

2018

Annual Report



CONTENTS

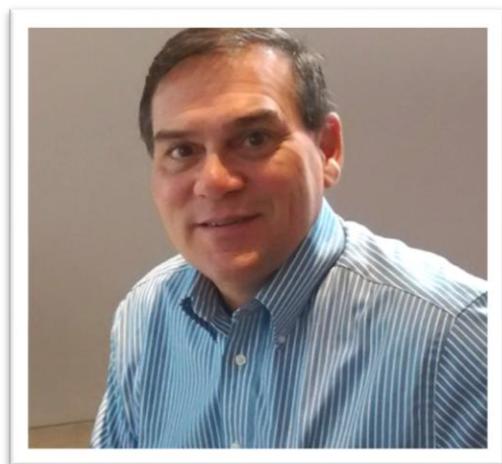
Message from Our President	1
Mission	2
Programs Impact	4
Impact Story 1	5
Impact Story 2	6-7
Thought Leadership	8
Resources & Fiscal Management	9
Looking Forward	10-11
Donate & Volunteer	12
Donors	13



Message from Gerald Paulus, Board President

Dear Friends,

College Bound AZ was established in 2010 as a nonprofit community resource to share the journey to college with aspiring underrepresented students through mentorship, guidance, and support resources for their advancement to a better future through education. Many hidden barriers hinder low income students from successfully transitioning to and through college. These barriers can be cultural, financial and family related but all can stifle undeveloped talent in bright, young people. College Bound AZ resources have changed that for dozens of high school seniors who are now in college and for those who have completed college and are now in the workforce. A college education transcends the graduate and makes a lasting generational impact on their family and their family's family for generations. Cynthia's story is one that comes to mind. Cynthia was our first College Bound AZ member and the first to graduate in 2013 with her four-year degree. Today she is a successful college graduate, working as a counselor, a mother, and just this year she bought a new home in Mesa, AZ. She is a productive member of society and well on her way to creating a better future for her family, the next generation. Cynthia volunteers back at College Bound AZ to assist with our newsletters and in mentoring.



2018 was our eighth year providing college access programs to our underrepresented community. The Junior High Academy that was the launch point for College Bound AZ continues with up to 25 students at each school receiving weekly workshops on college and career readiness. Using the language of college during formative years creates a future that includes college completion.

In addition, this year we served Mesa Community College students who have barriers to finishing college that include facing food scarcity. One study reported food scarcity affects 30% of community college students. Our "Fueling Minds with Heart," program was launched to help stock the college's food pantry. It was estimated by the college that the program serves over 1,000 students monthly and helps offset the living costs these young college students face.

College Bound AZ continues to grow and improve. This coming year we are going to initiate a new high school program through partnerships with Arizona State University (ASU) and the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT). These partnerships will allow College Bound AZ to reach further into the community to provide services across multiple school districts. We are upgrading our database system to make it possible to stay better connected to each cohort to ensure college completion and a transition into the workforce. Each college graduate earns \$15,000 more their first year in the workforce than those who enter the workforce with a high school diploma. The more high school seniors who benefit from our services, the greater the economic impact for the communities they enter. 2018 finished with an increase in the number of college graduates and program successes.

Gerald E Paulus



Mission

Our mission at College Bound AZ is to share the journey to college with aspiring underrepresented students through mentorship, guidance, and support resources for their advancement to a better future through education.

Programs



High School Academy

9th-12th grade students meet during monthly workshops with mentors and a college coach to become college-ready. 9th and 10th grades enhance research and presentation skills through year-long community service projects. 11th grade focuses on preparing for college entrance tests for the best scholarship opportunities. Seniors receive help with their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarship applications and essays, and college selections. 63% of students feel they would not go to college without the help of College Bound AZ.



Community College Food Box Program

Our program to assist community college students was launched in spring 2018 after a pilot at Sequoia Charter School to provide canned meat, vegetables, and fruit, power drinks, cereal, protein bars and other items through a partnership with a local food bank and donations from the community. College Bound AZ helps stock the college's food pantry to offer relief for the estimated 13% of homeless community college students through its *Fueling Minds with Heart* program to support college completion.

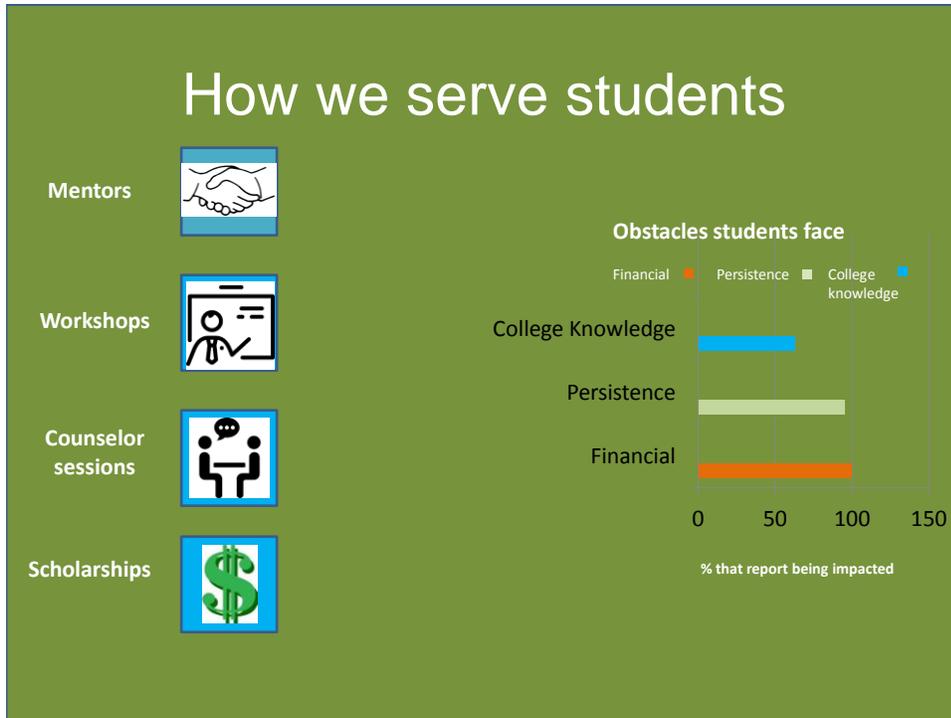


Junior High Academy

In 8th Grade we partner with middle schools in a year-long program that includes lessons on college and career readiness. Low income students are 20% less likely to pursue college than their more affluent peers. Through College Bound AZ, each topic will be a part of the necessary college prep work throughout high school and increase the number of low income students who pursue higher education. College Bound AZ helps develop students' academic performance and personal potential through experiential learning and career association.

Impact

Often the barriers to college remain hidden from casual observation. Students in College Bound AZ feel challenged the most by the cost of college, secondly by the transition process to college, and finally the proper steps to become college ready. College Bound AZ engages mentors and a college coach trained in the college-going process to meet with students to move past these hurdles.



The illustration (above) shows the process for a participant moving through our High School Academy.



Impact Story 1



Samantha Isidoro Hernandez

Samantha first entered our program when she was in seventh grade to learn about going to college. That meant her progress to college was now being tracked by College Bound AZ which changed Samantha's future at a critical moment.

In 2018 she graduated Number 16 from her high school and became an Obama Scholar which awarded her four years free tuition, room and board at Arizona State University to major in biological sciences. This is a scholarship valued at \$100,000 and is awarded based on academic merit and a low family

Samantha Isidoro Hernandez
Joined College Bound AZ in 2012

income level. After high school graduation, College Bound AZ was monitoring her transition into college and learned the scholarship had been withdrawn because of deadlines missed. Samantha's financial aid application had been

completed with the help of a tax preparer but completed incorrectly. This was brought to her attention in July and she was given an August deadline by the university to resolve it. With the crush on incoming freshmen, Samantha found it hard get help at college to address the problems. Her parents have English as a Second Language and could not help her. In addition, Samantha is the first in her family to attend college. Together College Bound AZ and Samantha crafted her appeal and she submitted it.

Samantha nearly lost her scholarship because of deadlines missed through paperwork errors. College Bound AZ was there to help craft her appeal to restore her scholarships so she could afford college. Today she is finishing her first semester on her way to a career in medicine and is also part of the Barrett Honors College.

Through the College Bound AZ programs Samantha was provided a mentor to review her college essays and assist with letters of recommendation. Workshops by session leaders provided insights on peer pressure and financial literacy for her to thrive in college. Samantha also received a laptop computer to take with her to college. While the meeting space for College Bound AZ was donated by Benedictine University, all class materials, snacks and books for the workshops and Samantha's computer are possible through generous financial donations. "College Bound AZ is a program that I would do all over again!" said Samantha.



Impact Story 2

Kimberly Saenz

Kimberly's mom is often sick so as the oldest child she often acts as a second mom to her brother and sister. Her dad leaves early in the morning for his construction job. Kimberly cooks and cleans, and gets her siblings started on their homework. Neither parent speaks fluent English, so Kimberly helps her parents navigate in the community when needed. She attends classes at a charter school and also the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), a career and technical training school in Mesa, AZ. There she was part of the dental assistant program learning the medical terms and procedures of dentistry. Kimberly one day hoped to be a dentist and she practiced her new skills through an "externship", working up to 10 hours each week at a local dental office.



Kimberly Saenz
Joined College Bound AZ in 2016

At the urging of a friend, she joined College Bound AZ in 2016 as a high school junior and was matched with a mentor to help with the college-going steps. Juanita was instrumental in reviewing essays and other English assignments when Kimberly felt she needed help in school. College Bound AZ's trademark is the 6-Step Critical Path to College that explains what it takes for students to achieve college success. Her mentor Juanita was there to talk about the college-going process with Kimberly and her mom and dad since no one in the family had any experience with higher education, and there are no college counseling resources provided at her high school. Kimberly continued to attend College Bound AZ weekend workshops through her senior year, workshops made possible through the donations that pay for workshop supplies and mentor training materials. She finished high school as the valedictorian, giving her a very good chance for college scholarships.

She received two scholarships that allowed her to enroll at Arizona State University. Kimberly is the first in her family to attend college and had her family's total support. Living at home minimized her college expenses, but she still had to pay out of pocket over \$2,000 per semester for tuition. College Bound AZ checked in on Kimberly after her high school graduation and made Kimberly aware that she was perhaps eligible for more scholarships that hadn't materialized. ASU's College Attainment Grant is automatically awarded to Pell-eligible students with at least a 3.0 grade point average to provide four years of free tuition and fees.

Kimberly and College Bound AZ began a detailed review of her situation. Kimberly had been on top of her college-going steps and had completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on her own, but had completed it for the wrong year. There was no FAFSA on file for the current school year and therefore the College Attainment Grant was not awarded. It took five months of effort to correct the paperwork errors, but finally Kimberly's \$2,000 payments were refunded and she was awarded scholarships valued at \$50,000, four years-worth of college tuition and fees.



First Generation college students often need support for a successful transition to college because neither they nor anyone in their family have had experience with the complex process of applying to college. Instead of graduating with debt, Kimberly will graduate college debt-free and ready for graduate work toward her dream of becoming a dentist. “College Bound AZ helped me find scholarships, helped improved my writing and gave me the support I needed”, stated Kimberly. “I was better able to focus on my studies, and extracurricular activities, reliving some of my stress. As I transitioned to college, College Bound AZ was still there with me and helped me regain a scholarship I didn’t know I’d lost in the first place. As a First Generation college student, having someone who knows what to do by your side is crucial to success.”

Sponsorships, a grant, and our wine tasting fundraiser were our main sources to help fund College Bound AZ in 2018. Kimberly benefitted from the workshops held at Benedictine University that she attended which were conducted by trained session leaders, and from being assigned a mentor trained by College Bound AZ in the college bound process. After Kimberly’s high school graduation, College Bound AZ staff provided follow-up services that resulted in turning around Kimberly’s financial situation. It’s the generosity of donors that make our “crucial” support services possible, and each donor can proudly speak about the life that they changed as was the case for Kimberly.



Thought Leadership

Education remains the most consistent path to upward mobility in American culture. The societal benefits of being at least a middle income family are desirable: access to health care, stable housing, food security and the potential for experiencing the richness of a vibrant country.

Those who don't start out in a middle income family may find that attaining that status from a low socioeconomic position is incredibly challenging if not impossible. Yet this is America, a place where our culture teaches that all things are possible if you work hard enough.

Maintaining a 3.0 grade point average for admission to college falls into the category of hard work, ask any high school student. Our high schools do a great job of providing academically challenging courses and students are prepared for the rigors of higher education as a result.

Next stop-college. Information and guidance to attend college is available through the high schools. Research shows that access to a school counselor positively impacts a student's aspirations to higher education. The American School Counselor Association recommends schools strive for a ratio of 250:1, but their state-by state report shows that as of 2015, AZ's student to counselor ration is 924:1.

As a community we have a vested interest in taking every possible step to promote education. The very success of day-to-day life, one with adequate resources to respond to problems, depends on it. One of our most vulnerable populations, those from a low income family, is hampered by a lack of information to take the next step that spells forward progress. The college-going rate for low income students is 20% behind that of their more affluent peers, according to the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES). That makes the mentors and college coaching provided by College Bound AZ an important community resource.

Of particular note is the 6-Step Critical Path to College developed by College Bound AZ used as the guide for our sessions and workshops to give students as early as 8th grade information on the steps to follow to be college and career ready.

For students that have the advantage of getting to college, their challenges are not over. A 2017 study published by the University of Wisconsin revealed that at the community college level, 30% of students who work face food insecurity and an astounding 13% of students are homeless. The overall graduation rate is only 16% at a local community college and likely less for those who are low income. To improve the likelihood college completion, College Bound AZ initiated a partnership with the community college to provide items for their food pantry. Once launched, foot traffic increased to the point that 1,000 students are now served each month.

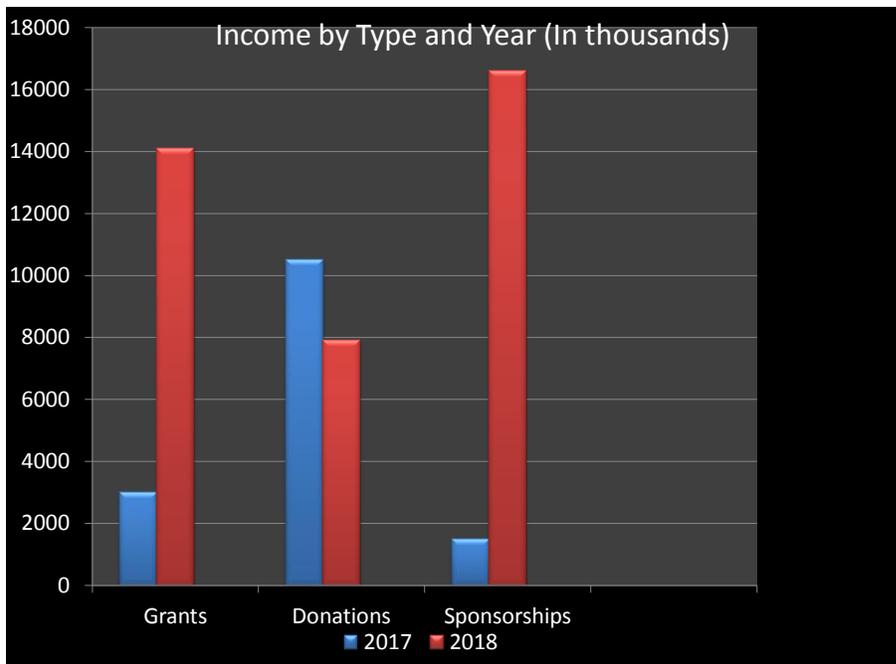
Together we go farther. Your donations have *everything* to do with the ability to Turn Dreams into Degrees.



Resources & Financial Management

Each year College Bound AZ predicts what revenue and income can be anticipated and therefore to what degree its three programs can be funded: the High School Academy, the Fueling Minds with Heart program, and the Junior High Academy. Primarily funds provide for student resources (books, supplies, transportation costs and scholarships) and staff who manage each of the programs. Less funding results in staff reductions and programs in fewer areas. The need for caring adults to assist underrepresented students stays the same, however. Our goal remains to serve as many low income students as possible through your support.

That support allows us together to respond to an urgency in our community – resources for low income families where resources are already scarce. The window of opportunity for providing educational support is narrowed by the family pressures of work, health, and stretching to make ends meet. Donor support means hope has arrived, and students get a helping hand to a better future.



The graph (above) shows the income by type and year for College Bound AZ. In-kind donations that consist mostly of volunteer hours are an important resource until funding sources are identified.

In-kind donations: 2017: \$141,000. 2018: \$133,000



Looking Forward

College Bound AZ plays an essential role in shaping the future of our youth and the college success of the low income students we serve. In looking for ways to expand the number of students we can serve, College Bound AZ's goal is to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones so that together we can reach more families and students who seek higher education to Turn *their* Dreams into Degrees.

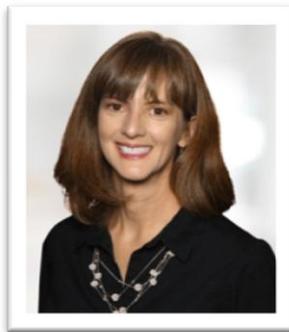
We are excited about partnerships with Arizona State University and selected high schools whose students need our services to take that next giant step to college and college completion. Support will again be provided on site at Sequoia Charter School and with our new partner, the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), we will be able to reach 11 school districts by providing services on EVIT's two campuses. We will also continue the Junior High Academy through which hundreds have already been impacted by our college bound program and message. Our "Fueling Minds with Heart" program launched in spring 2018 at the community college serves an ever greater number of college students because of the steady stocking of the campus' food pantry that students can now rely on.

Three successful programs lead the way to college completion!

Executive Leadership



Gerald Paulus
Board President



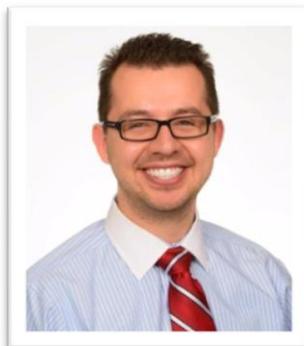
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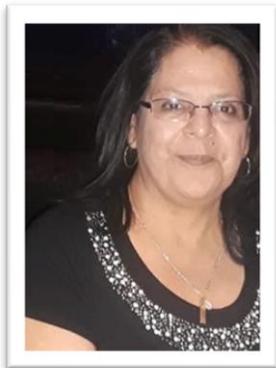
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Elizabeth Paulus
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Maryanne Baiza
Director of
Volunteers



We Need Your Help

Your donations make all the difference on which journey to their future our students experience. Your gift is life changing, because education gives rise to brighter, fuller destinies!



Every Penny Matters

You can give online here: [donation page](#)

You can also mail in your donation to: College Bound AZ, 4222 E. Brown Road #33, Mesa AZ 85205

Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

Not everyone can make a financial contribution. At our workshops and events, you can assist students with activities or chaperone on our college tour. Mentors can help students proof essays or help find answers on college topics. Businesses can set up collection points for community members to drop off food items or hygiene products to help those students already attending college.

- Volunteer with the Junior High Academy, Fueling Minds with Heart, or RISE Scholars
- Volunteer around the office with phone calls and other tasks
- Volunteer in a different way: _____

Please visit our website <http://www.collegeboundaz.org> to learn more, or call us at 602.550.3161. Send this form by mail to our office at 4222 E. Main Street, Mesa, AZ 85205

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

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