

Shoulder **to** Shoulder

FALL 2017

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ENGAGE, ENLIGHTEN, EMPOWER: Kimberly Querrey and Louis Simpson

Kimberly Querrey and Louis Simpson spend time with some of the first Q/S Scholars at St. Malachy School.

Flipped classrooms, online learning, and electronic books are changing the face of education. Yet the faces of Big Shoulders Fund are arguably more palpable: faces of scholars who strive for academic success with more limited resources to support their studies, often while balancing significant responsibilities at home and at school.

Behind these obstacles lie intelligent young people with porous minds, non-judgmental perspectives, and ambitious ideas that can garner change.

Thanks to generous individuals like Kimberly Querrey and Louis Simpson, Big Shoulders Fund is helping students bridge the gap. Scholarship programs like SQ Scholars are giving need-based families reason for hope. With the promise of funds to ease their tuition expenses, families can help their children realize a quality Catholic education—and be present and productive in their learning.

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**Big
Shoulders
Fund®**



Julia Sosnivka

Kimberley Querrey and Louis Simpson

...continued from cover

“Students need to be prepared for a fast, evolving workplace,” Querrey explained. “By partnering with Big Shoulders Fund, we can deliver a scholarship that not only removes financial barriers but also helps students build important life skills.”

Consistent with Querrey and Simpson’s vision, the SQ Scholars program stretches scholarship boundaries by funding innovative learning and enrichment. Besides substantial tuition support, scholars benefit from literacy training, mentoring partnerships, standardized test prep, and college coaching beginning in their freshman year. Monthly programs teaching self-advocacy and resilience; social, professional, and cyber etiquette; implicit bias; and career exploration broaden students’ view of a changing world.

The Querrey & Simpson Scholarship began in 2009, spearheaded by Sallie DeAngeles. The program supported 50 academically promising students from sixth grade through 12th grade at Big Shoulders Fund schools. Successfully matriculating out of the program, these scholars are now attending college.


“With this scholarship, I better understood what a privilege education is and am grateful I was able to attend a school where I learned so much, not just academically, but also about myself and the rest of the world.”

—Julia Sosnivka, Querrey & Simpson Scholar

Miriam Guerrero, for instance, started at St. Procopius and graduated from Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in 2016. She is now a marine science major at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. “I realized I can accomplish great things through hard work,” Guerrero said. Another Querrey & Simpson Scholar, Julia Sosnivka, began her education at St. Helen and attended Josephinum Academy. She is now a mathematics and international studies major, with a minor in European studies and Italian, at Loyola University Chicago.

Building on Querrey & Simpson successes and raising the academic rigor, SQ Scholars (sqscholars.org) began in 2015 under the guidance of Executive Director Judy Friedman. Requiring a 3.5 or better GPA in high school, the program is designed to motivate, educate, and cultivate the highest achievers at Big Shoulders Fund schools. “Families’ involvement is an integral part of grounding students for success,” Friedman noted. “Our work is a partnership between Big Shoulders Fund, schools, parents, and scholars.”

“These scholars are noticeably more confident,” said Nicole Wilson, Big Shoulders Fund senior director, strategy and operations. Also serving as a program mentor, she has shared her professional insights and seen, firsthand, students rise to their challenges. “Scholars have points of accountability outside the family,” she added. She hopes that SQ Scholars will serve as a model and inspiration for other Big Shoulders Fund scholarship programs. ■



The Big Shoulders Fund High School Fair provides an opportunity for scholars to learn more about their options.

Big Shoulders Scholarships Match Growing Need with Increased Support

“Big Shoulders Fund has been a beacon of hope in the inner city for more than 30 years.”

So says Thomas Zbierski, senior director, scholarship programs and school relations. Since 1987, Big Shoulders has provided more than 60 types of scholarships, growing into Chicago's largest scholarship program. More than 4,200 scholars representing 163 ZIP codes received assistance in 2016–17.

The program provides a strong academic and social foundation in elementary school, facilitates transition to quality high schools, and prepares students for graduation and college enrollment. Big Shoulders Fund schools have a 95 percent graduation rate, and 85 percent of scholars have enrolled in college the year following graduation—rates higher than national and city averages (see “Alumni Surveys Show Results” on page 5).

Big Shoulders recently received pro bono support from PwC to transition to an entirely electronic management system, which opened up time to identify students needing additional support. The streamlined process has made it easier for schools to submit applications, enabling staff to better recognize unfunded need. Last year applications increased 55 percent with \$3 million in unfunded need. “Scholarships are key to making sure our mission reaches as many children as possible, and we are investing in efficiencies and operations to make this a win for our students and programs,” commented President and CEO Josh Hale.

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Big Shoulders Scholarships

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Scholarship alumna Taylor Shufford (L in both photos) and sponsor Marcia Masloski, five years ago (left photo) and today, have stayed in touch.



Taylor Shufford, marketing director at St. Sylvester School, attended St. Sabina School and Our Lady of Tepeyac (OLT) High School thanks to scholarship supporters Marcia and Peter Masloski. “I placed in the top 10 on my entrance exam for high school,” Shufford said. “I would not have been prepared without this assistance. OLT has a wonderful college readiness program. We visited colleges to take tours and ask questions regarding aid and academics. Big Shoulders helped with my essay and scholarship applications, which is one reason I was the first senior to receive a college acceptance letter.”

The Masloskis have supported Big Shoulders Fund scholars since 2001. “Pete attended Princeton University with assistance from alumni who helped pay his way, and we both feel strongly about paying it forward,” noted Marcia.

“Scholarships are key to making sure our mission reaches as many children as possible, and we are investing in efficiencies and operations to make this a win for our students and programs.”

—Josh Hale, Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO

Shufford was among their first group of scholars. “I visited the scholars at St. Sabina, often with my children,” recalled Marcia. “Pete and I continued sponsoring Taylor in high school. I was most impressed with her journey to school—walking to the train, taking the train north, then taking a bus—nearly two hours each way. What a brave and determined young woman!”

“Mrs. Masloski’s effortless kindness inspired me to join community service organizations while at Southern Illinois University,” said Shufford. “I volunteered at local literacy and outreach programs and mentored teenage girls.”

“I see the cycle of poverty and need deepening and the role of Big Shoulders increasing,” shared Zbierski. “We turn away hundreds of children because we lack the resources. Our impact has been tremendous in keeping schools vibrant and families together. I am most proud of the fact that 100 percent of every scholarship gift works miracles.” ■



Alumni Lead at Big Shoulders Fund Schools

Among some alumni of the Big Shoulders Fund Leadership Development Program (LDP), serving schools has an even deeper sense of mission. “A number of current school leaders and LDP alumni are themselves former students at Big Shoulders Fund schools,” said Dan Bennett, director, leadership and scholarship support. “This personal connection gives them a true grasp of the need for and promise of these schools and has driven them to grow their schools and open up more possibilities to today’s children.”

- **SHAUNTAE DAVIS**, a graduate, teacher, parent, and now principal of St. Margaret of Scotland (SMOS) School in Washington Heights, has helped increase enrollment and introduced new academic programs and enhanced technology.
- **SHAREE ONYEZIA**, a Big Shoulders Fund scholar at St. Thomas of Canterbury School and a graduate of St. Ignatius College Prep, has brought a range of experience to bear as the new principal of Our Lady of Tepeyac (OLT) High School.
- The energy and impetus behind the growth and transformation at Leo Catholic High School comes from alumnus and second-year principal **SHAKA RAWLS**. His presence, drive, and vision have dramatically increased programs and enrollment.
- St. Mary Star of the Sea Principal **CANDACE USAUSKAS** has helped to save her alma mater from imminent closure. She has created new programming, increased enrollment, and steadied the school’s finances (see *Shoulder to Shoulder* Spring 2017 issue).

“Thanks to the LDP, I had help with my tuition at Dominican, where I earned my graduate degree in education, and also made connections through networking,” commented Onyezia. “It’s reassuring, as I start my first year as a full-fledged principal, to have other school leaders I can reach out to.” As a first-generation American, Onyezia also appreciates the positive example she and her largely female staff provide to the all-female student population, many also the first generation in their families. “Since we have primarily Latina and African-American students, it gives them confidence to see me, an African-American woman, as a leader, encouraging them to pursue leadership roles.”

Across all Big Shoulders Fund schools, there are 20 LDP graduates/candidates in leadership roles this school year. ■

(Above) Sharee Onyezia presents a high school admissions workshop for Big Shoulders Fund scholars in middle school.

Alumni Surveys Show Results

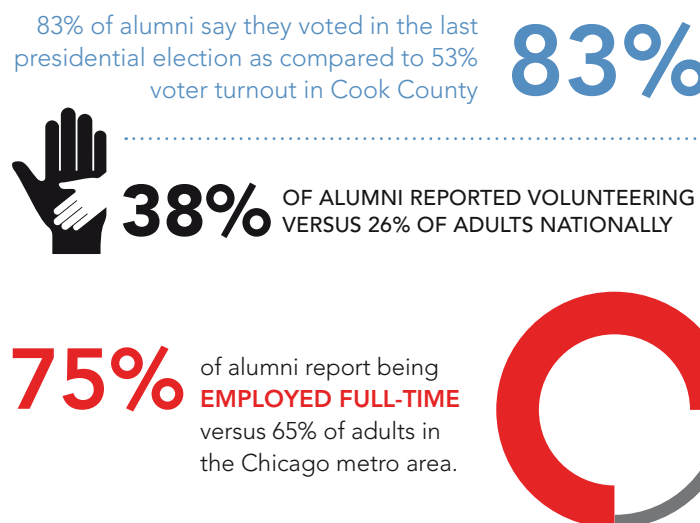
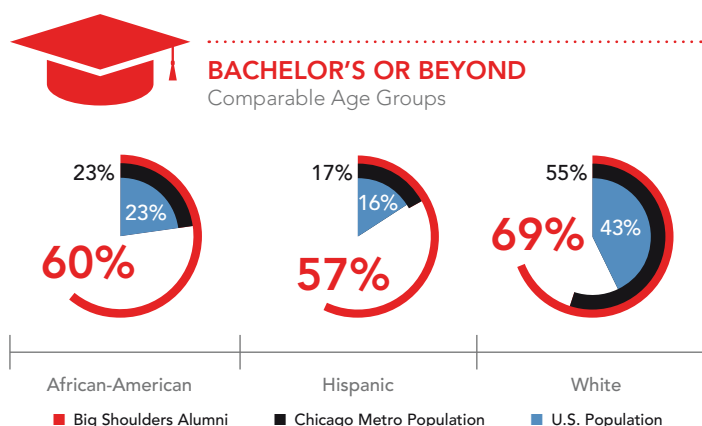
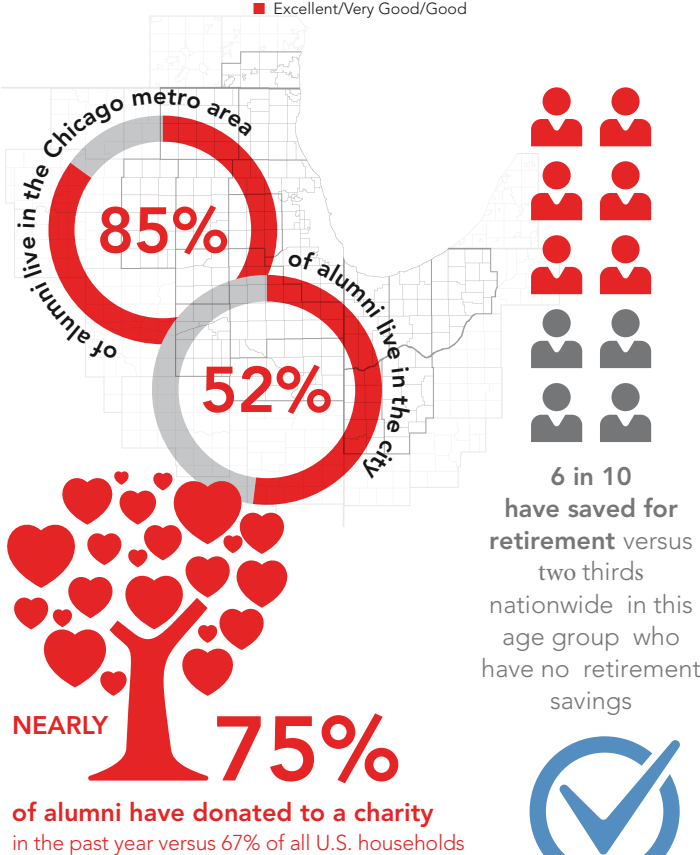
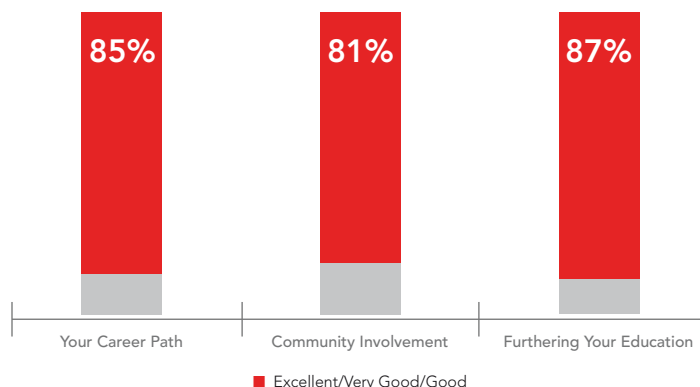
What happens to alumni of Big Shoulders Fund schools? Under the auspices of the Data, Outcomes, and Research Committee, Big Shoulders has been tracking its alumni and their successes, providing data for increasing support and enabling more students to succeed post-graduation. Big Shoulders has partnered with IPSOS, an international market research firm, to survey alumni and gather information on longer-term life outcomes.

The 2016 survey, built on the survey framework Big Shoulders used in 2013, benefited from a larger group to sample: 11,000 alumni aged 24-41 from 45 schools. The Big Shoulders Fund Alumni Advancement Program, funded by Big Shoulders Fund board member Dennis FitzSimons, the McCormick Foundation, and the GHR Foundation, helped facilitate the acquisition of alumni contact information.

The second survey achieved two primary goals: increasing the number of African-American and Hispanic respondents to validate the first survey's results and tightening up questions around civic engagement. The survey found Hispanic alumni completed bachelor's degrees at nearly four times the national rate and African-American alumni at nearly three times the national rate. Alumni again voted and gave to charity at rates much higher than average. Big Shoulders found higher than average employment rates, with one in 10 working in education, the most popular field reported (including at Big Shoulders Fund schools; see "Alumni Lead at Big Shoulders Fund Schools" on page 4). Overall, the results demonstrate the trajectory of success for our students: a strong foundation in elementary and high school leads to high rates of educational and career attainment and engaged citizens advancing our communities.

"The Data, Outcomes, and Research Committee vetted a number of options for research," said Committee Chair Steve King. "It was important to our committee to work with an independent third party to gather information about these types of outcomes for students, and ultimately the committee chose a leading market research firm. We are pleased with the even richer data we received in the second implementation and that it affirmed the positive trends we saw in the first. Next, we want to survey scholarship alumni to better gauge the impact of those programs."

Most alumni found their education and experiences **excellent/very good/good** at preparing them for their career paths, promoting community involvement, and furthering their education





In the Community





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- 1: Auxiliary Board member Carl Rivera mentored four of the more than 60 Valenti Scholars for more than three years and was a consistent and motivating presence in their lives. He attended DePaul College Prep's graduation ceremony and here congratulates one of his four mentees. The students headed off to Western Michigan University, Trinity International University, Judson University, and Hope College this fall.
- 2: Chairmen's Advisory Council Co-President Lori Dawson (C) hit the rink with her mentees and St. Catherine St. Lucy Gallagher Scholars.
- 3: Rich and Lisa Carrigan hosted their six scholars from Leo Catholic High School at a performance of *Hamilton* and only later did they notice Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale had unknowingly "photo-bombed" their picture!
- 4: Outdoors Bound is the latest development in the Brush Creek Ranch Experiences. A multi-week program, during which cohorts of rising high school seniors learn to work as ranch-hands and experience greater levels of independence in preparation for college. Outdoors Bound allows former campers and scholars, like Ben Ehigie (R), to connect with Brush Creek in a whole new way.
- 5: Mark Valenti (L) and Josh Hale (R) meet with Valenti Scholar Nicholas Durham, St. Rita graduate and current DePaul University student.
- 6: In partnership with Chicago Literacy Group, the Big Shoulders Fund Literacy Initiative is transforming the lives of teachers and students alike. This work equips pre-kindergarten–fifth grade teachers with the tools and materials necessary to build classroom cultures that foster a

love of learning, embrace student independence, encourage authentic writing, and motivate confident readers.

- 7: Ten Fellows on break from college joined Big Shoulders Fund's staff this summer to provide on-the-ground support to schools with enrollment marketing, including canvassing at neighborhood festivals such as Fiesta del Sol in Pilsen.
- 8: The GATX foursome (L–R) Brian Kenney, Alli Dean, Rachel Boyd, and Bob Lyons hit the links at the 2017 Golf Classic in Olympia Fields. This year's event was the most successful yet, raising more than \$740,000 for scholarships. Save the date for the 18th Annual Golf Classic on August 13, 2018.
- 9: The 11th Annual Big Shoulders Fund Ball took place Friday, October 6, 2017, raising more than \$100,000 for scholarships. Among the supporters were (L–R) Omar Zamora, Ryan Jacobson, Andrea Rosado, Philip Ott, Carole Guadalupe, and Deirdre Anaya.
- 10: The first annual entrepreneurship challenge, sponsored through a partnership with EY, took place May 12, 2017. Teams of students from nine elementary schools worked with an EY employee mentor to develop a product or service that would improve the Chicago community. Congratulating the winning team from St. Ann School were Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale (far L) and judges (L–R) EY Partner Ryan Butman, Defined Learning Founder and CEO Johnjoe Farragher, Von Technologies President Michelle Vondrasek, and EY Partner Lee Henderson.

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How can you invest to **transform**?

Kimberly Querrey and Louis Simpson



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Excerpt from 2009 Big Shoulders Fund Annual Report

Big Shoulders Fund will honor the work of Kimberly Querrey and Louis Simpson at the **Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Humanitarian Award Dinner** on May 24, 2018. In addition to their critical support of the scholarship program (see cover article), Querrey and Simpson have provided transformative gifts and strategic guidance to help Big Shoulders build its capacity and strengthen its operations. Dinner Steering Committee members include Ellen and Jim O'Connor, Rita and John Canning, Josh Hale, Sue and Tim Sullivan, and Monsignor Ken Velo, while Elizabeth Cole is chairing the Arrangements Committee. [For more details or sponsorship information](#), contact Amelia Drozda at 312.751.3850 or adrozda@bigshouldersfund.org.

save the date!