

# KATHY OLIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

2020 IMPACT REPORT



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## HISTORY

The Kathy Oliver Scholarship Fund was established in 2018 to honor the life's work of Outside In's long-time Executive Director. Kathy led the agency for nearly 4 decades and grew it from a small team of volunteers to an organization with over 150 employees, 11,000 patients and clients, and 3 program areas including medical care, homeless youth services, and behavioral health. Throughout the years of growth and success, Kathy never lost sight of the mission. She believed everyone deserves to have their basic needs met. And, that everyone should have access to education, especially young people who were experiencing homelessness and oppression.

Today, students who are participating in educational programs at Outside In's Employment & Education Resource Center (ERC) are eligible to receive support from the Kathy Oliver Scholarship Fund.

## OVERVIEW

We are proud to report that our postsecondary programing, term-by-term retention, and overall student success, continues to be strong, thanks to the Kathy Oliver Scholarship Fund. Since July 2019, Outside In has spent **\$30,200 in student scholarships**. This funding has been used to provide flexible support to **34 postsecondary students and 29 GED students** in the form of tuition payments, books/supplies, transportation, and through the creation of a technology loan library.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Seven postsecondary students found employment in areas directly related to their chosen fields of study.
- Twenty-eight students attended thirty-two distinct postsecondary exposure opportunities—such as, tours, informations sessions, trade or apprenticeship fairs, and preview days.
- A technology loan library was created to provide remote tutoring opportunities for students.
- Scholarship training was established to teach students how to apply for private scholarships.
- Five students earned their GED. Note:
  - Access to GED testing has been limited since March 2020.
- Two students completed short term vocational certificates.
- One student transferred from two-year college to four-year university.



## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March of this year our operations abruptly shifted to accommodate remote access to all of our education services. Switching to a virtual format was a huge learning curve for staff and students alike. The biggest barriers for our students are lack of access to reliable technology, internet connection, and a physical space to actively engage in a virtual learning environment. To break down these barriers, we created a technology loan library and purchased **20 laptops and 22 headphones**. GED and college students were offered remote tutoring and coaching appointments along with technology when needed. This was accomplished within a few days of temporarily closing our downtown site.

While the technology loan library is primarily available for our GED and Job Readiness Training students, we also purchased personal laptops and headphones for **6 college students**, who otherwise would have dropped their classes because colleges and short-term training programs were transitioning to remote learning platforms. We anticipate more technology purchases in the new year, as our actively enrolled student rate increases.

In July, we began a phased approach to reopening our physical space to serve the most vulnerable students who lack reliable internet connection and relied on our space as a calm, structured learning environment. Student, staff, and community safety remained a top priority. The ERC team worked closely with Outside In's Health & Safety Specialist to establish clear operation protocols and procedures to protect against COVID-19.

## NEW INITIATIVES & 2021 GOALS

In an effort to expand the impact of Kathy Oliver Scholarship funds, we've established a training session to help students access other private scholarships. This session offers a \$50 stipend for completing an initial orientation and submitting an application to an outside scholarship with ERC support. We officially rolled out this paid learning experience in November 2020, when common applications such as Pride Foundation, OSAC, PCC Foundation, and Ford Family Foundation begin to open. Until recently we had not developed a method for tracking the amount students have earned after applying for outside scholarship funding. We've fixed this, and should start to see the results of this initiative in summer 2021 when many of these scholarship decisions are announced. Our aim is that 50% of enrolled students will have applied for additional private scholarships.

## STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

### ASH

“Are you a boy or a girl?” A question that is all too familiar for Ash. A question that is even one of the first lines of dialogue in their favorite video game: Pokémon. As a budding game designer and coder, Ash now seeks to dismantle the largely white, patriarchal rule within the gaming industry and tech field. But when Ash first arrived at Outside In’s ERC in February 2018, they did not believe they could make the career they wanted work.

Ash describes their life prior to turning 18 and accessing services at Outside In as a time characterized by housing instability, domestic violence, and trauma. Their family moved frequently. Ash attended four different elementary schools, and three separate high schools during their sophomore year alone. Despite hating school and the impermanence of place, Ash graduated high school with a 3.7 GPA and several college credits.

The adaptability of the ERC’s programming gave Ash the space to continue working intensively toward their career goals over the months it took to get through two surgeries and to build the critical life skills they’d need at coding school. We developed a new coding mentorship to support them and connected them with a mentor from Tesla who also identifies as gender non-binary. Ash rapidly built coding skills, but lacked coping skills and other life skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Since Ash also expressed interest in agriculture and the environment, we invited them to apply for our new micro-enterprise project. With the facilitation of two occupational therapy doctoral candidates, Ash and another youth partner developed a plan for a microgreens business. In addition to hands-on agriculture and business management experience, Ash developed skills in time and money management, communicating confidently and effectively, and persevering through all the setbacks that come with building a business.

Ash had consistently reinforced their desire to attend a coding boot camp. They had some college experience, but were capable of a faster pace and wanted to complete a program before ending their term in Outside In’s Transitional Living Program. Working with their college coach, Ash found a program that had an excellent national reputation and sent students into the workforce with mid-level experience. However, cost was an issue. Ash utilized their effective communication skills to apply for scholarships and were awarded with enough aid in scholarships to get 70% of their tuition covered. The ERC used the Kathy Oliver Scholarship to cover the remainder of tuition and supplies.

**Ash has now graduated from their program, and in March of this year they found position as a Development Operations Engineer at a multinational corporation, earning a wage of \$42/hr.** Ash came to us as a capable young person; the difference we made was providing them with a flexible learning community that aided and encouraged their ability to grow and learn.

## STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES, CONT.

### JAMAL

Jamal's mother had always been physically and emotionally abusive to him. One day they got into a fight, she started hitting him and calling him names, and Jamal left. He moved in with a friend, who started pressuring Jamal into sex in order to continue living there. Jamal stood up for himself and was kicked out. Jamal spent several nights sleeping outside before purchasing a car, which he lived in for several weeks—receiving parking citation after parking citation—before accessing Outside In's Employment & Education Resource Center (ERC).

Since arriving to the ERC in November of 2017, Jamal only had one career interest: police officer. Jamal says that growing up, he always saw police officers as heroes helping the city.

Upon graduating our Job Readiness Training course, Jamal starting working with his education and career development team toward this goal. Jamal's college coach was able to connect Jamal with the Criminal Justice program advisor to create a term-by-term education plan to obtain a degree in policing. Our employment coach was able to coordinate for Jamal to go on a police ride along, and coached Jamal beforehand on informational interviewing. Jamal reported that the ride along had been an amazing experience, and learned that he may also be interested in a career as a police dispatcher. The closer it got time to start school, the more nervous Jamal became. He had always struggled in school. Jamal graduated high school with a modified diploma, and had an Individualized Education Plan all throughout school. So, in preparation for starting school Jamal worked diligently with his instructional team on college prep and Adult Basic Education tutoring. Jamal also worked with his college coach to coordinate appropriate accommodations through PCC's Disability Services.

**Jamal is currently working as a security guard, and has recently received a promotion and will transition into a government position, once he has completed his required training, earning \$18/hr.** He is off the streets and living in his own apartment with his new puppy. Jamal continues to utilize tutoring support from the ERC nearly everyday. He is now in his 11th consecutive term at PCC with a 3.27 cumulative GPA, and is **anticipating graduating with his associates degree next year.** Jamal has found a great sense of belonging and community here at the ERC. We see Jamal nearly every day for remote tutoring support from our instructional team. Jamal is still amazed that he is in college, and wears the title of "college student" proudly, saying "I never thought that someone like me could ever go to college."