

State of the Foundation | 2016

Opening Doors to Equal Educational Opportunity for Outstanding Low-Income Students





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Message from the Executive Director

This year we are celebrating the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's 16th anniversary of providing among the largest scholarships in the country to students with enormous talent but limited financial means, fulfilling Jack Kent Cooke's inspiring vision. Nearly 2,200 students have received Cooke Scholarships and thousands more have benefited from programs we have funded through grants, thanks to the Founder's generosity. Many more will benefit far into the future.

Although I have only been with the foundation since September 2014, I have seen repeatedly how Cooke Scholarships dramatically transform the lives of extraordinary young people (and also benefit their families) by giving them access to the most challenging educational institutions. We give Cooke Scholars the ability to follow their dreams and overcome enormous obstacles, such as poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, being undocumented, and trying to raise a family as a single parent. With our help, Cooke Scholars have shown they will not allow their past to limit their future. They are living proof that demography is not destiny. Far too often, students like those we serve have been barred from America's elite colleges and universities – not because they lack the academic ability, but because their families lack the money to give them the many advantages that other students enjoy. This should not be the way things work in a nation dedicated to being the Land of Opportunity.

A Cooke Scholar receives not just the chance to go to an outstanding high school, college or university. A scholar receives educational benefits such as study abroad, music lessons, enrichment classes, academic counseling, and the ability to take internships instead of working in low-level jobs just to make ends meet.

In the stiff competition for college admissions today, students of modest means struggle because they are not given challenging coursework in many public schools, because the college counseling they receive in high school is almost always inadequate, and because the college admissions process itself is stacked against them. They are not told, for example, that for applicants who are both very smart and lack financial resources, an elite college is often dramatically *less expensive* than their local state university or community college.

The Cooke Foundation is challenging the obstacles facing high achieving, low-income students by educating the public, awarding prizes, making grants to other organizations with similar missions, and conducting high-visibility research.



Our 2015 and 2016 Cooke Foundation reports have gained particularly wide attention and become uncontested sources for reliable data:

- <u>"Breaking Down Walls: Increasing Access to Four-Year</u> <u>Colleges for High-Achieving Community College Students"</u>
- <u>"Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card</u> on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students"
- <u>"True Merit: Ensuring Our Brightest Students Have Access</u> to Our Best Colleges and Universities"

The "True Merit" report, in particular, has gained a great deal of attention since it was issued in January because it documents how college admissions today are wildly skewed in favor of students from high-income families. The report has received wide coverage by newspapers, websites and radio programs, and was cited in an editorial by The Los Angeles Times. I have written several op-eds based on the report, including one that appeared in The Washington Post.

"True Merit" documents that at the most selective colleges, barely 3 percent of students are from poor and working-class families, while 72 percent are from high-income families. The Cooke Foundation is dedicated to seeing that college admissions are based on talent, hard work and true merit rather than wealth, station and privilege. Cooke Scholars have accomplished great things – pursuing advanced degrees, creating startup businesses, engaging in medical and scientific research, and embarking on social entrepreneurship ventures that are improving the lives of others – all because they have been liberated from the overwhelming burdens that financial need imposes.

Our foundation's motto is: "Think big. Work hard. Achieve." We are proud that our scholars do this every day and that we have helped make their success possible, thanks to Mr. Cooke's wonderful gift to future generations.

Sincerely,

Harka lung

Harold O. Levy

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Scholarships and Awards

The Cooke Foundation has awarded over \$152 million in scholarship assistance to nearly 2,200 extraordinary high school and college students. Each of our Cooke Scholars has a strong record of academic achievement as shown by grades and test scores, leadership skills, service to others and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Cooke College Scholars and Undergraduate Transfer Scholars from community colleges can receive up to \$40,000 annually to cover tuition, living expenses, books and fees. In addition, the students who hold these scholarships are eligible to apply for a graduate school scholarship worth up to \$50,000 a year, which is available for up to four years.

Our scholarships for high school, undergraduate and graduate students include academic advising, access to internship opportunities, funding for study abroad, and opportunities to network with other Cooke Scholars and alumni. For example, at the annual Scholars Weekend our scholarship recipients gather to get to know each other, participate in panel discussions and hear prominent speakers. Last year our scholars were addressed by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell. This year they heard from Secretary of Education John King and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The weekend enables Cooke Scholars to engage in high-level intellectual exploration, build strong relationships and showcase their talents.

Giving outstanding low-income students an excellent education does more than benefit the students. It benefits their families and the American people as a whole by strengthening our economy, enhancing our national security, and changing the arc of history. It is common for Cooke Scholars to "give back" to help other students and help worthy causes even before they graduate, using the knowledge and skills they have gained in school. The Cooke Foundation's investment in each student ultimately helps many more people than the scholarship recipient and his or her family.



William Tarpeh

William Tarpeh, who grew up in a singleparent home in Northern Virginia, was a Cooke Young Scholar and subsequently a Cooke College Scholar at Stanford University. He is now a Cooke Graduate Scholar at the University of California-Berkeley, pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental engineering. His research on <u>ways to turn</u> <u>urine into fertilizer</u> to grow crops in the developing world could have major benefits in struggling communities.

Money from the sale of the fertilizer can be used to bring toilets to poor communities and the fertilizer can be used to increase crop yields in areas that suffer from food shortages. The lack of toilets in many parts of the world creates serious sanitation problems that cause water contamination and widespread disease.

"Over 2 billion people don't have a clean place to go to the bathroom," William says. "I think that a lot of the solutions to our world's most pressing problems are in the minds of children who are simply preoccupied with survival. Sanitation for me is one way to remove that preoccupation with just surviving. These kids are instead thinking about how to change their own futures and the future of our world."

2000 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation begins operations in Lansdowne, Virginia

2000

Carroll College President Matthew J. Quinn becomes executive director



Lalita Booth

Lalita Booth once described herself this way: "High school dropout. Teenage mother. Homeless parent. Welfare recipient." Lalita grew up in a low-income family in Asheville, North Carolina, and says her parents were evicted from their home several times. After her parents divorced, she left home at 16 and became what she calls a "wild child." She lived on the streets and slept in a car and at the homes of friends, then married and had a son. But after two years her husband filed for divorce, joined the military and was deployed abroad. Lalita then resolved to turn her life around. "I decided to start taking on things that I thought were impossible and proving myself wrong," she says.

Lalita temporarily gave her son to relatives to care for, earned her GED, got an entrylevel job, and enrolled in a community college where she graduated with honors. She became a Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida in finance and accounting, going on to become a Cooke Graduate Scholar and earn an MBA and a Master of Public Policy degree from Harvard University. She founded a nonprofit organization that helps disadvantaged young people and became the CEO and co-founder of a software company in Boston.

Cooke Scholarship and Awards Programs

<u>The Cooke Young Scholars Program</u> serves students from 8th grade through high school with financial need who have earned all or mostly A grades since the 6th grade. The program has provided \$21.7 million to help fund summer enrichment programs, extracurricular activities, educational travel, purchases of computers and other technology, individualized counseling to set academic goals, guidance on applying to colleges, and the costs of attending private and public high schools for 817 Young Scholars since 2001.

<u>The Cooke College Scholarship Program</u> provides undergraduate scholarships to high school seniors with financial need. The scholarships are available to 12th graders who have earned a cumulative unweighted grade-point average of at least 3.5, along with minimum SAT combined critical reading and math scores of at least 1200, or a minimum ACT composite score of 26. The Cooke Foundation has selected 622 College Scholars since 2006 and awarded \$22.8 million in scholarship support.

<u>The Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Program</u> enables top community college students with financial need to complete their bachelor's degrees by transferring to selective four-year colleges or universities. Scholarships are available to current community college students or recent alumni who have earned a grade-point average of 3.5 or above. The Cooke Foundation has selected 808 Undergraduate Transfer Scholars since 2002 and awarded \$34 million in scholarship support.

<u>The Cooke Graduate Scholarships</u> have totaled \$67.8 million for 673 students since 2002. In 2010 the award became available only to recipients of the Cooke College Scholarship and Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

The Cooke International Awards at Oxford and Cambridge Universities are scholarships of up to \$85,000 a year for a Cooke Scholar with financial need who has already received a bachelor's degree. The awards enable a scholar to pursue a graduate degree at Lincoln or Brasenose College at the University of Oxford or Clare College at the University of Cambridge, all in the United Kingdom. This program was launched in 2015 and expanded in 2016.

2001

First group of 50 Cooke Young Scholars selected for high school scholarships

2001

First grant awarded to organization helping outstanding low-income students

The Graduate Arts Award and Dissertation Fellowship began in 2011, but were discontinued in 2015 in order for the Cooke Foundation to focus on its Young Scholar, College Scholar and Undergraduate Transfer Scholar programs. The Graduate Arts Award went to promising artists from low-income families and was the nation's leading graduate scholarship in the visual arts, performing arts and creative writing. The Cooke Foundation awarded \$5.4 million to 65 Graduate Arts Scholars. As discussed in greater detail below, the foundation continues to provide support to students with financial need chosen to perform on National Public Radio's "From The Top" radio program. The Cooke Dissertation Fellowship supported advanced doctoral students completing dissertations that furthered understanding of the educational pathways and experiences of outstanding low-income students. The Cooke Foundation selected 23 Dissertation Fellows and awarded \$502,000 in financial support. While no new awards and fellowships are currently being offered, scholars already receiving funding will continue to do so while completing their studies.

The Matthew J. Quinn Prize, named to honor the Cooke Foundation's founding executive director, is a \$10,000 award given annually to one or more Cooke Scholars currently in college or graduate school or Cooke alumni. The prize recognizes outstanding achievements, such as publication of an important work, development of an innovative solution to a societal problem, or creation of a useful community program.

The Matthew J. Quinn Youth Leadership Award is a \$5,000 prize given annually to one or more current Young Scholars recognizing outstanding achievement, such as creation of a significant community program, establishment of a student organization, or development of an artistic or research project that supports a social cause.



Harun Mehmedinovic

Harun Mehmedinovic grew up in wartorn Sarajevo in Bosnia, and spent much of nearly four years taking shelter in the cellar of his apartment building as artillery shells and gunshots tore through the city. He came to the U.S. as a refugee in 1996, at the age of 13. He later became a Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar at UCLA, where he studied film and worked as a photographer, cinematographer and director on more than 30 short films.

Harun went on to become a Cooke Graduate Scholar at the American Film Institute. His film "In the Name of the Son," which is set during the war, has won more than 30 international awards. The accomplished photographer has produced books of his photos and taught film and photography at Northern Arizona University.

"If you're not passionate, you will get nowhere. If you don't have the mindset that you will dig through a mountain to accomplish something, it will not happen," Harun says. "When I became part of the (Cooke) Foundation, all the help aside as far as the school, what became most important thing I think and ultimately will prove to be most important thing is the community. I love the people that are part of it more so than anything."

2002 | First group of 79 Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholars selected by foundation

2002 | First group of 50 Cooke Graduate Scholars selected by foundation



Shrochis Karki

Shrochis Karki was a Cooke Graduate Scholar at the University of Oxford, graduating with a Ph.D. in International Development. He then went to work as an education consultant. Shrochis founded and heads the nonprofit Samaanta Foundation, which provides education fellowships that help fund high school and college education for low-income students in his native country of Nepal and also provides them with mentors. He was one of two recipients of the Cooke Foundation's 2014 Matthew J. Quinn Prize for outstanding achievement and donated his \$10,000 prize to the Samaanta Foundation. Shrochis was inspired to start the foundation while conducting research for his dissertation, which was titled, "Education, Employment and Transition: The Marginalized Experience in Nepal."

"During the course of my research, we encountered some specific circumstances which made it clear that numerous talented students were having to forgo their education for financial reasons," he says. "At Samaanta we are committed to creating a culture of giving. Our fellows are expected to serve as community leaders and a condition of their fellowship is to participate in our 'pay it forward' program, where they commit to helping others in need in the future."

Percentages of Total Scholars Served, 2000-2016



Gender and race/ethnicity statistics presented for all scholars. Remaining statistics exclude Graduate Scholars as data are not available. Beginning in 2016 the Cooke Foundation broadened our gender classifications to include: male, female, and other (gender-queer, gender non-conforming and different identity). To date, one scholar has self-identified as "other."

2002

First Cooke Scholars Weekend held for new scholars by foundation

2004

Foundation helps launch College Advising Corps to serve low-income students

Scholars Active, 2015-2016 Academic Year



Total Scholars Active 2015-2016 Academic Year

942**



Young Scholars	292
College Scholars	290
Undergraduate Transfer Scholars	230
Graduate Scholars (CSG, Original)	. 99
Graduate Arts Scholars	. 30
Dissertation Fellows	1

**2015-2016 Total Alumni and Total Active does not equal Total Served (2,199), because count excludes dismissed scholars and 2016 awardees.



Ahmad Ali Lewis

Ahmad Ali Lewis was a 17-year-old high school honor student who grew up in a crime-infested neighborhood in Los Angeles. His college plans were delayed when he wrote and performed the hip-hop song <u>"Back in the Day,"</u> which became the first and biggest hit of his career in 1994. The song reached No. 19 on the rhythm and blues charts and No. 26 on the pop charts. Ahmad continued performing on and off for years.

After his band 4th Avenue Jones broke up, Ahmad decided to resume his education at Long Beach City College, a community college. He graduated from Long Beach City College in 2008 as valedictorian, with a 4.0 GPA. This prompted the Los Angeles Times to publish a profile of Ahmad, headlined: "He's no gangsta; he's a scholar."

As a Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar, Ahmad was admitted to Stanford University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 2010. In 2015 he became a Cooke Graduate Scholar at the University of Southern California, where he expects to earn a master's degree in social work.

2005 Grants to NPR's "From the Top" classical music program begin

2006

First 39 Cooke College Scholars selected by foundation



Grants

Since its establishment 16 years ago, the Cooke Foundation has identified and invested a portion of its funding in strategic grant initiatives to expand educational opportunities throughout the United States. The foundation has partnered with educational leaders that share our commitment to advance the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need. Together with our grant partners, we work to create high-quality learning experiences for thousands of remarkable students whose families, schools, and communities need additional resources to help these students reach their fullest potential. Since inception, the foundation has awarded over \$90 million in grants to schools, colleges and nonprofit educational organizations.

Grants fall into four broad categories: college access and excellence; academic achievement; artistic advancement; and local support, with a focus on supporting high-quality learning programs that spark student curiosity and passion, augment formal academic instruction, nurture informal intellectual interchange, influence students' educational and career paths, and help them reach their full potential at all grade levels.





Brian Skotko

Dr. Brian Skotko earned an undergraduate degree from Duke University, an M.D. from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Public Policy degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard as a Cooke Graduate Scholar.

Inspired by his sister, who has Down syndrome, he is dedicating his career to helping children with cognitive and developmental disabilities as co-director of the Down Syndrome Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. "I wouldn't be doing what I am today had it not been for my sister Kristin," he said in a 2013 interview on "The Today Show."

Brian has testified before Congress, spoken at the United Nations, made many radio and TV appearances, and delivered scores of lectures at medical schools and advocacy organizations around the globe. His pioneering research on Down syndrome has been written about in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times and Washington Post, and he has written two books about Down syndrome.

2006-2015

Community College Transfer Initiative operates 2007

"Achievement Trap" report issued on high achieving low-income students

College Access and Excellence

A grant of \$500,000 was given to Equal Opportunity Schools to launch the Lead Higher Initiative to ensure access to advanced learning opportunities for high ability, low-income students. Together with partners the College Board, Google, Tableau Software, and the International Baccalaureate Organization, along with the support of the White House's My Brother's Keeper initiative and others, Equal Opportunity Schools will identify and place 100,000 low-income students and students of color in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses nationwide over three years.

\$1.6 million in STEM Education Grants were awarded in 2015 to programs that help academically talented low-income middle and high school students prepare for college studies in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. The grants went to the New York Academy of Sciences, the Duke University Talent Identification Program, Bridge to Enter Advanced Mathematics (BEAM) in New York City, the College of William and Mary, the Purdue University Gifted Education Research Institute and New York University. Programs funded by the grants include mentoring of students by STEM professionals, challenging online courses, several residential summer enrichment programs, and academic guidance and support for student math teams to take part in competitions.

Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement Grants have provided almost \$9.3 million to help fund high-quality learning experiences, such as summer enrichment programs, for thousands of low-income students since 2007.

The Selective Public High School Grants support the establishment of new programs and the enhancement of existing initiatives to prepare academically talented lowincome students to be admitted to and graduate from selective specialized high schools. The Cooke Foundation awarded \$500,000 in grants to selective public high schools in six states in 2015 to benefit more than 1,500 students in grades 6-12.

Awarded biennially, the \$500,000 Talent Development Award recognizes exemplary practices that transform high-potential, economically disadvantaged K-8 students into high achievers. The award is intended to catalyze an organization's work, bring strategies to a broader scale, and amplify conversations around one approach to cultivating potential. In 2014, the award went to the University of Iowa's Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education to expand its STEM Excellence and Literacy Program to serve over 300 students in rural middle schools and high schools. In 2012 the recipient was the Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy to provide an advanced curriculum focused on creative productivity, leadership and character development to 4th through 8th graders in urban schools.

2009 Harvard University psychologist Lawrence Kutner becomes executive director

2011 Cooke Foundation video studio begins operation to spread awareness of work

Artistic Advancement

Grants to the nonprofit organization From the Top support the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Awards and the program's national radio broadcast. From the Top encourages the commitment of young people to classical music and enables young musicians to perform live on the NPR program "From the Top." The Cooke Young Artist Awards provide \$10,000 scholarships each year to advance the artistic development and education of 20 outstanding young musicians, ages 8 to 18, who demonstrate financial need. The Cooke Foundation has given \$7.1 million to From the Top since 2002, including \$2 million for more than 200 Cooke Young Artist Awards.

Widening the Stage Grants distributed \$5 million from 2012 to 2015 to eight organizations that provided advanced music instruction to just over 900 talented musicians, ages 8 to 18, from low-income families. The grants funded private lessons, master classes, quality instruments, summer programs and performance experiences for the young musicians.

Local Support

The Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program enables Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) to provide college counseling to more than 500 students in Loudoun County, Virginia, each year and awards 60 Pathways Scholarships to highly accomplished low-income students attending NVCC, George Mason University or other universities. The Cooke Foundation has provided \$1.9 million to the program since 2006. In recognition of its support for community colleges, the foundation was awarded the 2016 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy.

The Good Neighbor Grants program, established in 2012, helps identify and strengthen ties with youth-serving nonprofit organizations in Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland. These organizations support students with significant financial need to reach their full potential through education. To date, the foundation has awarded over \$1 million to 37 organizations in the region supporting diverse programs in K-12 education, college access, and visual and performing arts education. The largest grant in 2016 was for \$35,000 and went to KIPP DC College Preparatory Academy in Washington to enable 20 high-achieving seniors to participate in college-level English classes through the school's Dual Enrollment Program at Trinity Washington University.



First Graduate Arts Award and 2011 Dissertation Fellowship recipients selected

2012 Cooke Fourily academic enrichment grants Cooke Foundation begins awarding

Cooke Prize

The \$1 million <u>Cooke Prize for Equity in Educational</u> <u>Excellence</u> is the largest award in the nation given to an elite college for eliminating arbitrary barriers to admission and promoting the success of high-achieving students from lowincome families. <u>Vassar College</u> in New York received the first Cooke Prize in 2015. <u>Amherst College</u> in Massachusetts became the second recipient of the prize in 2016.

Vassar President Catharine Hill has led Vassar's transformation to become an economically diverse college campus that prioritizes a commitment of funds to the financial aid budget. As a result, the percentage of low-income students (those receiving federal Pell Grants) in the freshman class at Vassar rose from 7 percent in 2006-7 academic year to 22 percent in 2015-16.

"Currently in the U.S. the likelihood of earning a bachelor's degree depends to a large extent on a person's family income and race," Hill said on accepting the Cooke Prize. "This must change for our country to live up to its principles of social advancement for all. Selective colleges and universities with large endowments must do their part by committing significantly more resources to need-based financial aid. Government incentives to do so would help, but we don't need to wait for government policy changes."

Amherst's percentage of low-income students receiving Pell Grants has risen from about 15 percent in 2006-07 to nearly 25 percent. The college has also increased enrollment of community college transfer students – many coming from low-income families – from zero or one annually to 12 to 15 each year.

Amherst President Biddy Martin said on accepting the Cooke Prize: "We are honored to have been recognized by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation for our efforts to make education accessible to talented students from low-income backgrounds. Our goal is to identify and nourish talent wherever it exists. It exists everywhere. While building on the remarkable progress Amherst made under President Tony Marx, we are now focused on closing the invisible opportunity gaps that students face once they arrive on campus. This prize will help us in that work."





2014 Former New York City Schools Chancellor Harold O. Levy becomes executive director

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"Partnerships That Promote Success" report on Community College Transfer Initiative

College Advising Corps

The College Advising Corps, which was incubated by the Cooke Foundation, has received \$11.9 million in grants from the foundation since being launched in 2007. Under the skillful leadership of Nicole Hurd, the nonprofit organization has increased the number of low-income and underrepresented students who graduate from college by hiring recent college graduates to serve as full-time college advisers in underserved high schools. The advisers help students better understand the college selection process, apply to colleges and apply for financial aid.

From 2005 to 2016 the College Advising Corps has served more than 840,000 students in high schools across America. Recently, Rebecca Cullen, the long-time director of our Young Scholars Program, became chief operating officer of the College Advising Corps. Today the organization has more than 500 advisers in rural and urban high schools in 15 states.

The Cooke Foundation's current funding supports the College Advising Corps' efforts to lead, develop and evaluate college initiatives to reduce under-matching (when outstanding lowincome students do not apply to selective colleges that match their abilities).

A study found that students who received advice from the College Advising Corps were 30 percent more likely to apply to a college or university, 26 percent more likely to submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), 18 percent more likely to take the ACT and 14 percent more likely to take the SAT exams that are used to evaluate college applicants.

Community College Transfer Initiative

Nearly half of all undergraduate students in the United States including many from low-income families - are enrolled in community colleges. However, outstanding community college students who want to go on to earn bachelor's degrees often must struggle against the mistaken perception by some college admissions officers that they cannot succeed at elite institutions. They also face economic barriers to completing their bachelor's degrees.

The Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI) operated from 2006 to 2012. It initially provided over \$7.3 million in grants to these highly selective colleges and universities to help outstanding low-income community college transfer students succeed and receive bachelor's degrees: Amherst College; Bucknell University; Cornell University; Mount Holyoke College; University of California-Berkeley; University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; and University of Southern California.

Another \$2.5 million went to additional schools beginning in 2011 (Bryn Mawr College; Syracuse University; UCLA) and 2012 (Loyola Marymount University; Southwestern University; University of California-Santa Barbara).

Foundation sponsors White House College Opportunity Summit 2014

2015 Scholar Robert Kancans participates in science fair hosted by President Obama



Helping Low-Income Students **Overcome Barriers**

A total of 816 Cooke Undergraduate Scholars have graduated from colleges and universities - including 548 from elite institutions - and hold jobs today in business, nonprofits, academia and government. Their achievements have created a lasting legacy.

We are focused on doing everything possible to advance the education of our Cooke Scholars and to ensure that our programs are operating effectively and efficiently. At the same time, we recognize that the Cooke Foundation will never have enough money to award scholarships and provide guidance to all outstanding low-income students who deserve it and who could accomplish great things with a great education. Accordingly, we are working to make the education community, government officials and the American people aware of the need to do more to further the education of such exceptional students, of whom the Cooke Scholars are emblematic.

We also want to get the attention of potential Cooke Young Scholars and Cooke Undergraduate Transfer and College Scholars - along with their parents - to attract the most talented students with financial need in the nation to apply for our scholarships. We want Cooke Scholars to be recognized for their qualities of mind and for the fact that unlike Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Truman, Telluride and Knox scholars, Cooke Scholars are selected because they have both achieved academically and overcome the burdens of financial need.

To fulfill our goals, we work to attract national attention – via traditional media and social media - to our scholars, to similarly talented students from struggling families and to our groundbreaking research. We issue news releases and get opeds published in newspapers and on general news and education news websites. We also have a social media presence, with almost 5,200 Facebook friends and more than 4,500 Twitter followers in the summer of 2016, along with a strong presence on LinkedIn and Instagram. In addition, we publish a weekly newsletter that has a circulation of nearly 5,000 and contains reports on cutting edge research, political developments and academic initiatives - all related to high achieving, low-income students.



Emily Hedin

Emily Hedin co-founded the nonprofit organization **Building Dignity** in a lowincome neighborhood in Lima, Peru. The organization runs programs and operates a community center to carry out its mission: "To enhance and expand educational opportunities, train local leaders and support neighborhood-led development."

Emily received an undergraduate degree in political science and international studies from Macalester College and then became a Cooke Graduate Scholar and earned a Master of Philosophy degree in international development from the University of Oxford. A committed social activist and scholar, Emily has also worked in Senegal, El Salvador, Britain and the U.S., and held positions with the Arias Foundation and the Inter-American Development Bank.

"I never expected to stay in Latin America long-term," says Emily, who first went to Peru in 2007. "Working in this community every day I see a reminder of the perseverance that defines the human spirit. ... I carry the work and the mission of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation with me every day."

2015 | Four Cooke Scholars participate in conference hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama

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Raul Magdaleno

Raul Magdaleno has gone from living in a homeless shelter to becoming an international professional empowerment speaker and education consultant. The youngest of 10 children, he immigrated to Texas from Mexico with his family at the age of 2. Shortly afterward his father was sent to prison, and later all his brothers went to prison and his sisters dropped out of high school.

"As a child and young adult, I experienced many hardships, but it built my character," Raul says. "All this has influenced my career ambition to believe in others and help them find their purpose through education. ... My message is one of resilience; never allow your circumstances to define your destiny."

As a Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar, Raul earned a bachelor's degree in corporate communication and public affairs at Southern Methodist University while living for a time in a homeless shelter with his mother and sister. He also worked as a special assistant to the dean. In 2011, Raul founded the Magdaleno Leadership Institute, a nonprofit that helps lowincome students attend college. "I started the Magdaleno Leadership Institute because I wanted to be to others what I once needed," he says.

On top of this, since 2011 we have operated a video studio at the Cooke Foundation that has created more than 100 educational videos, with 50 of them available on YouTube. We push these videos out through all media channels and as a result they have been viewed over 120,000 times on YouTube, Facebook and our website.

In the past year we have also reached out to state and federal policymakers, principals of highly selective public high schools, presidents and directors of admissions of elite colleges, and others to educate them about the need for equal opportunity in college admissions for outstanding low-income students.

For example, Executive Director Harold O. Levy spoke to the National Governors' Association Education and Workforce Committee at the association's summer meeting to discuss educational opportunities for such students.

In another example, the first-ever national meeting of the principals of selective public high schools was convened by the Cooke Foundation in 2015 on the topic "Closing the Excellence Gap: Nurturing Talent of High Achieving, Low-Income High School Students." The conference led to the creation of the Coalition of Leaders for Advanced Student Success (CLASS), which works to ensure that the nation's brightest students, regardless of income, have the skills and knowledge to succeed in school and the workforce. CLASS and the Cooke Foundation convened a second conference in February 2016.

In addition, we convened a meeting in 2015 of presidents and high-level administrators from 19 elite colleges and universities at the Cooke Foundation for a conference to discuss challenges facing low-income students at such schools, where most students come from families able to give them many advantages. The college officials exchanged ideas about actions they have taken to help low-income students succeed and discussed how they could work together to help such students. A highlight of the meeting was a discussion by three Cooke Scholar alumni about how they adjusted to their new environments at highly selective colleges.

2015 | First convening of presidents of selective liberal arts colleges

2015 Breaking Down Walls" report on community college students going to four-year colleges

We convened a meeting in 2016 of officials from private and public colleges belonging to the Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success, which works to improve the college admissions application process for all students.

We are working in partnership with top colleges and universities to identify more outstanding low-income high school students to encourage them to apply for Cooke Scholarships and for admission to selective colleges. We have entered into agreements with the College Board and with edX - the Harvard/Massachusetts Institute of Technology MOOC (massive open online course) provider - to identify potential qualifying applicants.

We are also endeavoring to get more students from inner city schools around the nation to apply for our scholarships. We are determined to open the door to our scholarships to all qualified applicants.









Aaron Fulkerson

Aaron Fulkerson is a successful information technology entrepreneur who was part of the first group of Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholars selected in 2002. He is a founder and CEO of MindTouch, Inc., a San Diegobased provider of cloud-based software for business clients. He has written articles for many websites and also frequently gives speeches on the topics of both technology and education. In 2010, he was among business leaders who spoke at the White House Summit on Higher Education, following opening remarks by President Barack Obama.

Aaron used his Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship to transfer from Durham Technical Community College in North Carolina to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he received a bachelor's degree in computer science. While in college, he launched 14 technology community centers in lowincome neighborhoods and helped create a nonprofit group that trained public housing residents in computer skills, found corporate sponsors to donate computers, and refurbished hundreds of computers that were used by low-income families.

"Clearly, I wouldn't be where I am today were it not for the options and skills higher education afforded me," Aaron says.



Helping Cooke Scholars Succeed

Cooke Scholars are often the first in their families to go to college. Many feel out of place when they move away from home to attend elite colleges and universities, where most of their fellow students come from more affluent backgrounds with college-educated parents. These feelings of inadequacy are known as the "impostor syndrome." The student feels that he or she doesn't belong at the school and is not really good enough to be there, and will be unmasked as an impostor.

In addition, students without parents, siblings or friends who have attended college often don't have a clear understanding of how to apply to college, what the college experience is like and how to make the right decisions on course selections and in other areas.

The Cooke Foundation is helping our Undergraduate Scholars in a number of ways to overcome these challenges so they can acclimate, succeed and graduate.

For example, just as we do for our Cooke Young Scholars, we have full-time educational advisers available to answer questions and provide guidance to all our Cooke Undergraduate Scholars. We also have faculty and staff liaisons to mentor our Cooke Undergraduate Scholars at Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Princeton and Stanford universities. We are working with 38 more schools that have four or more Cooke Scholars enrolled to establish liaisons there as well.

In addition, the Scholars Weekend enables scholars to get to know each other and establish ongoing relationships with other students with similar backgrounds who are facing similar challenges. This helps lessen the stresses of the impostor syndrome.

Cooke Scholars at the White House

Six Cooke Scholars participated in events at the White House in 2014 and 2015 involving President Barack Obama or First Lady Michelle Obama.

Cooke College Scholar Chionque Mines – at the time a student at Goucher College in Baltimore – introduced President Obama in 2014 at the White House College Opportunity Day of Action. Chionque gave moving remarks



Isa Adney

Isa Adney was a Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar who used her Cooke Scholarship to go from Seminole Community College in Florida to Stetson University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in communications. She then went on to earn a Master of Education degree at the University of Illinois. She is the author of the book <u>"Community College Success:</u> How to Finish with Friends, Scholarships, Internships, and the Career of Your Dreams," which provides valuable advice to community college students around the country. She now works as a speaker, author and consultant to help break the cycle of poverty, and is a blogger for the Huffington Post.

Isa was profiled in GOOD Magazine's list of 100 People Pushing the World Forward for her efforts to help low-income students navigate college. "Becoming the first in my family to get a bachelor's degree and a master's degree makes me feel tremendous gratitude and has instilled a burning fire to help others break those same barriers in their own families and communities," she says.

 $2015 \mid \begin{array}{c} \mbox{First national convening of principals} \\ \mbox{of selective public high schools} \end{array}$

2015 Coalition of Leaders for Advanced Student Success (CLASS) launched



Noah Ready-Campbell

Noah Ready-Campbell, who was part of the first group of Cooke Young Scholars selected in 2001and the first group of Cooke Undergraduate College Scholars selected in 2006, has built a successful career as an entrepreneur. After graduating summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania with degrees in computer science and economics, he briefly worked as an associate product manager at Google AdWords, and then launched his own company with a Google colleague in 2012.

The new company, called Twice, was an online marketplace for sellers and buyers of used clothing and became a quick success. Noah served as CEO. The company raised over \$23 million from investors and grew its workforce to nearly 300 people, and then was purchased by eBay in 2015.

about the challenges she faced growing up in a small apartment in a Philadelphia neighborhood plagued by crime and drugs. The eldest of seven children, Chionque was born to a teenage mother and was raised by a grandmother who was herself struggling with substance abuse and later by an aunt who was caring for five children of her own.

Chionque said at the White House Conference that "it was clear to me, even at age six that the life I was living was a life set up for failure. ... As a young girl, I thought about college but it was not until attending KIPP Philadelphia, where my principal visited my overcrowded home to tell me face to face college was going to happen for me. Then the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation chose to fund my education and matched me with educational advisers who helped me to focus on my goals and interests."

As a Cooke Young Scholar, Chionque took rigorous courses in three high schools and maintained a near-perfect GPA. Thanks to the Cooke Foundation, she was able to take part in summer programs for high school students at Yale and St. George's universities, and to study in Australia while in college.

Cooke Young Scholar Robert Kancans participated in the White House Science Fair in 2015 hosted by President Obama. Robert – who is from White Bear Lake, Minnesota - is now a Cooke College Scholar at the University of Southern California. In high school he participated in summer programs where he studied engineering at the University of Dayton, biotechnology at Stanford University and biomedical engineering at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute.

While at the University of Pittsburgh, Robert engaged in intensive cancer research on tumor immunology, which he continued to research as a senior in high school with a faculty member at the University of Minnesota. In spring 2014 he won the Minnesota Department of Education Scholar of Distinction in Science Award for his research.

Four Cooke Scholars participated in the Beating the Odds Summit with Mrs. Obama in 2015:

• Dawit Gebre is now a Cooke College Scholar at Stanford University studying economics. His interest in business was sparked by his father, an Ethiopian refugee who ran a convenience store in Georgia and died suddenly when

2015 Selection of Larry Liu as the first Cooke Oxford Scholar at Lincoln College, Oxford

2015 Executive Director Harold O. Levy speaks to National Governors Association

Dawit was in high school. In 2009 Dawit became the youngest person ever ordained a deacon in the Ethiopian Orthodox Synod in Exile. He participated in a mission to Peru, served as president of a genocide awareness and outreach club at his school, and tutored students on weekends and during summers.

- Emily Janis was one of eight children who grew up in poverty living in a trailer on the Pine Ridge Native American Reservation in South Dakota. The reservation is one of the poorest areas in the U.S., where unemployment tops 80 percent and many people live in Third World conditions. As a Cooke Young Scholar, Emily became valedictorian of her high school class, after earning an award for top dramatist, leading the oral interpretation team to a state tournament and starring in a school play. The Cooke Foundation made it possible for her to attend the San Francisco Writer's Conference and summer programs for high school students at Princeton University and the University of Colorado-Boulder. She is now a Cooke College Scholar at South Dakota State University.
- Myles McMurchy was a Cooke Young Scholar and is now a Cooke College Scholar at Dartmouth College. Committed to helping others escape poverty, Myles has been a tutor at Dartmouth, a research assistant at the Poverty and Learning Lab, and an intern for the Alliance for Excellent Education. He has mentored high school students and served homeless people in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. He hopes to teach after graduating and eventually pursue a master's degree in public policy or go to law school.
- Merilin Castillo, a Cooke Young Scholar who went on to become a Cooke College Scholar at Harvard University, is the daughter of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. She became the president of Harvard's Dominican Student Association and co-chair of the National Dominican Student Conference. She has interned at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships, a U.S. attorney's office and a law firm, and plans to go to law school. She has also mentored younger students. "Education access has been central to my past and future successes," Merilin says. "Programming to guide and assist low-income students is not only vital, but a great investment in the future of this nation."



Yasmine Arrington

Yasmine Arrington was a Cooke Young Scholar from Washington, D.C., who went on to become a Cooke College Scholar at Elon University in North Carolina and later received a Cooke Graduate Scholarship. She is currently a student at the Howard University School of Divinity.

The daughter of a father who was in prison for much of her life and a mother who died when she was young, Yasmine was raised by her grandmother. She founded the organization ScholarCHIPS, which she heads as executive director. The nonprofit has provided \$80,000 in scholarships to high school seniors with a parent in prison. "I think big ... I don't think very small," Yasmine says. "Life has sort of forced me to be mature."

Yasmine has won many awards, including the Cooke Foundation's \$10,000 Matthew J. Quinn Prize for outstanding achievement in community service, and a \$25,000 Peace First Fellowship to further her work. She was chosen to be an AXA National Achiever, an Abramson Foundation Scholar, a Washington **Redskins College Success Foundation** Leadership 1000 Scholar, a 2012 BET Black Girls Rock M.A.D. (Making a Difference) Girl, and a Linowes Leadership Unsung Heroes Award Youth Recipient.

"True Merit" report examines access of bright low-income students to selective colleges 2016

2016 Amherst College receives \$1 million Cooke Prize for Equity in Educational Excellence



The Excellence Gap

From the day they are born, children of poverty do not have the privileges and opportunities other children have. This creates an Excellence Gap – the difference in the percentage of low-income students and higher income students of *equal intelligence* who reach advanced levels of academic performance. The gap is stark evidence of the different educational opportunities available to children.

The Excellence Gap arises because the children of parents with higher incomes have so many built-in advantages growing up. The gap first appears early in elementary grades and grows wider as bright low-income students mature and often slide backward in their achievements when compared with more affluent children. The low-income students usually don't get all the support they need from their teachers, counselors and schools to find pathways to success and admission to top colleges.

Children of affluence get many enrichment experiences beginning in early childhood. These include exposure to extensive parental vocabulary, parents reading to them and teaching them basic reading skills, toys that stimulate their minds, early exposure to computers and other educational devices, enrollment in high-quality preschools, visits to museums and family vacations to faraway places.

Affluent children typically go to good public or private schools that provide experienced teachers, small classes, computers, science labs, field trips and extracurricular activities. In high school, they receive Advanced Placement courses, extracurricular and enrichment activities, private tutoring and test preparation classes. These children can afford to take the SAT and ACT exams multiple times, to experience educational travel, to work in unpaid internships and volunteer positions, and to do other things that make them more attractive to college admissions officers. From childhood, they are told they will go to college and they expect to do so.

Children of more limited means live very different lives. Few have collegeeducated parents. Many are from single-parent households. Some grow up in homes where English is not spoken. Some go through periods of homelessness and hunger. As young children, the TV set may be their window on the world and books may be scarce or absent in their homes. In their early years they are often cared for by an older sibling or grandparent who is juggling many tasks, or in a crowded child care center that provides baby-sitting but little stimulation or education.



Ben Marcovitz

Ben Marcovitz is the founder and CEO of Collegiate Academies, which operates three charter high schools in New Orleans serving students who are almost all lowincome and minorities. Beginning in 2007 with Sci Academy, when New Orleans was still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, Collegiate Academies has dramatically improved student test performance. Most of its students go on to college after high school.

Ben won the 2012 Matthew J. Quinn Prize for his work with the schools. Earlier he was a teacher in New Orleans, Washington and Boston. He received a Cooke Graduate Scholarship in 2005, which he used to earn a master's degree in education from Harvard University. Previously, he received a bachelor's degree from Yale University.

"Think big, work hard, achieve is the formula for success," Ben says. "And I think what our scholars here at school have been told too often is that it's what you're born with that creates success.... So to be able to set a high, lofty, ambitious goal and then be willing to put in the work to achieve is the message of our entire organization."



Ethan Ambrose

Ethan Ambrose, a star student at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School in Brooklyn, received a Cooke College Scholarship in 2016 and is now attending Harvard University. He hopes to become a pediatric neurosurgeon and wants to work to make health care available to everyone, regardless of economic status.

Ethan was salutatorian at his high school. He was also one of 42 Class of 2016 Urban Ambassadors representing the New York City Department of Education. The Urban Ambassadors leadership program helps young men become positive role models and prepare for college success.

Working as a tutor during his high school years, Ethan used his earnings to help pay for household expenses. He had to miss classes at times to care for his 2-year-old sister while his mother went to work and attended college.

After being surprised with the Cooke College Scholarship presented by Foundation Executive Director Harold O. Levy at a school assembly, Ethan said he "was so overwhelmed with emotion, I was at a loss for words."

Medgar Evers College Preparatory School serves over 1,200 mainly African-American students. Sixty-five percent are low-income and qualify for free school lunches. When they get older, poor children often go to substandard schools. Because we fund public schools largely with the property tax, children from low-income neighborhoods are often packed into large classes without needed equipment or supplies, and taught by less experienced teachers who struggle just to keep order. Students must often hold part-time jobs to help support their families during their high school years. This can make it impossible to take part in clubs, sports and other afterschool activities that impress college admissions officials. And hours spent working in fast-food restaurants, supermarkets and elsewhere make it hard for low-income students to devote enough time to homework assignments and to studying for tests to get the highest possible grades. College is not in the cards for most. Just getting a high school diploma is the goal for many.

According to the most recent data from the <u>National Center for Education</u> <u>Statistics</u>, 10.7 percent of Americans ages 16 to 24 from families with the lowest 25 percent of incomes were high school dropouts in 2013. The comparable figure for young people from families with the highest 25 percent of incomes was a dropout rate of just 3.2 percent – less than a third the rate for their lowincome counterparts.

The college graduation rate in the United States also differs dramatically by income. A 2014 White House report titled <u>"Increasing College Opportunity</u> for Low-Income Students" gives this disturbing statistic: "While half of all people from high-income families have a bachelor's degree by age 25, just 1 in 10 people from low-income families do." In other words, if you are born into a high-income family, you are five times as likely to get a college degree as a child born into a poor family. It is noteworthy that there are *any* high achieving, low-income children.

If you're poor, the deck is stacked against you. If you come from a more affluent family, you start out with a good hand. To paraphrase former football coach Barry Switzer, many children from affluent families have a shot at home runs because they were born on third base – not because they hit triples. Children of poverty are often born outside the ballpark.

In 2016 our nation is being split in two by what is, in effect, a bifurcated educational system rooted in income inequality. Because so few low-income students graduate from any college – and even fewer graduate from top colleges – poverty has become an inherited condition for far too many.

Students who grow up in poverty – no matter how high their grades, test scores and abilities – are at a profound disadvantage in the competition for admission to college, particularly elite colleges, when compared to their equally talented but more affluent peers. This disadvantage affects their career options and their entire lives.

The sad truth is that the rise of academically talented low-income students up the ladder of opportunity has been blocked by a cash ceiling. The Cooke Foundation is working to knock a hole through that ceiling for our scholars and for other students who have an abundance of talent but a shortage of cash.



Graduation Rates of High-Achieving Students, By Income and Selectivity of Institution Attended

Source: Josh Wyner, John M. Bridgeland, and John J. Dilulio, Jr., *Achievement Trap: How America is Failing Millions of High-Achieving Students from Lower-Income Families* (Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, 2008), p. 24. "High-Achievers" defined as top 25 percent academically in 12th grade. "Lower-Income" denotes family income below the national median; "Higher-Income" denotes family income above the national median.

Richard D. Kahlenberg, J.D. The Century Foundation INCREASING ACCESS FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING ufer Giancola, Ph.D. COLLEGES E STUDENTS EQUAL TALENTS, UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students Partnerships That Promote SUCCESS: Lessons and Findings from the Evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative Dr. Jonathan Plucker, University of Connecticut Dr. Jonathan Mucker, University of Connection Dr. Jennifer Giancola, Jack Kent Coole: Foundation Ice Healey, Daniel Arndt, and Chen Wang, University of Cor

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Groundbreaking Research

The Cooke Foundation has conducted groundbreaking research on high achieving, low-income students. Our most recent study, issued in early 2016, is called <u>"True Merit: Ensuring Our Brightest Students Have Access to Our Best Colleges and Universities.</u>" The report documents how top colleges and universities in the United States continue to use outdated and inaccurate measures of student ability to deny admission to many outstanding low-income students. We found that a mere 3 percent of students at the most selective schools come from the 25 percent of families with the lowest incomes. In sharp contrast, 72 percent of students at the top schools come from the 25 percent of the U.S. population, with the highest incomes.

To right this imbalance, the "True Merit" report calls for colleges to change their admissions practices so that academically qualified low-income students have a fair chance at being admitted to top colleges and universities. This would also help increase racial and ethnic diversity at select schools, because a disproportionate number of minority students are from low-income families.

The "True Merit" report does not call on the top schools to lower their standards and admit academically unqualified students from poor families. Instead, it calls on the colleges to recognize that students who overcome the burdens of poverty and perform well in high school – despite not having the enrichment courses and supports of more affluent students – have shown they are highly motivated and deeply talented. This is the type of student top colleges should admit.

Earlier research by the Cooke Foundation that examined the challenges faced by highly talented students with financial need includes:

- **2007:** <u>"Achievement Trap: How America is Failing Millions of High-Achieving Students from Lower-Income Families</u>" documented how students from families below the median income level who start school performing at high levels lose academic ground at every level of schooling. These students suffer a big drop in college when compared to more affluent students.
- 2014: <u>"Partnerships That Promote Success: Lessons and Findings from the Evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's</u> <u>Community College Transfer Initiative</u>" found that partnerships between two-year and selective four-year institutions increase the number of students who transfer, and that the transfer students perform well academically.
- 2015: <u>"Breaking Down Walls: Increasing Access to Four-Year Colleges for High-Achieving Community College Students"</u> documented that many more community college students could succeed at four-year colleges and universities than are given the chance.
- 2015: <u>"Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income</u> <u>Students</u>" assessed the extent to which all 50 states have policies in place to close the K-12 Excellence Gap and offered recommendations to states.



Harnessing Educational Technology

Just as much of the technology we now use was science fiction 30 years ago, much of the technology that will be commonplace 30 years from now lives only in imaginations today. But great progress is being made in turning education technology dreams into reality, and the Cooke Foundation is at the forefront of the effort.

This should be welcome news for exceptionally bright low-income students attending cash-strapped high schools where college counselors are each responsible for advising hundreds of students – an almost impossible task.

Computers are very good at sorting through the many factors that influence the college selection decision. They can't entirely replace trained counselors, answer all questions, empathize or emote. But computers can simplify complex tasks by helping students to weigh many variables and decide which ones really matter. Computers are also good at quickly sorting through vast heaps of information. This can assist high school students in developing college application strategies (which is a "safety school," which a "reach") and navigating the arcane world of financing a college education with grants and loans.

Today there are excellent websites that provide thoughtful college selection information and advice, including: <u>Bigfuture</u>, <u>College Greenlight</u> and <u>Parchment</u>, but they have limitations.

The next phase for automating college advisement is in sight. The model for the college admissions killer app is the Army recruiting site, <u>www.goarmy.com</u>. The site contains a "chatbot," called <u>Ask Sergeant Star</u>, that responds to typed questions with spoken, conversational, factual answers.

The Cooke Foundation is leading an effort to develop an advanced chatbot backed by a learning computer. The combination will provide students with a single user-friendly website filled with excellent information, access to a smart chatbot, and – if questions still remain unanswered – access to human counselors on Skype. Much like Amazon for books or Kayak for travel, we anticipate that it will quickly become the one-stop source for college admissions. For the vast majority of high performing, low-income students who have essentially no counseling, it will be a lifesaver. For other students, it will be the first step in a much improved process.

High school students who have particularly complex or unusual questions or problems that need to be addressed will always need counselors. By utilizing educational technology to handle routine information requests about college, counselors will be able to devote more time to the students in greatest need of their help. To strengthen the counseling profession, the Cooke Foundation awarded a \$100,000 grant to Teachers College at Columbia University in May 2016 to create a professional development program for college advisers in high schools.



Benjamin Castleman

Benjamin Castleman received a Cooke Dissertation Fellowship and earned a Ph.D. at Harvard University. He is now an assistant professor of education and public policy at the University of Virginia and faculty director of the University of Virginia-U.S. Army Partnership on the Educational Trajectories of Soldiers and their Dependents.

Ben conducts research on strategies to help low-income and first-generation students gain admission to college and graduate. He is the co-author of two books on that topic, titled "Decision Making for Student Success: Behavioral Insights to Improve College Access and Persistence," and "Summer Melt: Supporting Low-Income Students Through the Transition to College." He has discussed his research at The White House Summit on Expanding College Opportunity and in testimony before Congress. In addition, his work has been the subject of articles in the New York Times, Washington Post, NPR, Time magazine and USA Today.



A Never-Ending Gift

Jack Kent Cooke, a self-made man who found great success as an entrepreneur and sports team owner, couldn't afford to finish high school in Canada during the Great Depression. Instead, he had to end his formal education and go to work to help support his struggling family.

But despite amassing great wealth in the United States, Mr. Cooke never forgot his modest beginnings. He realized that financial barriers continued to keep many bright young people – similar in many ways to himself as a teenager – out of colleges and universities where they could excel, if only given the opportunity. So on his death in 1997, Mr. Cooke's will laid out his great vision for creating one of the largest scholarship foundations in the country, to be funded by an endowment created by the sale of some of his assets, including his beloved Washington Redskins football team.

As a result, long after his passing and for as far into the future as anyone can see, Mr. Cooke's great gift will continue to open the doors to educational opportunity for extraordinary students with financial need. Blessed with an endowment valued in July 2016 at \$641 million, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation proudly bears the name of its founder and patriarch.

At the Cooke Foundation we aim high - just as Mr. Cooke

did in his extraordinary life. Our aim is not simply to help the brightest low-income students get into college, but to help them get into the most academically rigorous institutions and to graduate with distinction. Why? Because where a student goes to college matters, with life-changing consequences for the student, other family members, and potentially for the entire nation.

Contrary to the common belief that students perform better at less-challenging schools, research shows definitively that highly accomplished students graduate at a higher rate (and with superior grade point averages) when they attend very selective colleges and universities. This is because elite schools have the programs and resources to help students succeed, to counsel them when they begin to doubt their own abilities and to encourage them when they are on track to excel. In addition, research shows that students at top schools receive a higher quality education, earn larger lifetime incomes and are more likely to pursue graduate degrees.

Another benefit of attending a very selective college or university is that top employers typically recruit from such schools. The 2014 book <u>"Who's Running America? The Obama Reign,"</u> by Thomas R. Dye, found that just 12 colleges and universities graduate about half of the nation's corporate and government leaders. We are determined that in the future Cooke Scholars constitute a prominent number of those leaders.

The importance of a college education has grown enormously since Mr. Cooke's youth. Throughout most of American history,



a college degree was rare and not particularly important to career and economic success. A high school diploma was the ticket to a good job and the middle class. But that is no longer the case.

In fact, 12 men without bachelor's degrees became president of the United States before 1953 – including George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman. But none since.

As recently as 1940, only 6 percent of Americans age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. At the time, few college graduates were from low-income families and almost no graduates of elite colleges and universities grew up in poverty.

The GI Bill, which helped fund college educations for millions of returning World War II veterans, sparked dramatic growth in college enrollments that has continued. The Census Bureau says that 34 percent of Americans age 25 and older had bachelor's degrees in 2014 – an almost six-fold increase from 1940. And 68 percent of students who graduated from high school in 2014 went on to enroll in college that year.

As a result, a college diploma today has become what a high school diploma was for generations past – a requirement for many good jobs and the gateway to financial security. The U.S. Education Department reported in 2015 that people with a four-year college degree typically earn 66 percent more than those with only a high school diploma. The department found that the average worker with a bachelor's degree will earn about \$1 million more over the course of a lifetime than a worker without a postsecondary education.

Education's ability to open the doors of social advancement is not without its challenges. In his new book, <u>"Lesson Plan: An Agenda</u> for Change in American Higher Education," former Princeton President William Bowen raises the alarm that American higher education faces some serious problems – including the demise of the American Dream of social mobility for all who work hard. He quotes MIT economist David Autor that contrary to what he calls "conventional civic mythology," America is no longer the "land of opportunity." In fact, America has "both the lowest mobility and highest inequality among all wealthy democratic countries."

In addition, the National Student Clearinghouse in a May 2015 report stated that total college enrollment fell that year. Arguably, the forces behind these phenomena are contributing factors that are helping to prompt the current domestic political polarization.

At a time when America continues to shift from an economy based on manual labor in factories and farms to a knowledge economy where more and more jobs require a college degree and our society is becoming increasingly stratified, the growth of a more educated workforce is vital. As a result, the work of the Cooke Foundation will grow more important over time, and generations born long after Mr. Cooke's passing will continue to earn degrees, achieve success, advance economically and use their leadership positions to build a better future for our nation and the world because of his largesse.

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Financials (Unaudited)

For the Fiscal Year June 1, 2015- May 31, 2016

Financial Position (\$ 000's)

Investments
Property & equipment, net 15,847
Split interest assets 13,452
Other 8,818
Total Assets

Total Liabilities
Bonds payable
Line of credit
Accounts payable & accruals 2,868
Grants payable 6,038

Program Spending (\$ mm's)

Total	Program	Activities	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	27	7.	2
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Think big. Work hard. Achieve.



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