

SCHOLARSHIP

A COLLEGE STUDENT
SUPPORT PROGRAM **PLUS**



WINTER GREETINGS!

Greetings from Scholarship Plus—

THE BIG NEWS OF WINTER. Hoorah! Two large, prestigious philanthropic organizations are so impressed by our track record and ambition that they have decided to bet their money on the future of Scholarship Plus.

The New York Community Trust has committed to pay for two full scholarships a year for the next four years. And The Pinkerton Foundation has given us a grant to help subsidize unpaid internships for our students.

This commitment—plus the growing support and generosity of dedicated friends like you—means that we will reach our goal of 10 students for 2017. It will also greatly help us achieve the ambitious growth plan we signed onto last year.

Our goal, announced in June, is to grow from a class of 7 new students last spring to 10 new students this year and 20 a year starting by 2020. That ultimately will give us 80 scholars in college at any one time.

MORE BIG NEWS. KATE FENNEMAN STOKES, formerly head of The Jerry Seinfeld college scholarship program, has signed on to work full time for Scholarship Plus as the Program Director. Many of you know Kate already. The rest will soon. She is recognizable by her positive spirit, dedication to students, imagination and high energy. We welcome another new teammate, ELLEN ADNOPOZ, who is helping us part-time to raise funds and strengthen programming. She brings great passion and experience having worked for underprivileged students at Posse Foundation and Chappaqua Summer Scholarship Program, among other similar organizations.

EVEN MORE. Thanks in large part to Kate, we are about to launch a Junior Advisory Board to guide SPlus, mentor undergrads, raise funds from a younger generation of donors and network with each other. A spirited group of alumni from Scholarship Plus, The New York Times and Jerry Seinfeld scholarship programs are working on this initiative.

WHAT'S ON OUR SCHOLARS' MINDS? Judging from our winter get-together in early January, our students are doing well academically. A few bruises here and there were forgotten in the reunion spirit and great food in an upper west side living room.

But it was also clear that night that the mood on campus now is one of increased angst—not about academic success, but about the turbulent political climate. Those with undocumented family or friends are losing sleep over the Administration's anti-immigrant initiatives. We've offered to give them whatever help and guidance we can on this.

Thank you again for supporting what we do for our great New York City kids. Our new funding from large foundations is a boost to us in many ways, but to meet our ambitious target of 20 new students a year, we still need to find many more new funders. Your suggestions, spirit and donations are the keys to our success.

We hope we can count on you for your continued support.

With gratitude,

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Finding Challenge and Beauty, At a Small College in Maine



Vasiki Konneh, Colby College Class of 2020

It was a few days before he began classes at Colby College that Vasiki Konneh, born and reared in Woodside, Queens, joined other members of his class for a three-day wilderness trip in the Maine woods. The natural beauty surrounding him struck Vasiki, and so did the pleasure of his first campfire. But it was the heavens at night, without urban light pollution, that really amazed him, including the sight of his first shooting star. He remembers, "it felt like the sky was choking on stars."

Now midway through his first year, Vasiki continues to enjoy the discovery and adaptation to a new world. Despite some bumps along the way, he is thriving at Colby.

Outgoing and gregarious, Vasiki found that in his first college weeks he missed his large group of friends from high school, and worried that he was sometimes eating alone. This concern faded when two upperclassmen told him that this was natural, that the makeup of groups of freshmen eating together had to do mostly with class schedules, and that as the semester went on new friendships would fall into place. That proved to be the case, and as Vasiki's social life got better, so did his academic performance.

[**MORE HERE**](#)

Aspiring Epidemiologist's Goal: 'Public Servant with Public Outreach'



PHILOMINA KANE, Princeton Class of 2017

Lab work and a big research paper about mosquitos are a major focus of Philomina Kane's senior year at Princeton. She gathered thousands of mosquito eggs for the study while on a trip to Ghana last summer.

This is all part of her major, ecological biology, which she defines as "the interaction of animals, including humans, with the environment," Philomina specializes in vector-borne diseases, infections spread by animals or insects. This category includes dengue fever, Lyme disease and the newly threatening Zika virus.

She has a dear goal: after getting a master's degree in public health, she intends to become a "business-savvy epidemiologist/entrepreneur," a "public servant with public outreach."

Philomina has already exercised some entrepreneurial muscle. Her YouTube channel, [Naturally Philo!](#), was created in 2014 and has 40,000 subscribers and 2.5 million page views. The show focuses on natural hair for women of color. She had taken her own hair from curly to straight in earlier years. At college she decided to cut it off and "let my hair grow without chemicals."

The channel started as an irreverent mix of tips on techniques, styles and products. She explains: "As time went on, I saw a new vision for this channel and that is a community. It's time to not just share but inspire."

[MORE HERE](#)

SAVE THE DATE

**PLEASE SAVE the evening of JUNE 14 for our annual welcome party
at the Jerome Greene Space.**

**We will salute more new scholars than ever before —
10 coming aboard and 7 graduating college.**

STAY CONNECTED



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