



March 2015

# NEWS & Views



## 'Shining Stars' Return for the Founders Fund 2015 Scholars Luncheon

Students, sponsors, trustees and benefactors of The Founders Fund gathered for the Annual Scholars Luncheon on December 30 at The Club Pelican Bay. Nearly 100 guests in attendance celebrated ongoing student accomplishments and had a chance to mingle and chat with one another.

Joan Thomas, The Founders Fund Chair, opened the luncheon by welcoming guests and emphasizing the importance of changing lives through education. She reported that there are currently 105 students attending 28 different colleges throughout the U.S.

Karen Pulte, The Founders Fund Scholarship Chair, invited each student to speak about their college studies, current activities and their career choices. Many of The Founders Fund scholarship recipients are ranked in the top percentile of their college classes. From aspirations of becoming surgeons, engineers, teachers, physicists and certified public accountants ~ student goals were very impressive. Each year, there seems to be a growing number of students who express an interest in returning to Collier County to help change the lives of others and many of those are choosing the medical profession.



*Keturah Lansiquot and Sam McCullough*



*Karen Pulte, Margit Mikkelsen and Joan Thomas*



*Frank Albanese, Sara Carranco & Karla Albanese*



*Benjamin Krinsky and Katie Ogden*

## Message from a Founders Fund Student

*By: Chris LaCivita – Senior at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton*



I'd like to thank everyone at the Founder's Fund for the opportunities my scholarship has allowed me to have in pursuing my college degree. Without the help from the Founders Fund, I don't know if I could possibly be as involved on campus as I am now. I'm part of four ensemble groups playing trombone and baritone, as well as being an officer in two fraternities, Kappa Kappa Psi and Phi Mu Alpha. I am excited to be graduating soon with my Bachelors in Accounting and plan on going further to get my Masters degree as well as a CPA license in the near future. Thank you again for all you do.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Joan Thomas



We recently held our Annual Scholars Luncheon with over 30 Founders Fund scholars in attendance, returning to share collegiate experiences. Several of them are enrolled in pre-med programs awaiting news of acceptance from medical schools. Others impressed us with majors in aeronautical engineering, nursing, biology, and music, with one history major at Rice going on for a PhD in hopes of becoming a professor. We were proud to hear their stories and are happy to have played a small part in helping them achieve their educational goals.

In late January, we held the annual Counselors Breakfast for local high school counselors to meet and discuss with us student scholarship applications and the interview process taking place this month.

On April 23, we will meet to make our selections for the new scholars of 2015. It is a privilege to go to these high schools and talk with students who have succeeded academically in spite of financial hardships. In addition to their challenging classes, all of these students volunteer with local organizations, and most of them work after school and weekend jobs. Their desire to achieve scholastic goals and success is truly inspirational.

Please mark your calendars and save the date for our biannual Ed Brennan Golf Tournament and Auction to be held on April 4, 2016. We hope to have your support and enthusiasm as we continue to raise scholarship funds for deserving students.

## COLLEGE EDUCATION STATS

With tuition and education costs on the rise almost every semester, students looking to attend college in the fall are faced with the highest costs in collegiate history.

When the Founders Fund began in 1991, the average cost of tuition, fees, room and board at a four year university was \$5,585 for Full-Time/In-State students. This is according to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

The U.S. Department of Education reported that the average cost of undergraduate tuition, fees, room, and board for the 2011-2012 school year was \$14,292. As statistics show, education prices are continually on the rise. Deserving Collier County students need the help and support of scholarships such as the Founders Fund now more than ever.

## The Founders Fund

*Since its inception in 1991, 565 students have been awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships.*

Last spring, 28 Collier County students were awarded \$8,000 scholarships for college and post high school education. The renewable scholarships are given in the amount of \$2,000 each year to students maintaining a B average or better in their college studies.

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# 2015 HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS BREAKFAST



Audrey Moss and Connie Pollina



Glenna Potter, Pam Berryman and Amanda Armocida

The Founders Fund held its annual High School Counselors Breakfast at the Club Pelican Bay on January 28. Twelve Collier County high schools were represented at the annual informational breakfast along with several Founders Fund board members.

The Founders Fund and counselors meet each year to discuss student needs, economic trends, number of graduating students and the scholarship process. The meeting better prepares counselors with information to assist students in the upcoming scholarship application process.

With education costs on the rise and over 2,000 Collier County students graduating this spring, the need for scholarships appears to be a growing concern for students, families and their high school counselors alike.



Susan Brown – Founders Fund Board Member with Lorie Cox

## WORDS OF GRATITUDE !

The Founders Fund has helped me find what I am passionate about and has given me the opportunity to attend Florida State University without accumulating student debt. This scholarship has made a huge difference by 'filling in the blanks' in my schooling finances. Thanks to the Founders Fund, I am lucky enough to attend a prestigious university that challenges me to not only pursue a successful career, but also grow as a person.

~Diana Mercas, Florida State University

The Founders Fund scholarship has allowed me to get through my last four years at FGCU, and has gotten me much closer to attaining my Bachelor's degree. My financial circumstances during high school and college have been difficult, but the Founders Fund scholarship provided me with a sense of assurance ~ I could make it to graduation! I will be receiving my Bachelor's degree soon and I can't thank the Founders Fund enough for their financial support and help year after year.

~Maritza Payan, Florida Gulf Coast University

I am so grateful for the Founders Fund and their support of my future. The scholarship has lightened my financial burden and allowed me to focus on the most important aspect of school --learning. I am very fortunate to be able to continue my academics, athletics, and community service at Flagler College.

~Cassie Fernandez, Flagler College

The Founders Fund has allowed me to put myself through school and graduate debt free. Thanks to the scholarship, I am able concentrate on my schooling without having to worry about how I will pay for this higher education.

~Stephanie Wolf, Florida Gulf Coast University

I feel very fortunate to have been chosen as a recipient for the Founders Fund scholarship. This is my second year attending the University of Florida as a Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience major. I was struggling in some of my science and math courses, but fortunately, I was able to afford a tutoring and mentoring program. I am truly grateful for the assistance I have received. Thanks to the Founders Fund, I was able to attain the resources I needed in order to be successful in school.

~Eveline Desvaristes, University of Florida

The Founders Fund scholarship has made gaining a college education possible. With the help of this scholarship program, I have been able to follow my dreams and attend Ringling College of Art and Design. I am sincerely grateful for the Founders Fund and their help in making this all possible.

~Theodor Schimek,  
Ringling College of  
Art and Design

Thank  
you!



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## A Tribute to Rocky Caldwell



It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of our good friend Rocky Caldwell. He was one of the original founders of the Founders Fund and our first Chairman in 1991. Even after he stepped down from the Board, he continued his enthusiastic support for the Founders Fund and the students to

whom we awarded scholarships. He and his wife, Addie, were regular attendees of our scholars' luncheons and receptions. Their daughter, Allison, created and drew The Founders Fund logo, a pelican with a mortar board on its head and a golf club tucked under its wing.

The Founders Fund was extremely fortunate to have had Rocky's early leadership. The Board of Trustees extends its deepest sympathies to the Caldwell family.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



### The Founders Fund Annual Scholarship Awards Reception & Ice Cream Social



**Thursday, April 23, 2015**  
**7:00 pm The Club Pelican Bay**  
**main dining room**

*Please make plans to attend and meet our  
new scholarship recipients.*

Board members, benefactors, supporters,  
sponsors and area high school guidance  
counselors are encouraged to attend.