GRATITUDE REPORT

COLLEGE BOUND OPPORTUNITIES
JULY 2018 - JUNE 2019
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FIRST-GENERATION

Have you ever traveled to a foreign country? Remember that nervous feeling in your stomach when asking for directions, feelings of being lost, wondering if the locals saw you for the clueless foreigner that you were? That’s how I felt navigating elementary, middle school, high school, and college. My parents have a 6th grade education and my siblings and I were tasked with overcoming financial and educational barriers to achieve a higher education. As a first-generation American I could not turn to my parents, aunts, or uncles for advice on how to navigate the school system. If it wasn’t for College Bound Opportunities, I might still be that shy kid walking through life hoping to make my dreams come true.

When I got to high school, I knew I wanted to go to college but was unsure about the steps I needed to take to make it happen. I met some amazing teachers and counselors who introduced me to CBO and the rest is history. I graduated from DePaul University with my bachelor’s degree in 2011. Along the way I couldn’t stop talking about the impact a college education had on me and encouraged my siblings to aim for their college degrees as well. My younger sister followed in my footsteps and earned her college degree in 2018. My niece and nephew say they want to go to college, too. The ripple effect of my college journey will be felt for generations to come.

CBO has given me confidence to speak up, to become well-informed, and to continue my education. I am currently working toward my M.A. in School Counseling and I am the first in my nuclear and extended family to do so. Although the road has been paved with uncertainty and stress, I know I have a support system in place I can turn to. This is the same support and encouragement I offer to the Scholars I work with and the two mentees with whom my sister and I work. I mentor a college senior and my sister and I co-mentor a senior in high school. Both girls encourage their younger siblings to work hard in high school so they, too, can follow in their footsteps toward a college degree. It is very encouraging to see families working together to aim higher.

The importance of a college diploma cannot be emphasized enough. My goal is to have CBO’s Scholars graduate from college, find meaningful work after college, and give back to their families and communities. Together with my colleagues, CBO’s mentors, volunteers and donors, we are empowering and inspiring a new generation of informed, kind, compassionate, and empathetic individuals who will build a brighter future for themselves and their families.

Mari Najera
Director of College Access
CBO Alumna, Class of 2011
Mission:
College Bound Opportunities mentors, empowers, and inspires low-income, first-generation Scholars to overcome barriers, graduate college, and achieve success in life.

What barriers do our Scholars face?

Financial:
In Lake County, the number of people living in poverty has nearly doubled since 1990. According to a recent study, 86,000 people in Lake County are living below, at, or just above the federal poverty level of $22,300.

Nine cities in Lake County have poverty rates that exceed 10% of their total population. CBO supports students from 3 of those cities: North Chicago 16%, Waukegan 13%, and Highwood 11%

Experience:
97% of CBO Scholars are the first in their family to attend college and lack the “institutional” knowledge their multi-generational peers take for granted on how to navigate the college experience.

Identity:
80% of CBO Scholars are minority and can be troubled by a feeling of “otherness” on a college campus. This seeming lack of common ground, socially or culturally, with their peers can lead to a phenomenon known as Impostor Syndrome.

Lifting students out of poverty through education, one college degree at a time
CONGRATULATIONS TO CBO'S 2019 GRADUATES

Kiley Alexander
Illinois State University

Elizabeth Astudillo
DePauw University

Danielle Belmont
Loyola University New Orleans

Isabelle Block
Marquette University

Natalie Burchall
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Luis Castellanos
Elmhurst College

Stephanie Goebel
University of Connecticut

Emil Gorgioski
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design

Shani Kaplan-Golan
Northwestern University

Juan Marban
Carthage College

Emily McGee
Andrews University

Tania Najera
Illinois State University

Jonathan Reyeros
Illinois State University

Ana Roman
Illinois State University

Pamela Rosales
Azusa Pacific University

Nic Roti
Illinois State University

Uli Solovieva
University of Illinois at Chicago

Tucker Wilson
UCLA

Britney Wittes
Columbia College Chicago

COLLEGE BOUND OPPORTUNITIES
MENTORS, EMPOWERS, AND INSPIRES LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION SCHOLARS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS, GRADUATE COLLEGE, AND ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN LIFE.
What sets CBO apart from peer organizations is our focus on creating consistent, long-term relationships with our Scholars. Success starts with our mentors. Each mentor is carefully paired with a Scholar when they are admitted to our program and that relationship spans through college graduation and, oftentimes, well beyond.

Thank you to all the incredible volunteers who have dedicated so much to each Scholar’s success and happiness over the years.

MENTORING

Sharon Abrams
Tricia & Bruce Abrams
Cathy & Julio Abreu
Veronica Accardo
Phyllis & Len Adams
Anna Aguilar
Nancy Alba-Robles
Jodi Alperstein
Tina Anagnos
Mary Andersen
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Susan Bell
Rebecca Bennett
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Ilyse Brownstein
Joanne Burgess
Gayle Byck
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Cheryl Chamberlain
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Susan Cherry
Kathy Chwiecko
Ann Cocks
Frank Cohen
Garrett Cohn
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Hilde Hutchins
Leslie Hyman
Peggy Jadwin
Frank Jaffe
Jay Josephson
Michele Kang

YOUTH WHO FACE AN OPPORTUNITY GAP BUT HAVE A MENTOR ARE 55% MORE LIKELY TO BE ENROLLED IN COLLEGE
COLLEGE ACCESS

As first-generation college students, CBO Scholars face unique challenges in their pursuit of a college degree. Our staff is focused on helping students understand the application process and building the tools and skills they need to navigate that process. CBO recruits high-achieving students from our partner high schools and admits each new class of Scholars prior to the start of junior year.

PARTNER HIGH SCHOOLS

CBO staff provides the following as part of our College Access Programming:

- ACT Test Prep & Academic Tutoring
- Office hours at each partner high school
- Advising students on colleges best suited for all their needs
- Traveling to college fairs & campus visits
- 1:1 assistance with college applications, essays, financial aid and scholarship applications
- Workshops to help transition to life on campus

And, once they have committed to a college and graduated from high school, CBO provides a new laptop as a graduation gift!

90% OF CBO SCHOLARS ARE THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE
CBO SCHOLARS ON CAMPUS
PAST & PRESENT


American University
Andrews University
Augustana College*
Azusa Pacific University
Ball State University
Beloit College
Bradley University*
Bryant & Stratton College
Carleton College
Carroll University*
Carthage College*
College of Lake County*
College of the Holy Cross
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DePauw University*
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University of Illinois Springfield*
University of Iowa*
University of Michigan*
University of Rochester*
University of Wisconsin – Madison*
University of Wisconsin – Platteville
Vanderbilt University
Villanova University
Wellesley College
Western Illinois University*
Wheaton College

*multiple students attended
COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

Once in college, staff and mentors remain in constant touch to ensure students are staying on track academically and socially. Scholars also check in with staff when they are home on breaks throughout the year.

Getting to college is one thing – persisting and graduating is another.

How else are we setting up students for success?

- Connecting students with various resources on campus
- Reviewing class schedules to ensure timely graduation
- Providing up to $16,000 total in financial assistance to help with academic costs, text books, supplies, housing, and travel in order to keep their debt load to a minimum.

Earning a four-year college degree is the best return on our collective investment and will provide our Scholars with a lifelong advantage that goes beyond socio-economics. They are changing the trajectory of their lives and that of their families, often inspiring siblings, relatives and friends to follow in their footsteps. They are setting an example for future generations to strive for more and know it can be accomplished with the right support system.
We are so proud of all our alumni who are thriving in cities around the country! Today, there are 120 alums who are pursuing graduate degrees, working, raising families, and giving back to their communities in countless ways. In fact, 10% of alumni are mentors themselves and quite a few have volunteered for various CBO workshops to help shape the next generation of CBO Scholars.

Ailyn Adames
Anna Aguilar
Sasvi Alam
Kiley Alexander
Julieta Alonso
Tatiana Alonso
Yesenia Alonso
Elizabeth Astudillo
Roberto Astudillo
Eric Avila
Michael Avila
Tonny Avila
Lesly Barrera
Salomon Barrera
Gabrielle Basok
Danielle Belmont
Nicole Belmont
Tracie Belsanti
Isabelle Block
Daunyell Boyd
Justine Burchall
Natalie Burchall
John Burger
Dylan Carrigan
Jorge Castellanos
Luis Castellanos
Francesca Castelli
Adriana Castrejon
Frankie Charles
Liz Chavez

Amy Chen
Starr Clark
Ferni Cruz
Martha Cruz
Emily Cushing
Enrique Diaz
Zari Dobrev
Bibi Donis
Chase Ellman
Catherine Garcia
Lupita Garcia
Marina Garfias
Stephanie Goebel
Jennifer Gonzalez
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Sheila Grant-Shaffer
Alex Guajardo
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Shoshan Handy
Monica Harasim
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Shani Kaplan-Golan
Andrew Lester
Caroline Lester
Lauren Lonski

Brittany Lowis
John Mannebach
Kate Mannebach
Juan Marban
Emily McGee
Kara Medina
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Samy Morales
Angelina Najera
Mari Najera
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Jairo Rodriguez
Ana Roman
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Paige Stromayer
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Kasia Tomaszynska
Enrique Torruco
Connie Uribe
Jackie Vazquez
Arturo Vergara
Arnie Weil
Alex Wesolowski
Tucker Wilson
Britney Wittes
Amy Yi
CAREER PREP

At CBO, we want every Scholar prepared to succeed after graduation. So we created a robust Career Prep program that offers Scholars the opportunity to build the hard and soft skills needed to lay the foundation for their professional lives.

**Summer Workshops**

Once students are home for the summer, CBO hosts a series of workshops designed to help Scholars build a portfolio of professional skills needed to launch themselves in the working world. Topics include:

- Resume Writing & LinkedIn
- Networking & Interviewing
- Strengths Finder
- Majors & The Real World

**Networking Reception**

As the final event in our Summer Workshop series, this reception offers Scholars a chance to network with local business leaders, potential employers, and other volunteers invested in their success.
Gaining experience in the workplace can be critical to a student's success after graduation. Not only do they have something relevant to add to their resume, they are creating invaluable connections that will help them in the future. Hosted in January each year, the Internship & Summer Jobs Fair is intended to connect Scholars with potential employers offering paid internships or summer jobs.

Did you know?

100% of CBO Alumni are employed or pursuing a graduate degree within six months of graduation.
On Monday, August 6th, 2018 CBO hosted its annual golf outing at the Merit Club in Libertyville. More than 120 golfers attended this sold out event and helped raise more than $100,000 in support of CBO's Scholars as they pursue their college dreams.

Guests participated in several par 3 challenges and a few lucky winners walked away with a new wedge, bag, golf balls, and one lucky golfer won a trip to the 2019 Masters!

Eagle Sponsors

Birdie Sponsors

CBO Golf Committee
Eddie Leshin, Chair
Susie Blau
Mark Flavin
Ross Friedman
Todd Heyden
Cynthia Hirsch
Vicki Kellerman
Tom Mann
Ken Rubin
Mark Schulman
Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 1st Annual Cards for College event at Ravinia Green Country Club! **Cards for College** raised more than $12,000 to help ensure CBO Scholars receive the tools, resources, and support needed as they pursue their college dreams.

Thank you to our partners:
* Bestowed
* DS Cosmetics
* Emmis Jewelry
* Kidoodles

**Cards for College Committee**
Bonnie Shlensky, Chair
Bonnie Brickman, Marla Gelfond, Mindy Leshin, Karen Lygizos, and Lisa Schulman
GET YOUR GROOVE ON WITH CBO

On Saturday, May 4th, 2019, 200 guests got their groove on with CBO in support of college dreams. Guests enjoyed a 70’s themed evening of creative cocktails and appetizers, a delicious dinner followed by groovy dancing and dessert. Jim Axelrod, Emmy-Award winning national correspondent for CBS, presided over the evening as the Master of Ceremonies and led a game of heads or tails, a Fund-a-Scholar paddle raise, and an exciting live auction.

Thank you to the sponsors, guests, donors, and volunteers who supported CBO’s 9th Annual Gala and helped raise OVER $250,000 to mentor, empower, and inspire low-income, first-generation Scholars to overcome barriers, graduate college, and achieve success in life.

**Summa Cum Laude Sponsors**
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- Elaine & Brian Weinberg

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- Mindy & Eddie Leshin
- Beth Lewis & Mark Sonneborn
- Sandy & Robert Lund
- Kathy & John McKenna
- Patty & Ken Pell
- Judy & Bill Siskel
- Caryn & Jerry Skurnick

**Gala Committee**
- Melanie Hanig, Chair
- Lisa Fleisher
- Jill Goldman
- Elissa Halperrn
- Beth Hull
- Megan Leopold
- Elizabeth McGregor
- Beth Olderman
- Silvia Rota Pettenati
- Stacy Raven
- Leslie Rubin
- Elaine Weinberg
- Lisa Xilas
GET YOUR GROOVE ON WITH CBO

Thank you to our In-Kind Donors:
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Foodstuffs
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Robin Greenberg
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Highland Park High School
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Silvia & Fabio Pettenati
Martha Abelson Photography
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Leslie Rubin, Jackdog Design
Sassy Sweets
The Standard, East Village
Elaine & Brian Weinberg
Abbott Wolfe
Lisa & Andy Xilas

Thank you to our Drink Sponsors:
We are so grateful for the support of so many individuals and organizations who believe in CBO’s mission and Scholars. None of our success would be possible without you. We extend our sincerest gratitude to the individuals, corporations, foundations and civic organizations who have contributed to College Bound Opportunities between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. Thank you for partnering with CBO to change the lives of our Scholars, their families and entire communities.

**$100,000+**
- Caerus Foundation, Inc.*
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**$75,000 - $99,999**
- Harriette and Ted Perlman*

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- Barbara and Jim Hanig^
- The Perlman Family Foundation
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- YEA! Highland Park^  

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- Victory Park Capital Advisors, LLC^  
- Weinberg/Newton Foundation*

*5 years consecutive giving  ^10 years consecutive giving
THANK YOU DONORS

The average cost for one year of college is $24,000 at a public institution & $48,000 at a private institution

The average annual income of a CBO Scholar is $30,000

$2,500 - $4,999
AFN
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Constellation Brands
Elite Staffing
Dale and Roger Gandall^ 
Diane and Kim Gasior* 
Donise and Scott Gehrisch
Hillary and Todd Heyden
Hollis Cobb
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Debbie and Bruce Pielet 
Penne and John Silverman* 
Wendy and Larry Tenebaum

$1,000 - $2,499
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ADP
Monique Ann and Gary Gillis
Anonymous
Deborah and Mark Attanasio
Susan Bell and Bruce Masterson^ 
Amy and Ron Berger
Caryn and Jim Berman
Mona H. Berman
Barbara and Don Bernstein
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Amy and Steve Don
Toni and Darren Fabric
Carol and Geoff Felsenthal
FGMK, LLC
Barbara and Larry Field^ 
Barbara Finder* 
Mark Fishman

* 5 years consecutive giving ^ 10 years consecutive giving
THANK YOU DONORS

The average gift to CBO this year was

$1,055

These gifts make it possible for Scholars to fulfill their college dreams

Carol and Richard Fleisher*
Free Market Ventures
Marla and Danny Gelfond
Laura Gold
Elissa and Jeff Halpern*
Lucy Hammerberg*
Melanie and Eric Hanig*
Alice and Peter Hanig
Amy and Brian Herzog
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Wendy and David Mutchnik
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Ted Schwartz
Judy and Bill Siskel^*^10 years consecutive giving
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Nathan Tannenbaum Foundation
Cooky and Myron Warshauer
Wendy and Bobby Weiss*
Judith and Irwin Wrubel
Lisa and Andrew Xilas*
CBO invests $25,000, per Scholar, over six years to help them overcome barriers, graduate college, and achieve success in life.

$500 - $999
28 Mile Vodka Company LLC
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Larry Smith
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Tori Spreckman
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Karen Winters
Paula Klein Zeid
Susan and Mark Zolno

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Anne and Terry Berk
Dayle Berke
Bestowed
Greg Bregstone
Gail and Andrew Brown
Lois and Don Chudacoff

* 5 years consecutive giving ^ 10 years consecutive giving
THANK YOU DONORS

94% of CBO Scholars have graduated or are on track to graduate

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Lance Donenberg
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Laura and Michael Tepper*
Laura and Michael Tucker
Laurel Tustison
Mindy Uhrlaub
Jody and Dean Weinberg
Amy Yi

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Susana Apter*
Andrew and Lisa Aronson
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Julie and David Baum
Beal Properties
Cyndy and Marc Benjamin

*5 years consecutive giving ^10 years consecutive giving
THANK YOU DONORS

These gifts make things like ACT Prep possible. Scholars attend 9 weeks of classes, gaining the average improvement of 2.5 points, which directly affects the amount of merit aid Scholars can receive.

Martha and David Berzon
John R. Blane*
Sally Blitt
Zivit and Steven Blonder*
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Total Expenses: $1,313,921
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