man of the Month” for the Young Men’s Initiative, alongside his best friend Samir.
- He holds a position on the Young Men’s Initiative Leadership Council, and participates in Real Scholars Read.
- He hopes to attend a Philadelphia Futures Partner College, where he will major in philosophy.

“\textbf{I found out about Philadelphia Futures when they came to my high school to recruit students. After they told us what they did, I thought to myself, ‘This is it.’ I knew from that moment that I would be able to go to college. I knew my goals were reachable.’}”

\textbf{Tahmir Brown}  
Sponsor-A-Scholar Class of 2018

\textbf{WHITE-WILLIAMS SCHOLARS} For nearly a century, White-Williams Scholars provided financial resources to high-achieving, low-income students in Philadelphia. Today, our White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards honor the legacy of White-Williams Scholars by recognizing the academic excellence, commendable character, and outstanding commitment of Philadelphia Futures’ high school students.
Sponsor-A-Scholar

Since 1989, Sponsor-A-Scholar (SAS) has made the dream of college a reality for more than 1,000 first-generation-to-college students.

Key components of the Sponsor-A-Scholar Program include:
- Long-term, one-to-one mentoring
- Individualized staff support through high school and college
- Year-round academic enrichment: after-school classes, SAT preparation and summer programs on college campuses
- Personalized college counseling and guidance activities, including college visits
- Educational resources, including individual tutoring and use of an on-site computer lab
- Career awareness activities
- Gender-specific programming: Young Men’s Initiative and Young Women Rising
- Extracurricular activities
- $6,000 for college-related expenses

SAS 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 support their work. In spring 2017, Dr. Philip Braun, PhD, Clinical Psychology, counseled mentors in how to best help students grow and thrive in their high school and college years.

New in 2016-2017: Real Scholars Read

This new program targeted 20 students who were reading below grade level. Small groups of students were matched with books that were carefully chosen for their reading level as well as their interests. Each group of students was paired with an adult volunteer who met with them twice a week to read alongside the students and help to facilitate “Book Talks.” On average, the groups completed three books in three weeks, totaling 1,100 average pages read per participant. As a result of this pilot program, students universally reported a greater love of reading and participants increased their reading levels by, on average, two grade levels, while some improved as many as four grade levels.

RESULTS IN 2016-2017

$23,975 in White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards were provided to 143 high school students.
Vicktoria Phanthavong, an enthusiastic participant in the College Connection Program, took the next step in 2016 and — with the help of Philadelphia Futures — applied to seven colleges.

Vicktoria was introduced to Philadelphia Futures by a friend who thought the SAT prep courses would be helpful. Vicktoria says, “Philadelphia Futures provided much more than just a SAT preparation course. They provided guidance when it came to the college application process, visits to various colleges, internships to build my resume, and support from the amazing staff.”

With a near-perfect grade point average in high school, Vicktoria was poised for success. But as a first-generation American whose family had not attended college, she needed assistance with the application process. Vicktoria visited multiple colleges and, during summer 2016, she participated in the College Admissions Marathon experience at Haverford College, where writing coaches assisted Philadelphia Futures’ scholars with their college essays.

Clubs and Activities
Philadelphia Futures offers year-round academic enrichment programs, including after-school clubs and activities.

Book Club: Participants read an assigned book and meet each month for a seminar discussion about themes and issues raised in the text.

Speech and Drama Club: Members read and perform plays, learn about theatrical and acting techniques, and practice skills to support effective public speaking.

Robotics Team: Students work together to design and test the performance of a robot built to complete challenging underwater tasks. The team then competes with other student groups in the Greater Philadelphia SeaPerch Challenge.

Stock Market Club: Students learn about the world of business and finance, including understanding stocks, bonds, and mutual funds as they participate in the competitive Stock Market Game.

Young Women Rising (YWR): Philadelphia Futures’ young women scholars engage in workshops and other experiences that help support their journey towards college and career success.

Young Men’s Initiative (YMI): Philadelphia Futures is committed to improving the educational and life outcomes for young men living in urban poverty who are most at risk in today’s society. Launched in 2006, our Young Men’s Initiative provides gender-specific resources and support to our male scholars.

Performing Arts Writing Club: Students attend performances of the Pennsylvania Ballet and write performance reviews that are published on the PA Ballet website.
More about Vicktoria

• She held a leadership position on the Philadelphia Futures Robotics Team.
• Awarded the Laurie J. Keeler Award at the Graduation Celebration in June.
• Vicktoria was accepted by her first-choice school — Dickinson College, a Philadelphia Futures College Partner.

“No one in my family attended college, so I did not know where to start. Philadelphia Futures exposed me to a large array of colleges and the process of applying to them. With their help, I applied to seven colleges.”

College Connection

This intensive program guides students who have a demonstrated academic foundation through the college application, admissions, and financial aid processes and actively supports their progress through college completion.

Key components of the College Connection Program include:

• Personalized college guidance and individualized staff support through students’ junior and senior years of high school and through college
• Weekly college-readiness programming
• Educational resources, including individual tutoring and use of an on-site computer lab
• Gender-specific programming: Young Men’s Initiative and Young Women Rising
• Extracurricular activities, such as career panels, networking workshops, and visits to various workplaces
• White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards for high school juniors and seniors who meet high academic standards
• Support services during college with special focus on individualized academic and personal support and connecting academic credentials to careers

COLLEGE CONNECTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2016-2017

• 100% of the Class of 2017 achieved a combined score of 870 or above on the math and critical reading sections of the SAT. The average Class score for the test on these sections was 1180, and students demonstrated an average growth of 101 points from the initial benchmark conducted by Philadelphia Futures to their final superscores.

• 100% of the Class of 2017 was admitted to one or more colleges.

• 100% of the Class of 2017 graduated high school on time.
Gheed Aljubouri is a junior at Arcadia University who is taking the next step by persevering in college, to achieve her dream of attending medical school.

Gheed's story is inspiring. She immigrated to the United States from Iraq in 2010, when Gheed was 13 years old. She says, “I had to get adjusted to the fast-paced environment of the classroom, to keep up with the subjects. By eighth grade, I was doing as well as all the other students, and I was accepted into the International Baccalaureate Program at Northeast High School.”

Gheed joined the College Connection Program in eleventh grade, where she took advantage of nearly every opportunity offered to her. With the help of her coordinator, Gheed chose to attend Arcadia University, a Philadelphia Futures Partner College, where she is studying biology on a pre-med track. Philadelphia Futures continues to provide Gheed essential support while she is in college. She says, “My advisor congratulates me when I accomplish a goal, and she hears me out and gives me advice when I am struggling.”

More about Gheed

- She earned 11 college credits before attending Arcadia from the Community College of Philadelphia, through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at Northeast High School.
- After graduating from Arcadia, she plans to take a gap year to volunteer at a hospital or work in a lab, before beginning medical school.
- In her spare time, Gheed is studying Spanish independently.

“...I learned valuable skills that are crucial for the real world, and I grew my professional network. Philadelphia Futures’ programs help me grow, develop skills outside of school and textbooks, and become more fit for professional work.”

In 2016-2017, Philadelphia Futures scholars enrolled at our partner colleges received $4.12 million in institutional financial aid.
College Partnerships

Philadelphia Futures has formed groundbreaking, strategic partnerships with nine colleges and universities that understand the value of a diverse student body, share our dedication to creating equal access to education, and are committed to providing our 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 Arcadia University, Dickinson College, Drexel University, Franklin & Marshall College, Haverford College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, and Penn State University.

Our partner colleges have made $36.3 million in institutional aid available to Philadelphia Futures’ students and have provided significant on-campus services to support their college success. Philadelphia Futures’ students who attend partner colleges succeed in record numbers — 86% of students who have been accepted into a partner college have graduated or are still enrolled in school working towards their degree.

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.
Career Futures

CHRISTOPHER FELIX
Lafayette College Class of 2018
Sponsor-A-Scholar Class of 2014

“Because of the Career Futures Internship Program I participated in this past summer, I received a job offer from Lincoln Financial Group. Philadelphia Futures has given me the opportunity to set up my future and take care of my family; I am excited to see what the future holds for me.”

Christopher Felix is a senior at Lafayette College, using the supports provided by Philadelphia Futures to take the next step towards his career.

For Chris, Philadelphia Futures is a family affair. Chris says, “My brother was recruited by Philadelphia Futures during his sophomore year of high school. When it was my turn to go to high school, not only was I looking for a school that was reputable, but I was also seeking a school that was served by Philadelphia Futures. I chose Northeast High School and applied for the Sponsor-A-Scholar Program very early in my high school career. As an individual who enjoys planning out his life, I was so happy to find a college readiness program that was going to work with me for the next eight years.”

Chris credits his participation in SAS, including a strong mentoring relationship with Bob Pyskadlo, for keeping him “on track” during his years at Northeast High School. Now, Chris is a senior at Lafayette, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Anthropology and Sociology and a cumulative GPA of 3.6. Philadelphia Futures assisted Chris in securing an internship at Lincoln Financial Group in summer 2017, which resulted in an offer of employment post-graduation.

More about Christopher

- He studied abroad in Sweden and Denmark during the spring 2017 semester.
- He is a member of the Psychology National Honor Society, Psi Chi.
- He is involved with Phi Kappa Psi and plays for the rugby team.
Career Futures matched 15 students with internships at 9 employers in summer 2016 and 20 students with 13 employers in summer 2017.

“Career Futures has given me the tools to interview well, showcase my abilities, and succeed within the workplace. Through my experience last summer, I made connections with professionals in my intended field, who gave me valuable insight for my upcoming professional career.”

– Kerby Phillipeaux (interned at Macquarie Investment Management)

“This experience has inspired me to not only further my knowledge on policy and advocacy in the school setting, but also on issues within school psychology, which I am eager to learn through Temple University’s Master’s Degree in School Psychology Program.”

– Alexis Grandy (interned at Public Citizens for Children & Youth)

Career Futures

Career Futures, established in 2013, is designed to provide students with internships that align with their academic interests and career goals and provide them with an opportunity for learning and professional development. Philadelphia Futures has partnered with a diverse group of employers, who provide industry-relevant experience with clearly-defined skill development and/or project-based learning, and an on-site mentor who works closely with the student intern. Philadelphia Futures matches students with potential employers through an internal application and vetting process. Matched students interview with and then are selected by employers to intern for a minimum of six weeks. All internships are paid.

Philadelphia Futures also provides internship success training for any student who has a summer internship, including students who secure internships through their schools or elsewhere. Training covers corporate culture, professional dress, networking, professional communication, and other skills for success.
Chris Paul is a Philadelphia Futures alumnus taking the next step towards career success as a professional chef.

A proud graduate of Sponsor-A-Scholar, Chris attended Samuel S. Fels High School, where as a freshman he first connected with Philadelphia Futures. Through Sponsor-A-Scholar, Chris received college prep assistance, financial incentives and, most importantly, a window into his future. He says, “I was not aware of the opportunities in culinary arts, but my mentor [Mark Dubach] happened to be a chef. This motivated me to continue cooking, and upon being accepted to Drexel University’s Culinary Arts Program, he gave me a custom knife kit with my initials engraved on all the handles. I am still grateful for his generosity.”

Philadelphia Futures encouraged Chris to apply to a diverse array of colleges and universities that were the right social and academic fit. Chris was one of the first students to matriculate to Drexel through the Philadelphia Futures partnership.

At Drexel, Chris took advantage of the supports from Philadelphia Futures, including staff guidance and sponsorship funds to help defray the cost of books. Chris remembers, “My financial aid process was more complicated because my mom was still a Haitian citizen, and there were a lot of times she did not have the required documents to move forward. Philadelphia Futures made sure that everyone came together every year to make my education possible.”

Since graduation, Chris has built an enviable restaurant career, including employment with Parc, Chifa, and Herban Quality Eats. Chris is currently working as a private chef, leading after-school cooking classes for The Free Library of Philadelphia’s Get Hype Philly Program, and doing pop-up events, most recently at Garage Fishtown.

“Participate in everything possible. These programs are here for you to take advantage of, and Philadelphia Futures is here for your well-being. Trust them, they want to see you succeed by any means. You just have to show up, pay attention and focus, and Philadelphia Futures will lead you down the right path.”

CHRISTOPHER PAUL
Drexel University Class of 2011
Sponsor-A-Scholar Class of 2007
John Hardin-Bey is a Philadelphia Futures alumnus who is taking the next step by serving as a mentor to a next-generation Sponsor-A-Scholar student.

John, who grew up in the Brewerytown neighborhood of Philadelphia, connected with Philadelphia Futures during his freshman year at Abraham Lincoln High School. The most influential part of John's SAS experience was his mentor, Gary Abrams. He says, “I had an amazing mentor with whom I still keep in regular contact. I have a great appreciation for him and his impact on my life; his influence on me has been akin to that of my parents. He has set an outstanding example and he has supported and guided me, even when I did not know he was doing it or that I needed it.”

John attended West Chester University, and Gary helped John land an internship opportunity at Gary’s employer, Delaware Investments (now Macquarie Investment Management). John continued to intern with the company throughout his entire college career and, after college graduation, John was hired as an Investment Accountant for Macquarie, where he enjoys the opportunity to use the professional skills he learned through Philadelphia Futures. John also serves as a Reserve Officer in the United States Marine Corps.

Now, as an established professional who appreciates what Philadelphia Futures has done for him, John wants to give back. John has volunteered to serve as a mentor to a student in the SAS Class of 2019. John says, “My mentor taught me a lot about humility and focusing on others. Now that I am a mentor, I hope that I am able to provide the same support and perspective to my mentee. I have had the desire to give back for a while, and I felt that Philadelphia Futures was one of the organizations that I would do my best to support once I was able.”

“My mentee and I are developing a rapport. I am listening to where I can assist him in reaching his goals.”
The Year in Review

For the Period July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017

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 2016–2017.

Program Performance and Results

Pre-College Programs

Sponsor-A-Scholar

- 185 high school students from 34 Philadelphia public high schools participated in the SAS Program.
- 100% of the SAS Class of 2017 graduated from high school. 100% of the Class was accepted to college, and 97% matriculated in fall 2017.

College Connection

- 99 high school students from 23 Philadelphia public, public charter and parochial high schools participated in the College Connection Program.
- 100% of the College Connection Class of 2017 graduated from high school. 100% of the Class was accepted to college, and 97% matriculated in fall 2017.

College Retention Services

- $187,071 in sponsorship funds, book allowances, and other financial incentives were distributed to 270 Philadelphia Futures collegians attending 49 colleges and universities.
- 100% of the High School Class of 2016 has matriculated to college. 98% of the High School Class of 2015 returned to college for their sophomore year.
- 98 collegians attended partner colleges receiving $4.12 million in institutional aid. 19 students earned degrees from partner colleges.
- 50 students earned degrees in 2017. The projected college graduation rate for the Sponsor-A-Scholar High School Class of 2013 is 72%.

White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards

- $23,975 in White-Williams Scholars Incentive Awards were made to 143 high school students participating in the Sponsor-A-Scholar and College Connection Programs in recognition of their superior academic performance.

Outreach Futures

- 42,000 copies of the Step Up to College Guide were distributed to 105 public, public charter, and parochial high schools, 56 libraries, and 107 community-based organizations and government offices throughout Philadelphia.
- The Step Up to College mobile app was downloaded over 1,000 times in FY2017.
- Outreach Futures offered individualized, multi-session programming and guidance to 28 students attending Northeast High School, single-session workshops to 1,365 students, and professional development seminars to 51 student-serving professionals and educators.

The Charles E. Ellis Trust for Girls

- $481,456 in grants were made to 245 girls attending public and public charter high schools to fund academic and personal development programs and school-related needs.
- $521,521 in grants for tuition assistance were made to 115 girls attending independent high schools.
- $729,295 in grants for tuition assistance were made to 288 girls attending parochial high schools.
Thank you. 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.
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Step Up to College

In October 2016, we distributed over 40,000 print copies of the 27th edition of our Step Up to College Guide. With a new, easy-to-navigate magazine format, the 2016-2017 edition of the Guide featured reflections from Philadelphia high school graduates about why college was the right choice; expanded offerings on understanding options for college and finding the right “fit;” the seven strategies for conquering the FAFSA; and the ever-popular grade-specific checklists and hands-on activities.

In November 2016, we launched the Step Up to College mobile app. The app provides enriched and interactive access to the Guide, including a form to help students compare their colleges’ academic, social and financial fit; the ability to record responses to questions asked on college visits; a college cost calculator that allows students to analyze and compare financial aid offers; and the ability to track each step of the college admissions process. The Step Up to College mobile app is available for a free download via the App Store and Google Play.

Sponsor-A-Scholar Mentors

Joining the Program Between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017

Estelle Acquah
Beth Adamski
David Brooks
Suzette Brooks
Alexandra Caccavella
Molly Crotty
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Alissa Weiss
Brian Wyant
Melissa Wyatt
Samantha Wyatt
Robert Young, Jr. *
Debra Zlotnick*
*
Has mentored in the program before

Collaborations and Partnerships

Asomugha Foundation
Bridging the Gaps — Drexel University
Center for Peace and Global Citizenship — Haverford College
Community College of Philadelphia-Northwest
Drexel University
Eastern University
Haverford College
Management 100 — The Wharton School
NextFab Studio
Pennsylvania Ballet
Philadelphia Theater Company
Temple University Fox School of Business—Center for Professional Development
Townsend Press
University of Pennsylvania Philosophy Department

Career Futures

Internship Hosts

Aria Health
CS Consulting
Esperanza Health Center
Independence Seaport Museum
InstaMed
KPMG
Leadership Solutions
Lincoln Financial
Macquarie Investment Management
Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth
Philadelphia Futures
Philadelphia VIP
Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young

Career Day Hosts

Aria Health
Comcast-Spectactor
Glennmede
Macquarie Investment Management
PECO
Philadelphia City Council
Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP

Volunteer Tutors

Vinesh Anandarajan
Cameron Brandon
Robert Courey
Bonnie Eisenfeld
Jacob Ferguson
Jan Green
Jack Israel
Katrina Lawrence
Theodore Lewis
Matt Lin
Lynn Ma
Timothy Malarkey
Robert Gravets
Sarah Seeherrnan
Christian Selinski
Emily Silver
Sunil Verma

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Stephanie Bariahtaris
Ruthanne Boylan
Karen Detlefsen
Susan Fazio
Sarah Fitzhugh
Melanie Freely
Elizabeth Gephart
Eli Goldblatt
Amy Golinker
Lara Griece
Thomas Keeler
Donna Keegan
Michael Kelly
Olga Kofman
Barbara Link
Annie Liontas
Evan Malone
Robin Manix
John Metzger
Janis Moore-Campbell
Kristin Norton
Laura Novo
Maryann O’Conor
Michelle Ottey
James Gunsworth
Linds Paul
Janet Perry
Elizabeth Rimington
Nadlyn Rosenberg
Melissa Rowe
Marian Sandmairer
Stephen Seeling
Richard Weiss
Jenny Williams

College Guidance Volunteers

Caroline Beale
Cortney Bruno
Charles Burckhardt
Emily Chen
Robert Courey
Anne Denner
John Egner
Bonnie Eisenfeld
Sue Fazo
Lisa Feden
Melanie Freely
Elizabeth Gephart
Shawn Gonzalez
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Mary Lawler
Christa Leimbach
Tracy Matthews
Betsy McCarthy
John Metzger
Pamela Milcos-Smith
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Jen Pollack
Juliana Rausch
Rachel Rivest
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Marian Sandmairer
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Marcia Johnston
Susan Lee

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230 South Broad Street
7th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-790-1666
www.philadelphiafutures.org

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