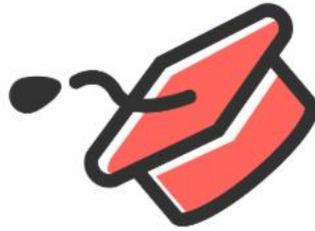


# SCHOLARSHIP

A COLLEGE STUDENT  
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## Celebrating a new class, our college graduates and a new chapter

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Wednesday night's awards ceremony was a night of many firsts: Our largest class ever of 10 new high school graduates and the first change of leadership in the history of Scholarship Plus.

Soma Golden Behr, a longtime reporter and editor at The New York Times and Executive Director of SPlus, passed the baton to Kate Fenneman Stokes.

Kate has worked hard by Soma's side for years and will now become the second Executive Director in the program's history. Soma will take a step back as Senior Advisor. She will continue to work closely with Melanie Rosen Brooks, Director of SPlus who helped found the program with Soma in 2009 - and with a small staff and a team of experienced volunteers.

Scholarship Plus is in a period of growth, a challenge that Kate enjoys. She single-handedly ran a large college scholarship program for Jerry Seinfeld, the comedian, soon after arriving in New York from her native Indiana.

She has a deep passion for helping bright, determined high school students from impoverished families make their way through the zigs and zags of selective American colleges. Her optimism and enthusiasm are contagious. Students feel it and so do adults working with her.

Last night we welcomed our 8th scholarship class, our 4th class of new college graduates (100 percent of whom graduated in 4 years) and honored the hard-working teachers who have made the biggest difference in our new students' lives.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, attended our event and posted on social media, "The program understands that kids need support- a hand up to succeed. These students I saw last night will fly... and it was so moving to hear their testimonials to their teachers and their teachers' pride and love towards their students."

### **Kate outlined her plans for the near future:**

- To raise more money so the class size can grow to 20 a year, resulting in 80 in college at any one time.
- To work with the new Associate Board of young professionals - all scholarship students themselves- on fundraising, student support and marketing for SPlus.
- To recruit an official board of directors (mostly older professionals) to help SPlus meet its growth goals.
- To expand the program's ability to support a larger student body with more mentors and paid internships.

Throughout this expansion, Kate is determined to maintain the special family spirit that has defined Scholarship Plus since day one. Soma, who also worked to generate this spirit, will still be doing so. Though from now on, she will be working for Kate instead of vice versa.

Kate, her husband Josh- an executive chef- and their two young daughters live in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

We all thank you for your guidance and continued [support](#).

Soma, Kate, Melanie and the SPlus Team

## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

### Scholarship Plus Welcomes 10 New Scholars!



The 10 members of the 2017 Scholarship Plus class make it our largest group of scholars so far, and bring the total to 54. The new scholars of our eighth class come from a variety of backgrounds, but all share records of outstanding academic achievement and community contributions while overcoming stark challenges that include poverty, homelessness, mastering a new language and culture, and health-related difficulties.

Their accomplishments have earned them admission to Boston University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Franklin & Marshall College, George Washington University, Lehigh University, N.Y.U., Northeastern University, the School of Visual Arts and the State University of New York at Oneonta.

**ROSELKIS ADAMES** has earned a number of distinctions since coming here in 2014 from a rough neighborhood in the Dominican Republic. Among them being on the winning team of the Science Genius Hip-Hop Competition at Columbia University two years ago. She wrote and performed a rap song about DNA.

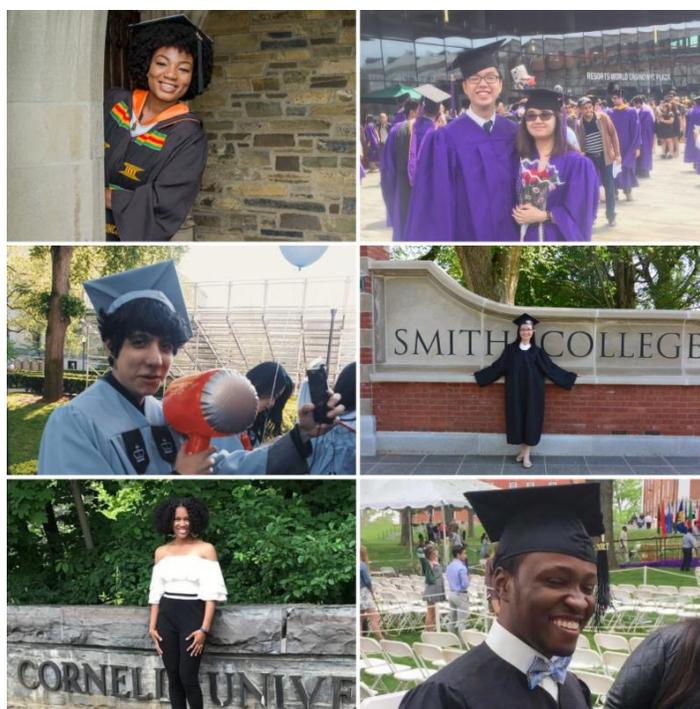
Hip-Hop, of course, involves verbal gymnastics, making it more remarkable that Roselkis was able to achieve this in her first year of living in the United States. The same determination has put her first in her class of 75 at the Ellis Preparatory Academy in the Bronx. ELLIS'S mission is reflected in the acronym of its name: English Language Learners and International Support. Roselkis counselor describes her as "one of the most extraordinary young minds I have seen in my eight-plus years of teaching and counseling" since the school was founded.

Outside of her school, Roselkis has continued exploring. She learned programming at a local community center, and at a high school engineering program sponsored by Columbia, she used advanced 3D modeling software to construct simulations of the uterus during potentially dangerous preterm births. Meanwhile, at a South Bronx performing arts program, she explored her passion for acting and singing.

Ideally, she would like to become an actress, but she plans to study computer science – "to be employable." This fall, she will enroll in SUNY Oneonta.

[READ MORE 2017 SCHOLAR BIOS HERE](#)

## Congratulations to Our College Graduates



**Clockwise from top left** Philomina Kane- Princeton University, Jeffrey Ng- NYU Tandon School of Engineering, Jamie Nino De Guzman- Columbia University, Aixin Li- Smith College, Emony Robertson- Cornell University, Shaunpaul Jones- Amherst College.

The six members of the fourth Scholarship Plus class have all graduated from college on schedule. Here are their updates:

**Philomina Kane, Princeton University:** Graduated with honors, majoring in Ecological and Evolutionary Biology, minoring in Global Health and African Studies. Last summer Philo went back to her native Ghana to collect research for her thesis on the behavior of the particular mosquitoes responsible for Zika, dengue and yellow fever. Philomina's next stop is in Philadelphia for a two-year fellowship in entrepreneurship with Venture For America. She then plans to head back to school to receive her master's in Epidemiology.

**Jeffrey Ng, N.Y.U. Tandon School of Engineering:** Jeff brought his love for flying and his ability to fix jet engines to N.Y.U., where he just graduated with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. In August, Jeff will start at JP Morgan Chase as an analyst in Product Development, a group that works with projects closest to engineering. And in a few years he plans to go back for his master's in Mechanical Engineering.

**Jaime Nino de Guzman, Columbia University Fu Foundation School of Engineering:** Jamie has just been accepted into the Graduate Mechanical Engineering Program at Fu/Columbia for next fall. Jaime's other interests range from tennis, karate and tae kwon do, to teaching and tutoring at Kumon, to gaming – he has become an internationally respected champion in an online video game, Super Smash Bros. He has taught himself many coding languages and is chiefly self-motivated.

**Aixin Li, Smith College:** Aixin majored in Economics with a minor in Landscape Studies. She is searching for a job in the urban planning field while studying for the Graduate Record Exam and planning for graduate school. In her words: "I am grateful for what I got to experience in college and am more grateful for the people, including my family, friends, professors, alums, and the Scholarship Plus community, who have pushed me to be a better person and supported my aspirations and goals."

**Emony Robertson, Cornell University:** Emony majored in Developmental Sociology and minored in Communication and Inequality Studies – making Dean's List all four years! She earned the Director's Award, given to a senior with demonstrated dedication to their academics, community and to the opportunity program. Emony is back home in New York City as a litigation paralegal for Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, where she interned in past summers. And she will be preparing to apply to Law School.

**Shaunpaul Jones, Amherst College:** Shaunpaul majored in NeuroScience and has won the John Simpson Fellowship for Medicine and will be attending the University of Rochester School of Medicine. During college, Shaunpaul was Captain of the Mixed Martial Arts Club, and enjoyed singing in choral groups and being a volunteer EMT-emergency medical technician. Upon reflection he says, "I can't always say it was fun or easy, but...my college years were the most formative and important years of my life. College has not only given me the chance to appreciate my qualities, but it has also given me the tools to improve myself and grow."



Two of our Associate Board members, Jayson Jones and Amar Ramroop (pictured third from the left) are running 12 miles of hills, walls, and lots of mud in the Tough Mudder competition and all money raised will go to Scholarship Plus! More information and how to donate can be found [HERE](#)

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