The HEAR Scholarship Foundation's mission is to provide financial and mentoring support to Chicagoland High School graduates of need who have demonstrated academic excellence, commitment to community, and highest moral character in pursuing their dream of a college education.

Dear HEAR Foundation Supporters and Friends,

As usual, it’s been a very busy first half of the year. At the end of April, we selected our new 2022 Class of HEAR Scholars. This is always challenging, and proved even more so this year as we received over 650 scholarship applications.

We officially welcomed 27 new scholars into the HEAR Family at our Annual Scholarship Award Ceremony in early May; our largest group ever. We also congratulated our Graduating Class of 2018. We were honored to welcome Dr. Toinette McClellan Gunn, Vice President of Programs at Chicago Scholars, to our awards ceremony. Dr. Gunn gave a heartfelt presentation that was greatly appreciated by all and especially resonated with our scholars. We were delighted that so many of our HEAR Family and friends were able to attend our ceremony and join in this annual celebration.

With the substantial increase in the number of HEAR Scholars over the last couple of years, we expanded our mentoring efforts with the addition of HEAR Scholar Graduate Melissa Vela. Her efforts have contributed a significant element to our program, which we feel will lead to an even stronger connection to our scholars and pave the way for their continued involvement and support after they graduate. Under the direction of HEAR Volunteer Mary Sue Smith, the HEAR Foundation has also added an Enrichment Committee who send cards and “HEAR Care packages” including tasty treats to the scholars, reminding them that we really do care.

Under the leadership of HEAR Directors Dave McCreery and Len Wislow, we have also broadened our fundraising efforts as we look to gain financial support from area corporations and foundations.

We are grateful for the committee member volunteers and the donors who make this program possible. Should you have any questions or feedback, or are interested in joining one of our programs, please do not hesitate to reach out. Find out more about our programs and plans at www.hearfoundation.org, or send me an e-mail at chris@hearfoundation.org.

Thank you for your support.
Christopher J. Eigel
President

Class of 2022 HEAR Scholar Richard Rivera gets a surprise visit from Dr. Ray Pollina, Scholarship Director, & Vera Pollina, Executive Director. Richard is a Boys Hope, Girls Hope scholar from Loyola Academy and was absolutely delighted to receive a scholarship from the HEAR Foundation.
Dear Friends,

We at HEAR are feeling truly celebratory this year. Because of your generosity, support, and hard work we were able to award scholarships to 27 new scholars in 2018, a more than 60% increase year-over-year! We have now committed over 1.55 million dollars in scholarship support to a group of young people whose grace and determination have us in awe. Our scholars are graduating, finding employment or attending graduate school, and volunteering in Chicago and nationwide. They are doing research, creating beautiful music and art, always working hard, and - in many different ways - supporting HEAR in turn. Your gift creates a ripple effect that will change the very fabric of this city we love.

Read on to find out more about what HEAR has done this year, what we have planned in the future, and how we plan to make the most of the trust that you place in us.

On behalf of the HEAR Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for your continued support of our mission.

With thanks,
Vera Pollina, Executive Director

STATE OF THE PROGRAM

2018 is the 9th year that the HEAR Foundation has awarded college scholarships. Our award of $20,000 over a four-year period is paid directly to the scholar's college to help cover tuition. Our scholarship is renewable, and scholars must submit their grades each semester and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above to remain in our program.

Our awards ceremony in May at the beautiful St. Ignatius College Prep. was a truly celebratory affair. We were delighted to award 27 scholarships to exemplary high school seniors with significant financial need from the Chicagoland area. We also commended the 8 graduating scholars from our HEAR Class of 2018 for their perseverance and determination to succeed at college. We maintain a 100% graduation success rate and look forward to welcoming our new class of HEAR Scholars into the family. We have now awarded 81 scholarships and have seen 20 scholars graduate successfully from our program.

The fall of 2018 will see 62 HEAR Scholars pursuing higher level education throughout the US; DePaul, Harvard, Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Illinois Wesleyan, Loyola, Marquette, Michigan, Northwestern, UIC, Wisconsin and Yale are just a handful of colleges where our scholars have chosen to study. In addition to this, one of our new scholars is pursuing her degree at University College Dublin, Ireland.

STEM subjects were once again a strong favorite amongst our new class of scholars. Other disciplines include biology, business, education, finance and accounting, journalism, marketing, media & television, medicine and psychology. Our scholars have a current combined cumulative GPA of 3.43, and our Spring term GPA was 3.54. Two scholars scored a Spring 2018 Term GPA of 4.0.
HEAR Honor Roll

Our students continue to excel in their studies, many of them while working part-time jobs on top of their studies. The following HEAR Scholars all made honor roll (GPA at or above 3.7) over the past 12 months:

**Fall Term:**
- Andres Lagunas - 4.0 (Class of 2021)
- Lynn Weishaupt - 4.00 (Class of 2018)
- Claudia Szafarski - 3.99 (Class of 2021)
- Brianna Guzman - 3.94 (Class of 2019)
- Jerry Lau - 3.93 (Class of 2020)
- Jillian Gomez - 3.8 (Class of 2020)
- Lori Steffel - 3.8 (Class of 2021)
- Deja Young - 3.78 (Class of 2019)
- Allison Ledwon - 3.75 (Class of 2019)
- Richard Mouombo - 3.75 (Class of 2021)
- Nick Coleman - 3.74 (Class of 2019)
- Eden deJesus - 3.72 (Class of 2021)
- Dan Tryba - 3.71 (Class of 2020)
- Nick Moran - 3.7 (Class of 2021)

**Spring Term:**
- Zuriel Trejo - 4.0* (Class of 2021)
- Lynn Weishaupt - 4.0 (Class of 2018)
- Brianna Guzman - 3.95 (Class of 2019)
- Nick Moran - 3.94 (Class of 2021)
- Andres Lagunas - 3.92 (Class of 2021)
- Amanda Bardhoshi - 3.89 (Class of 2021)
- Deja Young - 3.88 (Class of 2019)
- Jillian Gomez - 3.83 - (Class of 2020)
- Whitney Giroux - 3.8 (Class of 2020)
- Karina Barazza - 3.76 (Class of 2020)
- Sam Daughenbaugh - 3.75 (Class of 2020)
- Gina Dudek - 3.75 (Class of 2021)
- Julian Tamayo - 3.73 (Class of 2019)
- Daisy Laureano - 3.72 (Class of 2018)
- Brianna Dang - 3.70 (Class of 2021)

*Zuriel scored a 4.0 in Winter & Spring terms

HEAR by Numbers

HEAR Scholars have a 100% college graduation rate to-date. The national average for low income students graduating is approx. 16%. By fall 2018, 20 HEAR scholars will have graduated from their chosen colleges. (National Center for Education Statistics)

**OVER**

$1,500,000 in scholarships committed to exemplary young Chicagoland high school seniors in financial need.

By the fall of 2018 the HEAR Foundation will have helped 82 scholars pursue their dreams of a college education.
**Our Selection Process**

Our selection process follows a structured approach to identify every incoming HEAR Scholar. We continue to maintain close relationships with many college counselors throughout schools in the Chicagoland area. We also work with local support organizations including Chicago Scholars, Daniel Murphy Scholarship Fund, Boys Hope Girls Hope and Evanston Scholars. We received over 150 additional applications this cycle over 2017, and our estimation is that this number will continue to increase as awareness of our Foundation grows.

Our selection criteria remain stringent. All applicants must hold a GPA of 3.0 or above, possess excellent character, a demonstrated commitment to service, impeccable work ethic and a proven financial need. In addition to this, each student must submit essays, high-school transcripts and a teacher recommendation.

This year's applications were especially strong, making the decision of whom to award a scholarship even more difficult.

Of the more than 650 online applications we received, approximately 40% passed our initial screening process and were then reviewed by our carefully selected panel of volunteers. From there, 47 finalists were invited to attend an interview (this is an increase of over 50% on last year's application cycle).

The successful recipients of our scholarship were celebrated at our annual awards ceremony on May 8th and they are now looking forward to starting a new chapter in their lives.

Thank you to Dan Strzalka and Nixon Peabody LLP, who very generously granted us use of their conference room during our interview process.

**HEAR Scholarship Enrichment Committee**

A wonderful new addition to our program in 2018 has been the introduction of a HEAR Scholarship Enrichment Committee. This has been spear-headed by HEAR Volunteer, Mary Sue Smith who, along with numerous other volunteers, has been showing our scholars that we are thinking about them by way of sending cookie care packages during exam season, and birthday cards to mark their special day. The positive feedback that we have received from our scholars has been overwhelming and reinforces our commitment to family rather than being purely a financial provider.

The Enrichment Committee also gave each of our new scholars a first HEAR Care package during our recent HEAR Scholar Summer Social.

Sam Van Loon (Class of 2019) said, “I was wonderfully surprised! I had no idea what I’d be getting from HEAR, and I was very pleasantly surprised by the cookie care package.”

Allison Ledwon (Class of 2019) said, “That care package made my day! I was expecting to go to the package center to pick up a new phone charger and it was a box of deliciousness instead. Thank you for taking such great care of us! Also, the brownies in there were TO DIE FOR!”

Andrea Guzman (Class of 2021) said, “Please tell the baking ladies that I loved the cookies and really appreciated it!”
**Vision for 2018**

The HEAR Foundation's annual fundraiser in December 2017 surpassed all expectations, raising well over $250,000 and enabling us to exceed our target of 20 scholarships for the 2018 cycle. As a direct result of your generosity, 27 scholarships were awarded to exemplary high school students in financial need, providing them with access to a college education.

In September 2017, the HEAR Foundation was granted public 501(c)(3) status, meaning we are now eligible to apply for corporate funding as well as continuing to accept personal donations. In light of this recent status change, the HEAR Foundation is planning to award between 30-35 scholarships for the HEAR Class of 2023. We have formed a dedicated Grant Application Committee who will be working on growing this part of our Foundation over the coming months.

In line with the significant increase in new HEAR Scholars over the last 12 months, a main focus has been on improving our mentoring program. Melissa Vela joined the HEAR Foundation as our Director of Mentoring and, as a HEAR Graduate herself, is in a unique position to be able to assist our scholars where needed. HEAR scholars are mentored throughout their four years at college and some require more support than others. Missy and Executive Director, Vera Pollina, have been investigating ways to continue to ensure that the HEAR Mentoring program is in a position to offer support in whatever scenario our scholars may need us. A challenge for the Foundation over the next 12 months will be to increase the number of mentors that we currently have in our program. If you would like more information please visit our website (www.hearfoundation.org).

Through our widening network of supporters, we have been fortunate to be in a position of continuing to expand our internship program, providing vital access to work experience that would normally be unattainable for many of our scholars. One example of this is HEAR Class of 2019 scholar, Sam Van Loon who studies at Northwestern University. Because of the HEAR Family network, Sam was given the opportunity to work on a pre-Broadway production of Pretty Woman at the Oriental Theater in Chicago.

Our commitment to supporting HEAR Scholars throughout their college journey is one of the defining factors setting us apart from other scholarship providers. Our mentoring program, the enrichment committee and our internship initiative all help to ensure that our scholars feel a part of a wider family, and offers them as much support as possible to successfully complete their college journey.

HEAR Class of 2018 scholar, Jasmine Drew, at her graduation ceremony.

Class of 2022 HEAR Scholars, Ellery Therriault & Salma Barhoumeh at our awards ceremony.
HEAR Class of 2018 - Christian Galka has just graduated from DePaul University in Chicago with a bachelor's degree in accountancy. As a Freshman, Christian entered college with a vision and pursued it with single-mindedness. With the help of a friend he was able to intern as a tax accountant early in his college career and has continued to do so every year. Upon graduation, this annual internship led Christian to a full time role with Schwartz & Harris LLP.

HEAR Class of 2019 - Deja Young attends Hampton University and will be entering her senior year this fall. Deja is a member of the university's band as a dancer. Earlier this year, the band competed at the Honda Battle of the bands in Atlanta, an event that was created to celebrate, support and recognize the excellence of Black college marching bands and the unique academic experience offered by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It was the first time the university had been represented at the event and they had a successful time, visiting 19 high schools en route to promote the college! In addition to this, Deja passed her HESI exams and after taking nursing courses throughout the summer months she will now be able to start professional nursing courses in the fall.

HEAR Class of 2020 - Salma Campos will be attending Northwestern University in the fall of 2018. After having to defer enrollment for health reasons, Salma was able to find perfect accommodation for her family's needs at Chicago City Colleges. She did so well there that she will be able to transfer to Northwestern University as a member of the graduating class of 2020. We have always considered Salma as part of the HEAR Family of Scholars and are thrilled that we are finally once again in a situation where we can support her studies financially.

HEAR Class of 2021 - Eden De Jesus has just completed his freshman year at Parsons School of Design in New York. Next year he will major in Fine Art, with a focus on performance art. In March, Eden designed and organized a 10 piece collection fashion show with over 100 guests. The proceeds of this went to a local NY charity. Eden is one of our scholars who chose not take a STEM subject, and is really enjoying the coursework that his chosen major offers!

Cumulative GPA: 3.48

HEAR Class of 2022 - Richard Rivera (right) will be attending St. Olaf University in the fall, majoring in Computer Science. Richard is a graduate of Loyola Academy and is a member of Boys Hope Girls Hope, Chicago Scholars and the Daniel Murphy Scholarship Fund. Richard was scholar of the year at Boys Hope in Illinois, has completed over 100 volunteer hours at a local daycare center, participated in a service trip to Guatemala and was a member of Loyola's Symphonic Orchestra, playing both violin & cello.

Above: Deja on campus at Hampton University.

Left: Eden stepping onto the cat walk at his fashion show.

Above: Salma on a recent trip to her parent's hometown in Mexico.

Above: Christian and family at his graduation ceremony.

Right: Christian and family at his graduation ceremony.
**Socializing and Celebrating**

**Winter 2017 Scholar Event**

We held our Annual Winter Scholar Event at Pompei Restaurant in Chicago and focused on building team spirit and re-enforcing a sense of community among our scholars. The theme was “Game Night” and it was a fun, competitive evening with teams pitching their wits against each other!

The occasion also provided a great opportunity for our HEAR Scholars to reconnect with each other, our Directors, mentors and other supporters of the Foundation. It was the perfect chance for our freshman in particular to discuss their first semester experiences and exchange tips and advice.

**Summer 2018 Scholar Event**

Given the dramatic increase in size of our new HEAR Class of scholars this year, we took a different approach with our annual summer event, with the main focus on our new scholars. In the fall, 27 new scholars will be leaving for college and, given that many of them are first-generation college goers with no one to turn to for help and advice, ensuring that they are as prepared as possible is crucial. Vera Pollina, our Executive Director, shared information and advice on how to get (and stay) ahead in college. Topics covered included goal-setting, getting to know teaching staff, when and where to turn to for help, school resources, scheduling (not procrastinating) and ensuring early class registration. A list of often overlooked do's and don'ts were also discussed amongst the group.

We were delighted to welcome Mary Sue Smith, our HEAR Enrichment Committee chair, who gave each scholar their first HEAR Care package and discussed the importance of staying in touch with family back home and keeping healthy. We were also very grateful to Lynn McCreery, a HEAR Volunteer and expert in the field of training and facilitation. Lynn led a very popular workshop on leadership and change management which was informative, interactive and fun! A number of current and graduated HEAR Scholars also attended, sharing their college experience and providing another opportunity for our new class to ask questions before they embark on their college journey.

Feedback from the day was very positive and this format will be used for future summer programming.
2017 Annual Fundraiser
Our Annual FUNdraiser in December was our most successful to date. An amazing band, fantastic prizes and great food and beverages ensured all our guests had a wonderful evening. New this year was the HEAR Wine Pull & Scholarship Squares game, both of which sold out early in the evening. Our guests also enjoyed reconnecting with old friends.

A Scholar’s Story

My mom wasn’t really active in my life. She really neglected, as a parent, to be there for me and show any real kind of support. She knew how much I loved school and how important education was to me, and sometimes she would threaten not to take me to school. She has never told me who my father is, so I was left with no family support system to speak of. I knew education was the way out but in my junior year of high school, when I told my mum of my intention to go to college, she told me I would have to do it by myself. I applied for lots of scholarships and every time I got a rejection my mom would tell me “you’re not worthy enough to go to college.” When I heard back from the HEAR Foundation I was over the moon! I was crying.

I am the first in my family to go to college and without a scholarship from HEAR, I probably couldn’t have afforded to go. Without the encouragement from my drama teachers I don’t think I would even have had the courage to apply for scholarships and without that, I wouldn’t have the funds because I’m paying for college as an independent student.

It’s still hard now, when I go home to visit my family, it isn’t a positive time. They say that I don’t love them anymore because I have put my education first. I use this as a motivator, it pushes me to do better and keep on track. I’ve grown so much in my self-confidence and I have to keep believing in myself and encouraging myself. HEAR is my extra family, whenever I think about the Foundation I feel a sense of relief. I know that the HEAR Family believes in me and that with their support I’ve got this! I can call them when I’m in trouble, or need support or motivation, and that’s tremendous! I don’t think there are many other organizations that offer that level of support.

I may not have a supportive family, but education has always been my drive. It’s stuck with me and I’m going to prove everyone wrong. I’m going to finish college with a smile on my face and with HEAR by my side. I’m ready to pursue my life and I know HEAR will be there with me.

Thank you for your continued support of the HEAR Foundation and for helping make a difference in the life of a young scholar.