SMALL VICTORIES.
BIG SHOULDERS.
2014 YEAR-END REVIEW.
WHERE DO YOU START?
NEARLY 24,000 STUDENTS
MORE THAN 60 PERCENT OF FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY
89 INNER-CITY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
MORE THAN 6,000 SCHOLARSHIPS
MANY SCHOOLS MORE THAN 100 YEARS OLD

WHERE DO YOU START?
THIS YEAR, OUR ANNUAL REPORT CELEBRATES A SIMPLE ANSWER:

Start small.
WIN BIG.

ONE STUDENT, ONE SCHOOL, ONE SINGLE VICTORY AT A TIME. IT'S HOW WE'VE GROWN TO OFFER $20 MILLION ANNUALLY IN SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS. RAISING MORE THAN $270 MILLION IN 28 YEARS. BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU, PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO TAKE THAT FIRST LITTLE STEP — TO GIVE WHAT YOU CAN, VOLUNTEER WHEN YOU CAN, JOIN THE PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS OF BIG SHOULDERS FUND SCHOOLS IN THE DAILY BLOCKING AND TACKLING THAT BRINGS SLOW, SURE SUCCESS.

COME WITH US AS WE SHARE THIS YEAR'S SMALL VICTORIES FROM BIG SHOULDERS.
First Day, Great Expectations

YOU'RE HERE. NOW WHAT? WELL, BY SEVENTH GRADE, YOU'LL BE READING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL. COLLEGE PREP HIGH SCHOOL IS ALMOST CERTAINLY IN YOUR FUTURE. LAST YEAR, 80 PERCENT OF ALL EIGHTH GRADERS CONTINUED ON TO CATHOLIC, SELECTIVE PUBLIC ENROLLMENT, MAGNET, IB PROGRAMS, OR OTHER QUALITY OPTIONS. STICK WITH IT. YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY.
The 2013-14 school year was the fourth consecutive year of enrollment growth for Big Shoulders Fund schools. Big Shoulders outreach counselors work in the community to bring in parents and students who never thought they could take advantage of what our schools have to offer. Meeting in person, in groups, even on Facebook, carries the message of new possibilities. With only three months of active recruiting, we approved 1,620 applications. And for the first time in years, enrollment in historically African-American schools grew by four percent.
Start small. Aim high.

Every year the youngest scholars look up and find someone who’s gone before them to look up to. More than 6,000 students received scholarships in 2013-14. Every year Big Shoulders students enter some of the finest educational institutions in the world. And every year another class moves one step closer to success.
TOUCHING THE WEB WORLD WIDE.

Last year, Big Shoulders Fund provided underserved classrooms with interactive whiteboards, iPads, and laptops, opening up a crucial learning channel for the present and ramping up indispensable skills for the future. There’s no substitute for the technological literacy Big Shoulders kids are developing.

WINNING UGLY.

The Auxiliary Board’s six Give Back Days and more than 60 Corporate Service Days gave hundreds of volunteers a chance to clean up, shine up, paint up, and spiff up one of our 89 schools. Here, a Give Back Day volunteer’s sneakers make the ultimate sacrifice for St. Ann School’s young scholars.
CREATIVE OUTLET.
The Big Shoulders Fund Auxiliary Board sponsored a trip to the National Museum of Mexican Art for the more than 100 scholars they support with proceeds from the annual Auxiliary Board Fund Ball. Volunteer mentors from the Board stay close to each of the scholars they support.

VICTORY, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.
Every year, the Chairmen’s Advisory Council invites nearly 300 business, corporate, and civic leaders to Lend A Shoulder Day, allowing them to spend time at one of our schools and share the small victories firsthand. Council members also volunteer year-round as mentors, tutors, Stock Market Program teachers, and more.
HELPING MORE THAN 80 STUDENTS, ONE BY ONE.

GERALD AND JENNIFER BEESON CREATED A PLAN FOR SUCCESS: FINANCIAL SUPPORT, A ONE-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIP WITH EVERY STUDENT, AND A CODE OF CONDUCT THAT PROVIDES CLEAR-CUT STEPS TO SUCCESS. POINT SEVEN OF THE BEESON CODE SUMS IT ALL UP PERFECTLY: “A BEESON SCHOLAR KNOWS THAT A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS.” TOTALLY.

To read more about the Beesons online, visit bigshouldersfund.org.
MEET THE KELLY FAMILY. THEIR MATERNITY BVM FAMILY, THAT IS. THE KELLYS FUND SCHOLARSHIPS AND WORK TO HELP ‘MATERNITY BVM BRING IN MORE STUDENTS. THROUGH THE JOSEPH SOCIETY, THEIR PLANNED GIVING WILL SUPPORT BIG SHOULDERS FUND FOR YEARS TO COME.

To read more about the Kellys online, visit bigshouldersfund.org.

STEM: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH. THIS YEAR, THANKS TO WENDY AND DAVE DURY’S VISION, THE FIRST EIGHTH GRADE CLASS OF STEM SCHOLARS GRADUATED, AND 91 PERCENT ATTENDED THE CITY’S BEST CATHOLIC OR SELECTIVE ENROLLMENT HIGH SCHOOLS. CURRENTLY 100 MORE SCHOLARS ARE FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS.
Math. Every day.

Last year, with support from The Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, CareerBuilder.com, The Opus Foundation, Tellabs Foundation, and more, Big Shoulders Fund expanded the Everyday Math curriculum from seven to 10 schools. Participating schools received not only the University of Chicago’s renowned inquiry-based math curriculum for preschool through grade six, but also instructional coaching for teachers and implementation support for administrators. Good news: it also is improving student learning and outcomes. Right now.

The Big Shoulders Fund Staff: Starting small in the Santa Lucia School Kindergarten.

We’re dedicated to the success of every Big Shoulders scholar, not afraid to start small, and celebrate big wins: one student, one school, one single victory at a time.

Photo Courtesy of Bill Healy
Since 2009, 88 percent of graduating scholars have enrolled in college the following fall, as verified by the National Student Clearinghouse. Even more, last year Big Shoulders surveyed a sample group of alumni to get a better understanding of longer-term educational outcomes.

The results indicated that Big Shoulders alumni are far more likely to graduate from college and find employment, compared to national and local rates. In fact, the college graduation rate for Big Shoulders Fund alumni was nearly 2x the national rate.
THE BIG SHOULDERS FUND 14TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC SOLD OUT FOR THE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, RAISING MORE THAN $575,000 FOR THE FRIENDS OF BIG SHOULDERS SCHOLARSHIP.
Alumni-in-training. Dotting the i’s, crossing the t’s, grade by grade we become “former students of...” St. Ethelreda, St. Michael, St. Angela. This year, with support from the McCormick Foundation and its chairman, Dennis FitzSimons, as well as the GHR Foundation, Big Shoulders provided funding and guidance to 28 schools to digitize old paper records, update alumni lists, and implement new solicitation techniques. Schools raised $130,000 in their initial appeals to newly found alumni.

Jasmin Sepulveda, Then and Now.

First time on a plane. First time on a horse. First time under the stars. Beth and Bruce White’s Staddle Camp at Brush Creek Ranch in Saratoga, Wyoming hosted 159 middle school students who hiked mountains, tracked animal prints, climbed rocks, and studied the environment. They returned better prepared for high school AP and advanced science courses. And with a healthy respect for horses.

Who knew?

Who knew?
Picking the winners.

Eighth graders at Big Shoulders Fund schools learn about bulls, bears, puts, calls, guts, and glory in the Stock Market Program. This year, under the leadership of Big Shoulders Fund Directors Charles Bobrinskoy and Jim Hoeg, the program expanded to 46 schools. Financial professionals make the markets real for students by helping them to invest a modest portfolio. At the end of the year, the students receive a management fee, and the school earns the value of the portfolio.

TSA loves BSF.

A TSA agent spotted one of our Auxiliary Board members sporting a Big Shoulders Fund polo shirt in the check-in line at the airport. Turns out the agent’s child is a Big Shoulders scholar at Visitation School. Now, we’re not saying a Big Shoulders polo shirt gets you through security faster. But it might get you through just a little bit happier. Just sayin’...
Winning big, one small step at a time. Here, the St. Malachy School Board meets with Big Shoulders Fund patrons to strengthen operations and strategically plan for the future. Patrons provide support in marketing, accounting, fundraising, capital improvements, and technology.

Nabal Jefferson was raised by his grandmother in a family of 10 on the South Side of Chicago. He attended St. Margaret of Scotland Elementary School and Marist High School on the Ryan family’s Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Scholarship for Athletics and had a very successful football career at Northern Illinois University. Today he’s launching his career at KPMG. His next big goal? To establish an after-school youth center on the South Side. His chances of success? As big as his track record to date, for sure.
There are big victories, too.

So many doors knocked on, so many letters, so many phone calls, so many thank-yous. On May 22, 2014, Big Shoulders Fund honored Monsignor Ken Velo for his leadership and his tireless efforts to make sure the good work continues. It was the most successful fundraising event in Chicago history, raising more than $10.6 million.

It’s all in the numbers.

St. Gall Principal Janie Flores reviews class academic assessment data and targets. The Big Shoulders Fund Leadership Development Program recruits, prepares, supports, and helps retain first-rate school leaders like Janie.

With 15 to 20 percent of principal positions open annually, the need for leadership is clear.
Meet the Alberto Family: Yireen, Yarliz, Armando, and Regla. Two daughters, both on JCB scholarships at Maternity BVM School. The Ryan family created the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Scholarship to help families with more than one student afford a superior education for all their children. One family to another: win-win-win-win. Winning... family-style.
OPENING DOORS BY KEEPING DOORS OPEN.

Schools at risk of closure have access to additional support. They receive help in creating a transformation plan to remain a vibrant option. Using Big Shoulders Fund best practices, and working with the Archdiocese, Big Shoulders helps these at-risk schools actively confront challenges and implement plans for the future. The goal is to maximize educational opportunities for low-income students.

89 INNER-CITY SCHOOLS SERVING 51 CHICAGO COMMUNITIES.

Nearly 24,000 students. 80 percent are minority, 30 percent are not Catholic, and 61 percent are low-income.

- Big Shoulders Fund Patron Schools
- Big Shoulders Fund Elementary Schools
- Big Shoulders Fund High Schools

Big Shoulders Fund:
Small Selfies. Big Shoulders.

Don’t you think your selfie belongs here? Join Big Shoulders and help us turn simple steps into giant strides for so many deserving students.

This year’s annual report captures moments during the school day and beyond. These moments often begin with a small voice within: How can I help? How can I make a difference in the life of a child? Where do I start? For a parent, it might be sacrificing to send a child to a Catholic school. For a young professional, it might be balancing work with volunteering and choosing to make the time. For our scholarship donors, it is often acting on a desire to encourage young people to reach their human potential by ensuring economic barriers do not prevent them from receiving a quality education.

Together, these individual choices add up to one large victory for students, schools, and our communities.

This past year included some great triumphs. Our enrollment continued to stabilize despite population decreases across the city of Chicago. We welcomed more than 1,600 new students into our schools with the Access Scholarship. In a new initiative, we deepened our commitment to a subset of schools that are struggling to remain viable, ensuring they can keep their doors open while we work with them to improve operations and academic outcomes. Third-party research confirmed our alumni reach great heights, graduating from college at rates twice the national average. While research also showed that on average our elementary schools are excelling beyond their peers nationally, their growth in math is not as rapid. In response, Big Shoulders has invested heavily in rigorous math curriculum and support and is eager for the results. The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Humanitarian Award Dinner was a rousing success, raising more than $10.6 million—the largest results from a single fundraiser in Chicago—and founding a new scholarship in Monsignor Ken Velo’s name. These are just some of the highlights of a year to remember.

People like you made all this possible by choosing to get started. While the challenges our students, their families, and their schools face can sometimes seem daunting, they do not deter you. At the core, you know the first step toward finding an answer to the question “Where do I start?” is often the hardest. Once you do, doors fly open, the momentum begins, and the impact is real.

We express our sincerest thanks to the Board of Directors, Patrons, mentors, scholarship sponsors, volunteers, Auxiliary Board and Chairman’s Advisory Council members, and donors, as well as our schools’ teachers and principals and the staff of Big Shoulders for having the determination and courage to start. You are creating the moments that fulfill our mission to provide deserving children with an opportunity for a better future.
The Big Shoulders Fund is an independent 501(c)3 charitable tax-exempt entity.