Organizational Profile

Founded in 1995 by a group of mentor 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 seldom recognized for their achievements.

2012–2013 Education First Board of Directors

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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.

Volunteers

Koma Balika
Rebecca Benville
Aarav Kapur
Paul Bruss
Saan Chau
Amanda Casey
Jay Dallera
Taylor Coker
Aparna Doshi
Lauren Dutton
Tirsa Embrey
Bittani English
Dunny Dong
Duncan Guillem
Bryan Gudinla
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Svea Le
Mike Mao
Ashley McCave
Riga Mahan
Khoa Maks
Cheryl Minor
Dana Mihelcic
Kevin Mini
Aurora Mavis
Somee Nanavati
Ando Teng
Christian Truong
Nikolaus Tschirren
Katherine Van
Kraig Zevallos

Foundations Grant 2%
Corporate Donations 17%
Individual Donations 81%

2011 Revenue Sources

Letter from the Executive Director

Education First has not been immune to the economic slowdown. The impacts of corporate tightening of community support have been felt in each of our six fundraising cities. In 2011, we had to reduce our scholarships amounts for the second year in a row due to the decline in corporate fundraising.

Thankfully our individual donors have continued to generously give to this great cause and recently we have seen corporate giving slowly start to pick up. In addition, volunteer regions are working harder than ever to plan exciting and successful fundraising events in your local community. In the spring our volunteers reviewed a record 293 applications from 18 schools and conducted over 70 interviews to select our remarkable scholars for 2011. A total of 56,000 (down from 78,000 in 2010) was granted in scholarships to twelve high school seniors that demonstrated impressive character, educational excellence, and commitment to their community.

Our scholarships, which are still some of the largest available to graduating seniors, are only made possible by our amazing donors. We appreciate and thank you for your support of Education First.

Sincerely,

Nathan D. Smith, Executive Director

2012–2013 Participating High Schools

Seattle Chief Sealth Cleveland Rainier Beach

Portland Benson Parker Cleveland Madison

San Francisco Ribak Mission Thurgood Marshall

Los Angeles Garfield Jefferson Manual Arts

Denver Jefferson North West

Austin Eastlake Memorial Reagan Travis

Education First

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Seattle, WA 98168
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Our 2011 Scholarship Recipients ($6,000)

Denver
Melissa Romero
North High School

Desire having to overcome many challenges, such as not having a home or bed and taking few classes, just to go to school every day. Melissa remained strong, optimistic and dedicated. As a volunteer for a community resource center, Melissa wants “to bridge the digital divide” that separates the less fortunate. She plans of studying computer science and business management.

Our 2011 Donors

Seattle
Phyllis Jasmyn Lee and Penny Grinty

Portland
Hamada Jana
Roosevelt High School

“WILL I reach my dreams — nothing is going to stop me” Hamada and her family of 10 arrived in the US 5 years ago from Somalia speaking no English, but through persistence and hard work she performed at the top of her class. Hamada will be the first in her family to go to college, and wants to become a pediatrician.

San Francisco
Allan Gomez
Mission High School

Canada College, Redwood City

Allan is determined and mature beyond his years. After escaping an abusive father in Guatemala twice, Allan had to ply asylum to immigration and take jobs on below minimum wage to support his family and pay legal fees. Despite all this, Allan never forgot the importance of education, and agrees to major in Political Science and become a lawyer/advocate for others in similar conditions.

Los Angeles
Amanda Pineda
Manual Arts High School

Los Angeles City College

A determined yet practical young lady, Beatriz sets her goals high. Coming to the US starting High School at 17 was not easy, but her ability to speak English and the need to work 30-40 hours a week to provide for her only family made her life much more challenging. However, Beatriz has taken all in stride, and is moving on to college while continuing to provide for her family.

Honorable Mention Award Scholars ($4,000)

Allan Gomez
Mission High School

Portland
Brianna Alroy
Marshfield High School

Sam Francisco
Irene Noh
Balboa High School

Lorenza Garcia
Jefferson High School

Denver
Rodolfo Segovia
South High School

Austin
Felipe D. Anaya-Hernandez
Eastlake Memorial High School

Past Scholars — Where are they now?

Ashley is finishing up her Latin American Studies degree at University of Kansas. Ashley has taken advantage of a diverse array of experiences, such as studying U.S. China relations in Beijing and complementing her Latin American Studies degree by studying abroad in Peru. In addition to her academic pursuits, Ashley has devoted significant time to volunteering, at various foundations and nonprofits. Ashley is currently preparing for the GRE and is excited to continue her education.

— Ashley Conna, ’11 Winner (Reagan High School, Austin)