

Shoulder **to** Shoulder

SPRING 2019

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**Big
Shoulders
Fund®**

Covered Schools Initiative Improves School Success

(Above R) St. Ailbe Catholic School students.

(Above L) IBM partnered with Big Shoulders Fund last summer to provide 34 bikes with helmets to six-to-ten-year-old students at St. Bede School as a school attendance incentive.

While Big Shoulders Fund supports inner-city schools with a range of programs—from scholarships to professional development to volunteer hours and more—there are times when a school might require more active involvement to ensure its continued success. In response, Big Shoulders established the Covered Schools Initiative in 2014 to support schools' efforts in academics, enrollment marketing and financial aid, financial planning, data usage, and more to help them thrive for years to come. Now in its fifth year, the Initiative includes 10 schools and has demonstrated outcomes on a variety of metrics (*see page 2*).

Big Shoulders Fund works to help Covered Schools have access to a core talent pipeline and professional development programs to alleviate the challenge of recruiting and retaining faculty, and the Teacher Development Program (TDP) cultivates quality teaching in promising young professionals. Kate Stevick, who teaches at St. Ailbe Catholic School on Chicago's Far South Side, receives support through the TDP.

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St. John de la Salle Catholic
Academy Principal
Sally Santellano with students.

Covered Schools Initiative

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“Through the program, I spent my second semester in a Big Shoulders Fund school,” she explained. That experience, and continuing access to coaching through the program, shaped Stevick’s decision to teach in a Big Shoulders Fund school. “The instructional coaching I receive is very helpful. My coach, Amy, shares the expertise she has acquired from classroom experience as well as her research to help me improve my teaching and be more fully and effectively myself in the classroom.”

At Holy Angels School in Bronzeville, the Covered Schools Initiative has enabled implementation of the Everyday Mathematics curriculum through the Big Shoulders Fund Math Initiative. Holy Angels Assistant Principal Nicole Watson described the program’s value: “Our teachers have had the opportunity to receive continued professional development that is solely focused on Everyday Math. Each math teacher has a coach who works directly with them once a month, the teachers come together as a group with the coach once a month, and they have two opportunities to visit and/or host teachers and administrators from other schools.”

Holy Angels also has benefited from the Initiative through consistent volunteer participation in improving the school’s facilities during service days. “It feels great to work alongside the volunteers, and it is all work that makes Holy Angels a better place for the students we serve.”

Sally Santellano, principal at St. John de la Salle Catholic Academy, also acknowledges the program’s importance in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers, growing enrollment, and planning long-term finances. The Initiative has made an impact through math and science programs, marketing assistance, social emotional learning, data-driven instruction, alumni advancement, and more. Santellano has worked closely with Big Shoulders Fund’s school marketing team to redesign the school’s website, implement parent engagement activities, increase social media visibility, and build a consistent brand for the school that is now recognizable in the community. “The Covered Schools Initiative has been our lifeblood,” she said. “Without this initiative, I don’t see any way we would still be open.”

“Big Shoulders Fund is a lifeline to our school but not just through financial assistance or professional development. The staff members I have been blessed to interact with are kind, open-minded, and hardworking people who have taken me and my school under their collective wings. There are 130 kids in a safe and strong academic environment at St. John de la Salle due to their hard work, and we salute them.” ■

COVERED SCHOOLS INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

- Covered Schools have achieved more than \$1 million in operating savings.
- Eighty-one percent of last year’s eighth grade class enrolled at a Catholic or quality CPS high school.
- Enrollment increased by two percent this year, versus the ongoing decline in Catholic school enrollment in the area and nationally.
- This year alone, nearly 2,000 students continue to receive a quality education at the schools of their choice only because of this program.

\$1M

81%

+2%

2000



Canning: “Chicago must have a strong, diverse educational system for all kids”

Big Shoulders Fund Co-Chair John A. Canning Jr. wrote the following letter to the editor, published in the 12/14/18 issue of Crain's Chicago Business.

It doesn't take an MBA to understand that a successful business can live or die by smart planning and strategic investing. It's why many corporate leaders such as myself are always on the lookout for good investments.

That being said, it's also important for business leaders to understand that the influence of money can go beyond the dollars and cents. I was reminded of this recently while sitting behind a child-size desk at Our Lady of Guadalupe School on Chicago's South Side, where I spent the morning working with students.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the 75 values-based inner-city Chicago schools supported by Big Shoulders Fund, the largest network of K–12 schools in Illinois outside of the public school systems, comprising nearly 20,000 students, of which 80 percent are minority and 66 percent live in low-income households.

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Shoulder to Shoulder

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Diverse educational system for all kids

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To serve the children of Chicago, we must have a strong and diverse educational system for all. A good public school system is the foundation of a successful education ecosystem that includes private schools and charter schools. There is no silver bullet to fix the problems in our education system, but we are already seeing progress being made across the board in our city.

This summer, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that 56.5 percent of CPS students met or exceeded the national average in math scores and that 61.4 percent did in reading scores. There was also a record-high graduation rate of 77.5 percent in 2017.

A recent study from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research found that CPS charter high school students attended school about eight more days on average than non-charter high school students and scored a full higher point on the ACT exam.

By supporting stronger schools, as well as the dedicated teachers and principals who serve them, we can make a positive impact not only on the students, but on how they interact with their communities as well.

Schools anchored in a values-based tradition and welcoming of all in a safe, structured environment have also shown success in educating children, supporting families, and encouraging service to others. In fact, 95 percent of Big Shoulders Fund students graduate from high school, 85 percent enroll in college, and those who graduate from college do so at nearly two times the national rate.

While critical to long-term success, a strong school system can do even more than prepare students for higher-education opportunities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that students who felt more connected to their schools had higher grades and test scores, had dramatically lower rates of substance use, attended school more regularly, and were much less likely to engage in violence. By supporting stronger schools, as well as the dedicated teachers and principals who serve them, we can make a positive impact not only on the students, but on how they interact with their communities as well.

Although it's easy to get distracted by news of the shortcomings of Chicago's education system, there are positive indicators, too. A survey of alumni of Big Shoulders Fund schools shows that more than half have remained in the city, with 85 percent residing in the Chicago metro area. They go on to study, work, volunteer, vote, and donate at higher than average rates, strengthening the fabric of our city and state. These Big Shoulders Fund alumni personify the importance of strong education in shaping good citizens. Long-term investing rarely produces immediate results, but we can be sure that the support we give our students today opens doors and broadens horizons that will produce positive results for them, their families, and their communities in the future. ■

Tax Credit Scholarships Help More Big Shoulders Fund Families

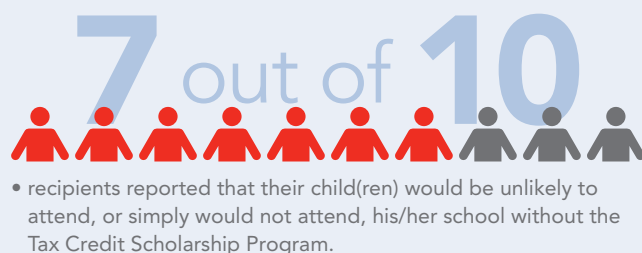
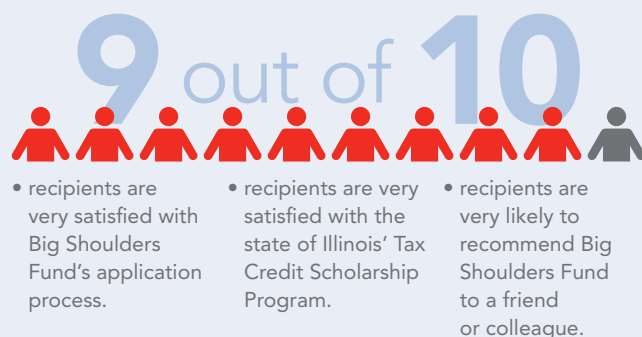
In 2018, Big Shoulders Fund found an opportunity to help even more families needing scholarship support through the Tax Credit Scholarship Program, made possible by the Illinois Invest in Kids Act. Big Shoulders received nearly 12,000 applications in two days. As of the close of 2018, Big Shoulders Fund distributed nearly \$8 million in Tax Credit Scholarships to 1,272 students attending 110 schools. The median household income of the awardees was \$22,500, with an average of four family members per household.

Big Shoulders has been able to support deserving families thanks to contributors like Gerald and Jennifer Beeson. Gerald is the chief operating officer of Citadel, and he and Jennifer have been supporters of Big Shoulders Fund for more than 10 years. "Having been a board member and school Patron, I've seen firsthand the impact of giving more students the opportunity to attend a Big Shoulders Fund school, and this program allows us to expand that impact to a much wider universe of students," he said. "Access to these schools positions students to succeed in grade school, in high school, in college, and beyond. The outcomes and opportunities available to our alumni are transformative."

In response to an anonymous survey, 97 percent of the parents/guardians of all Tax Credit Scholarship recipients reported the program is having a major impact on their lives, and nearly 70 percent categorized this level of impact as life-changing.

In January 2019, Big Shoulders received more than 13,000 applications, again reflecting the tremendous demand. With more than 12,500 applicants on the waiting list, Big Shoulders continues to raise funds for scholarships for eligible families.

Commented Beeson, "I strongly encourage others to contribute to this program—it makes a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of children." ■





Katherine Buck, member of the Big Shoulders Fund Board of Directors and CAC Executive Committee, and Pasquale Recchia, member of the Auxiliary Board Executive Committee, engage with students at Our Lady of Guadalupe School during Lend a Shoulder Day.

Sustaining momentum at any charitable organization depends upon cultivating new generations of supporters and an active volunteer leadership to ensure continuity and growth. For the past 12 years, Big Shoulders Fund has been fortunate to have its “Next Generation” boards—the Chairmen’s Advisory Council (CAC), the Auxiliary Board, and the more recently created Teen Board—to fulfill this need. Their commitment to our mission prompted *Crain’s Chicago Business* to recognize them among the fastest growing young professional boards, stepping up to make an impact.

“Big Shoulders Fund has seen tremendous growth during the last 12 years, not only in our support of funds to schools, but in our ability to support them with time and talent,” remarked Amelia Drozda, senior director, philanthropy, partnerships, and engagement. “This has been due in large part to our Next Generation boards.”

The CAC was founded in 2007 as the Board Development Committee with the goals of deepening the Board’s engagement in the mission, growing the base of support for Big Shoulders Fund, and developing a pipeline for future Board members. Achieving these goals and more under the leadership of Founding Chairs Lori Dawson, Fred O’Connor, and John Podjasek, the CAC has grown to 180 members, 77 percent of whom are engaged in schools by serving on boards and committees, tutoring, participating in the Stock Market Program, and more. CAC members volunteer in ways that correspond with their time and passion, spread the word about Big Shoulders Fund to their networks, provide financial support, and participate in the annual “take our supporters to school day,” known as Lend a Shoulder Day. Attendance at Lend A Shoulder Day has increased from 100 in 2007 to more than 260 in 2018. The CAC members have raised \$490,000 for events, programs, and the Chairmen’s Emergency Scholarship, which provides tuition assistance for families in crisis.

The Scholarship has made a significant impact on many families at Big Shoulders Fund schools. “Too often, families get caught off guard by events that affect their daily ability to function,” noted St. Mary Star of the Sea School Principal Candice Usauskas. “They may face a child’s life-threatening illness, death in their immediate family, job loss, or fire in their home. The stories are never easy to hear but the common thread is the same—they are unable to pay tuition and ask if I can help. Through the Chairmen’s Emergency Scholarship, I can offer these families respite from one of their major concerns: tuition. They can recoup their finances and get themselves together. It may not seem like much, but these families honor their obligations. Getting relief is not just about finances; it allows them to get back on a positive track in life.”

The CAC is transitioning as the founding chairs step down and the “next generation” of leadership takes hold of the reins. “The dynamic trio of Fred, Lori, and John, who also serve on our Board, have clearly left their mark,” said President and CEO Josh Hale. “They are so insightful, they even understood the need for new ideas and leadership. We are lucky to have three amazing leaders continuing where they left off: longstanding supporters Kristina Kelleher, Joe Tyler, and Anthony Balthazor. I am excited to see what the CAC will conquer next!” ■

Next Generation Boards Expand Big Shoulders Fund Reach



(L–R) Former Co-Chairs of the Chairmen’s Advisory Council and current Big Shoulders Fund Board Directors John Podjasek, Lori Dawson, and Fred O’Connor.



In the Community





1: Charitable organization Enchanted Backpack, founded by Big Shoulders Fund friend and supporter Carol Lavin Bernick, delivered school supplies to St. Catherine-St. Lucy School last fall and announced the creation of a new playground for the school. This is one of many Big Shoulders Fund schools Enchanted Backpack has visited. Lavin Bernick spent time with her Big Shoulders Fund Lavin scholars.

2: Big Shoulders Fund supporters went green for a St. Patrick's Day-themed Bowl for Big Shoulders. In its 12th year, the event raised nearly \$23,500 for the Auxiliary Board Scholarship Fund. Thanks to Michael and Lindsay Spencer and their 10pin bowling lounge for hosting the event in-kind. Members from the United Airlines team who had a great time bowling included (L-R) Maximillion Harris, Jamall Brimage, Crysenith Kirby, Beautiful-Joy Fields, Marissa Roberson, and Alexandria Almazan.

3: Through a partnership with CIBC, students from Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary and Holy Angels Schools had the opportunity to see Broadway's hit musical *Hamilton: An American Musical* at the CIBC Theatre.

4: Last December, Michael Best, led by Kerryann Hasse, the firm's Chicago managing partner and Big Shoulders Fund director, partnered with Big Shoulders Fund to build bikes for students at Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School, Maternity B.V.M. School, St. Ethelreda School, and St. Sabina Academy. Students picked up the bikes at the offices of Michael Best, where employees joined them to decorate the bikes and helmets.

5: Big Shoulders Fund Social Emotional Learning and Wellness Leader Kirk Ziemke celebrated the completion of a two-month curriculum promoting positive mental outlook, compassion, and metacognition with a group of eighth graders from St. Ann School in the Pilsen neighborhood.

6: In November, Big Shoulders Fund hosted its first all-day Marketing Summit catered to Big Shoulders Fund school administrators and exclusively focused on the topics of enrollment marketing and retention in this digital age. Our Lady of Tepeyac High School graduates Taylor Shufford (L) and Esmeralda De La Luz reunited as they both now support the marketing efforts of St. Sylvester School and Our Lady of Tepeyac High School, both Big Shoulders Fund schools.

7: The 19th Annual Big Shoulders Fund Lend a Shoulder Day took place last November at multiple Big Shoulders Fund schools. More than 260 supporters saw the Big Shoulders mission in action by spending the morning interacting with students and school administrators in 20 schools across the city. Laura Smith, from the Donald P. & Byrd M. Kelly Foundation, enjoyed engaging with students at Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

19TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, August 12, 2019 • Olympia Fields Country Club

save the date



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Big Shoulders Fund ON THE PANEL SCENE



The Big Shoulders Fund Chairmen's Advisory Council (CAC) Networking Speaker Series continues to feature some of the most influential civic leaders in Chicago. Late last spring, CAC members gathered at the Chicago Cubs headquarters with Executive Chairman Tom Ricketts. In the fall, the Series featured Cherryl Thomas, chief strategy officer of Ardmore Roderick, who discussed the importance of civic engagement and how the next generation of leaders can achieve change. And in February, CAC members enjoyed a delicious lunch at Chicago Cut with (above) Chicago Community Trust President and CEO Dr. Helene D. Gayle, in conversation with Big Shoulders Fund Co-Chairman John A. Canning, Jr.

(At right) In January, the City Club of Chicago hosted a fireside chat with Don Graham (L), former chairman and publisher of the *Washington Post* and CEO of Graham Holdings, and Big Shoulders Fund Co-Chairman John A. Canning, Jr. Graham provided information about the TheDream. Us, a nonprofit he co-founded to support DREAMers with college scholarships. At the end of the conversation, Graham shared, "I'm sure you know how lucky you are to have Big Shoulders here. I don't know every city in the United States, but I don't know anything else like it."



(Above) Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale moderated Ripples of Hope: Philanthropy and the Next Generation at the City Club of Chicago in November. Philanthropic leaders (L-R) Alicia Gonzalez, Angelique Power, and Carol Lavin Bernick inspired the sold-out City Club of Chicago crowd.

