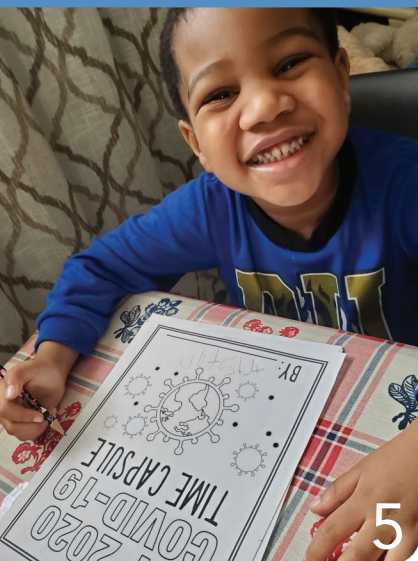


Shoulder **to** Shoulder

SPRING 2020

Inside



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Big Shoulders Fund Provides Schools with Multifaceted Support During COVID-19 Crisis

(Above R) St. Ethelreda School Principal Denise Spells and Eat & Run restaurant staff help to distribute meals to families.

(Above L) Student from Big Shoulders Fund Plus School Academy of St. Benedict the African.

On March 13, the day Big Shoulders Fund and its network of schools learned its buildings needed to close by the end of the day—indefinitely—due to the spread of the coronavirus, the Big Shoulders team and schools took immediate action: launching e-learning platforms and distributing materials, devices, and supplies.

By Monday, March 16, Big Shoulders staff had hosted a Zoom meeting with nearly 100 administrators and teachers focused on distance learning and debuted a website with tools and resources. Since then, the Big Shoulders academic team has hosted dozens of webinars and virtual meetings on such topics as mathematics, literacy, social-emotional learning resources, project-based learning, instructions on tools to connect with students, and more. That same Monday, Big Shoulders hosted a webinar on marketing in the COVID-19 era and has hosted weekly #MondayMarketingMotivation sessions ever since.

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Big Shoulders Fund Executive Committee Member Charlie Bobrinsky held a virtual Stock Market Program Class with St. Philip Neri School eighth graders. Students learned about the economic impact of COVID-19 on financial decisions in the future.

Big Shoulders Fund Provides Schools with Multifaceted Support During COVID-19 Crisis

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To invite the community to assist schools and families, Big Shoulders has launched a **COVID-19 Emergency Fund**, which aims to raise at least \$3 million. The Fund will enable Big Shoulders to help ensure students have food and learning opportunities and schools maintain operations. The Fund is investing in e-learning programs and providing tuition assistance to families experiencing job loss. To date, more than 300 supporters have contributed more than \$1.4 million.

“I am amazed to observe the spirit of help and generosity shifting into high gear,” commented Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale. “Our team and supporters have focused even more on our mission. The offers to help with food, school materials, and emergency tuition assistance is uplifting. Fear is not winning. Our core American value of helping those in need is alive and well.”

Big Shoulders works with school staff to help them connect with families and assess their needs, including food, housing, and emergency tuition assistance; provide families with access to devices and the Internet; distribute supplies safely; and assist with applying for the Paycheck Protection Program to keep teachers and staff employed. For e-learning, Big Shoulders is facilitating the implementation of programs that engage students while attending to diverse learners, including those with limited access to technology, English Language Learners, and students with IEPs or 504 plans.

Volunteers are participating in some programs remotely. One hundred people have joined remote volunteering activities including mentoring; recording children’s books; teaching through the Stock Market Program; creating cards and letters for students, especially graduating eighth graders and seniors; making fleece tie blankets for seniors; organizing book and supply drives; and joining the Big Shoulders Fund Racing Team to support schools.

One emergency initiative has been an innovative local partnership that encourages community-based restaurants and food providers to prepare meals for students, families, and community members. With the Lavin Family Foundation providing the original idea and a leadership gift, and subsequent support and partnerships, 20 Big Shoulders Fund schools have distributed more than 80,000 meals to date. The program has been featured on NPR, WCIU-TV’s *The Jam*, and WGN-TV and has received accolades from Mayor Lori Lightfoot. The program also inspired longtime Big Shoulders Fund supporters Jennifer and Gerald Beeson to sponsor a Mother’s Day distribution of nearly 20,000 meals.

“Nutrition is essential; we need our students feeling their best to do their best,” said Bonnie Hall, principal at Our Lady of Guadalupe School, which is collaborating with Roma’s Restaurant, owned and operated by a school family. “A healthy meal and snack assist in that process. I love to see the smile on everyone’s faces when they are handed a simple thing like food. Many of our families suffered economically before COVID-19, and now it’s even worse. We are proud to serve our families and our community. Our buildings are closed, but our hearts remain open.” ■



Big Shoulders Fund Provides Security to Families

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM REMAINS STRONG IN THIRD YEAR

School families rallied in February to support the Tax Credit Scholarship Program, made possible by Illinois' Invest in Kids Act.

For families facing uncertainty in many areas of their lives, there is significant comfort knowing they are able to provide their children with a high-quality education, thanks to the Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Now in its third year, the program, made possible by Illinois' Invest in Kids Act, offers an income tax credit to individuals and businesses contributing to qualified Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs)—including Big Shoulders Fund. The SGOs then provide scholarships for students whose families meet the income requirements to attend qualified, non-public schools in Illinois.

Each year, the program continues to be an important resource for families who otherwise would struggle to send their children to Big Shoulders Fund schools. As in prior years, demand far outweighs availability of funding, with more than 11,500 applicants on the waiting list for 2020–21. Last year, Big Shoulders Fund awarded \$7.4 million to 1,027 scholars and hopes to achieve this same level or greater next year.

A survey of parents/guardians whose children received Tax Credit Scholarships during the current school year verified the program's positive effect: 83 percent categorized this support as having a "life-changing amount of impact," and 99 percent said they "very likely" would recommend Big Shoulders Fund. Nearly 80 percent said they would either not have been able to enroll their children at these high-quality schools without the scholarship, or enrollment would have been "unlikely."

Gabrielle Jones, mother of St. Angela School sixth grader Kenny, shared, "This scholarship has made a big impact on my family. It allows us to select a school that we feel is great for our child when it comes to his

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Leadership and Staff

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John A. Canning, Jr.
Monsignor Kenneth J. Velo
Co-Chairmen

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President and Chief Executive Officer

Kamilah Anderson
Accounting Project Coordinator

Elizabeth Bartley
Lead Instructional Coach, Data Analysis

Dan Bennett
Director, Leadership and Scholarship Support

Eliza Bryant
Director, Academic Programs and Enrichment

Samantha Clark
Senior Accountant

Amanda Conley
Administrative Assistant

Vicente Del Real
Latino Outreach Coordinator

Malcolm Douglas
Chief Financial Officer

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Gisele Jones
Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement, Northwest Indiana Initiative

Matthew Katzfey
Director, Alumni Outreach and High School Development

Dan Kozlowski
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Rebecca Lindsay-Ryan
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Meika Slotsema
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Kyra Strzelczyk
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Executive Assistant to President and CEO

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Sarah Tang
Coordinator, Donor Services

Elizabeth Tracy
Assistant Director, School Marketing and Operations

Pam Yeshewas
Associate, Scholarship Program

Thomas Zbierski
Senior Director, Scholarship Programs and School Relations

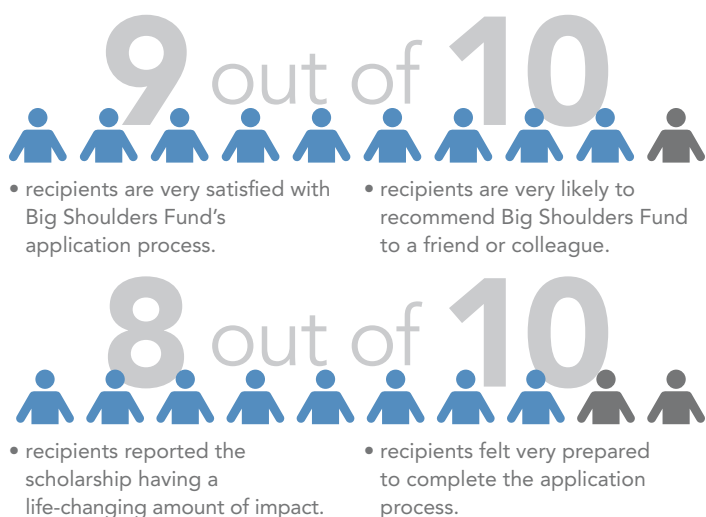
Big Shoulders Fund Provides Security to Families

...continued from page 3

education and his future. St. Angela School gets the kids ready for not just college but the outside world as well. They help my son set a dream that they nurture daily. They prepare him for high school and life, challenging him to meet *high* expectations.” Kenny’s favorite subject is reading, and his mother believes he has achieved an eighth-grade reading level, thanks to St. Angela. “We would like to thank Big Shoulders and the donors for what they are doing for children and their families by giving these children the option to go to a school that will make a great impact on their education.”

Maribel Moreno is the mother of fourth grader Sofia and second grader Iliana, both of whom attend St. Mary Star of the Sea School. “Being a Big Shoulders scholarship recipient has helped my family immensely. It has eased the financial strain that my husband and I were going through. St. Mary’s has been a second home to my family for many years. My oldest daughter Nadia started preschool there and she graduated last year. I worked for several years in the front office, up until recently, when I had to care for my elderly mother. St. Mary’s is like a big family; we all know each other, and we can always count on each other.”

RESULTS FROM A SURVEY SENT TO BIG SHOULDERS FUND TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



For more than 30 years, Big Shoulders has provided scholarships to families across the city of Chicago. The Tax Credit Scholarship Program provides another vehicle to partner with donors, parents, and students to secure educational opportunities for children. Each application represents a family’s hopes and dreams for a brighter future.

Donations to Big Shoulders Fund’s Tax Credit Scholarship Program remain eligible for a 75 percent credit towards 2020 Illinois state income taxes and can be restricted to an individual school or group of schools. For more information, contact Amy Drozda, Senior Director, Philanthropy, Partnerships, and Engagement. ■



SQ Scholars baked cookies last year at the Ronald McDonald House for families of patients at Lurie Children’s Hospital, Chicago.

First SQ Scholars Graduate

The SQ Scholars program, which launched in 2015 with support from Big Shoulders Fund Executive Committee member Kimberly Querrey and Lou Simpson, is preparing to graduate its first cohort of 10 scholars. The program provides substantial tuition support, literacy training, mentoring partnerships, standardized test prep, and college coaching. Monthly programs teaching self-advocacy and resilience; social, professional, and cyber etiquette; implicit bias; and career exploration broaden students’ view of a changing world. Requiring a 3.5 or better GPA in high school, the program aims to motivate, educate, and cultivate the highest achievers at Big Shoulders Fund schools.

SQ Scholars Executive Director Judy Friedman said, “These seniors have matured into thoughtful, responsible, compassionate individuals. They have grown from quiet, tentative eighth graders into confident, discerning, innovative thinkers and leaders. They have become mentors and ambassadors for our next cohort. They are leading clubs, participating in research and learning, and even volunteering help during the COVID-19 crisis.”

The program provided essential preparation for the college application and selection process. “Beyond academic support and mentoring, SQ Scholars focused on communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and character development, essential to college readiness and preparedness for school, career, and life,” described Friedman. “The program prepared students early for college testing, applications, and acceptance procedures so they knew what to expect.”

Perhaps most encouraging are the trajectories of the current SQ Scholars and those joining this program. “I am pleased with the success of all our scholars, particularly our graduating seniors, who are heading to top-tier schools—Northwestern, Princeton, and University of Chicago—and pursuing impressive majors, including a number of women accepted into STEM programs,” said Querrey. “We have learned a lot since we created this program on the Big Shoulders Fund platform, and we look forward to sharing that experience to improve the outcomes of all scholars and increase the impact for future SQ Scholars.” ■

Big Shoulders Fund Plus Pledges \$50M to 30 Schools

For 34 years, Big Shoulders Fund has supported Chicago's neighborhoods by providing financial, programmatic, and operational support to its network of schools and ensuring students of all backgrounds have access to these important community-based organizations.

In a historic level of investment toward fulfilling that goal, Big Shoulders Fund is expanding and deepening its relationship with 30 of its schools that have the greatest need (see sidebar). **Big Shoulders Fund Plus** is a \$50 million, 10-year philanthropic and operational commitment that will enable these schools to remain open and viable and continue enriching their local communities.

"Our research has shown that alumni of our schools vote, study, work, and volunteer at rates higher than their peers, becoming the citizens and neighbors that make our communities and Chicago a better place for all of us to live," said Founding Chairman and current Co-Chairman James J. O'Connor. "Additionally, we've learned that when our schools close, communities suffer."

Big Shoulders aims to make a more meaningful impact on these schools and communities in need by strengthening their prospects for long-term sustainability. As part of its 10-year commitment, Big Shoulders will not only substantially increase its financial investment to help school operations, but also take an expanded leadership role, working with principals to help manage their schools toward specific academic, enrollment, fundraising, and finance goals. Big Shoulders will invest additional resources to help leaders in these schools improve, measure progress, and achieve an ambitious vision for the children, schools, and communities they serve.

"In many ways, this is the natural next step for Big Shoulders Fund in our relationship with these schools and the way we work with them today and in the future," said Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale. "During the last 15 years, we have strengthened our scholarship programs, while adding significant new capabilities to provide operational and academic assistance for schools—marketing, financial planning, professional development for educators, talent recruitment and development, and more. We look forward to working with our schools in this new and evolving capacity. We have grown from investing \$12 million in 2011 to more than \$26 million this past year, with 45 percent of those funds focused on our operational and academic support to schools."

Big Shoulders plans to launch a campaign to raise additional funds. Among the preliminary investments pledged toward this initiative is a lead \$5 million gift from Big Shoulders Fund Executive Committee member John Schreiber and his wife, Kathy. "Kathy and I are proud to make the initial investment in this extension of Big Shoulders Fund programming, which involves a more operational role in their schools," John commented. "This accomplishes one of the primary areas of our philanthropy—to provide financially poor children who are rich in talent, passion, and hard work a pathway toward a brighter future."

Under the agreement, the 30 schools will remain part of the Archdiocese of Chicago, which will continue to provide financial support but at a decreased level than previous years.



Student from Big Shoulders Fund Plus School St. John de la Salle.

BIG SHOULDERS FUND PLUS SCHOOLS

- Academy of St. Benedict the African (West Englewood)
- Augustus Tolton Academy (Park Manor)
- Children of Peace School (Near West Side)
- Epiphany Catholic School (South Lawndale)
- Holy Angels School (Grand Boulevard)
- Leo Catholic High School (Auburn Gresham)
- Maternity B.V.M. School (Humboldt Park)
- Most Blessed Trinity Academy (Waukegan)
- Our Lady of Grace School (Logan Square)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe School (South Chicago)
- Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School (South Lawndale)
- Our Lady of Tepeyac High School (South Lawndale)
- Pope John Paul II Catholic School (Brighton Park)
- Queen of the Universe School (West Lawn)
- St. Ailbe School (Calumet Heights)
- St. Angela School (Austin)
- St. Ann School (Pilsen)
- St. Catherine of Siena/St. Lucy School (Austin/Oak Park)
- St. Ethelreda School (Auburn Gresham)
- St. Gall School (Gage Park)
- St. Genevieve School (Belmont Cragin)
- St. John de la Salle Catholic Academy (Roseland)
- St. Malachy School (Near West Side)
- St. Margaret of Scotland School (Washington Heights)
- St. Mary Star of the Sea School (West Lawn)
- St. Nicholas of Tolentine School (West Lawn)
- St. Philip Neri School (South Shore)
- St. Pius V School (Pilsen)
- St. Sylvester School (Logan Square)
- Visitation Catholic School (Back of the Yards/Englewood)

Big Shoulders Fund will also continue to support its full network of schools and programs through significant annual investments, in addition to the organization's expansion into Northwest Indiana, announced in October (see Fall 2019 issue of *Shoulder to Shoulder*), which was made possible through a fully funded restricted gift, independent from Big Shoulders Fund's Chicago program funding. ■



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In the Community



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- 1: On January 29, Our Lady of Guadalupe School held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of their gym, which had been closed for nearly 10 years due to flooding and other issues. In partnership with school Patrons Beth and Bruce White and the Claretians religious order that sponsors the school, the gym now has a new floor, sound panels, and new bathrooms and locker rooms.
- 2: The Lavin Family Foundation has created the Feed it Forward initiative to provide funds for Big Shoulders Fund and other organizations to create and support a unique partnership between local restaurants and school communities. The Foundation's leadership gift of \$250,000 has inspired others to get involved, resulting in more than 80,000 meals served to date.
- 3: In February, Big Shoulders Fund asked supporters to #LeapIntoAction, and the results were tremendous. Volunteers completed more than 1,200 service hours, nearly doubling the goal of 750 hours, including participating in the highest attended Give Back Day: more than 200 volunteers made an immeasurable impact on the St. Catherine of Siena/St. Lucy School community.
- 4: The Sullivan Leadership Program equips early-career principals with "best in class" management tools and a collaborative peer community with the goal of increasing principal retention rates at Big Shoulders Fund schools. Thus far, the program has had a 94 percent year-to-year retention rate, much higher than local and national averages. Participants are meeting for weekly "virtual" happy hours to continue collaborating and supporting one another as they navigate this new reality for their schools.
- 5: Arcel and Ayleen, two Lynch Family Scholars from St. Agnes of Bohemia School, received their school's Lightning Leader Award in January for displaying leadership in the areas of Responsibility, Respect, and Readiness.
- 6: On March 10, nearly 650 Big Shoulders Fund high school scholars attended the College Symposium at Saint Xavier University. Scholars participated in a variety of college transition-related sessions on the admissions process, financial assistance, entrance essays, and more.
- 7: On February 22, students from seven Big Shoulders Fund elementary schools competed at the third annual Black History Month Academic Bowl hosted by the Leo High School National Honor Society and Big Shoulders Fund. Students tested their knowledge of African-American history through a variety of activities, and WGN-TV featured the event on its evening news. The team from St. Ailbe School (pictured) took home the winning trophy.
- 8: On April 30, St. Sylvester School, located in the Logan Square neighborhood, hosted a Drive-By Parade. Teachers drove down Palmer Square waving and calling out to families and delivered goody bags with materials for family activities, as well as donated Home Run Inn frozen pizzas through Big Shoulders Fund's food distribution program.
- 9: On February 16, nearly 120 individuals attended a Bingo Brunch at Happy Camper and raised nearly \$1,200 in support of the Big Shoulders Fund Auxiliary Board Scholarship.

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\$1 Million Challenge Grant



Maximize Your Impact

YOU Donate	THEY Match	Donation
	1/5	
	+	\$20 = 

save
the
date

Big Shoulders Fund Executive Committee member Kimberly Querrey and Lou Simpson, longtime generous supporters who wanted to offer additional help at this critical time, have issued a \$1 million challenge grant: for every \$5 donated to Big Shoulders Fund through Labor Day, they will donate \$1, up to \$1 million. There are many opportunities to maximize their matching grant, including gifts to Big Shoulders Fund's COVID-19 Emergency Fund (*see p. 2*), scholarship contributions, the Golf Classic on August 3, the Racing Team, the Humanitarian Award Dinner, and any gift to Big Shoulders Fund that furthers the organization's mission. "I thank Kimberly and Lou for their leadership and each of you for being on this journey with us by giving your time, talent, and treasure and for recognizing that a fundamental part of a just world is educational opportunity for all students," said Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale.

20th Annual Big Shoulders Fund Golf Classic

