

Shoulder **to** Shoulder

FALL 2015

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(L-R) Courtney Sawyer of Kaboom!, Big Shoulders Fund Director Rich Carrigan, YPO member Doug Cook, and Maternity BVM leadership development graduate Pat Landry organized Maternity BVM's Playground Build by Kaboom!.

Big Shoulders Fund.[®]



St. Ethelreda, the bedrock of the Auburn Gresham community since 1929, has experienced vastly improved enrollment, with more than 85 percent of students receiving tuition assistance.

Big Shoulders Helps Transform Struggling Schools

“We simply wouldn’t be here without Big Shoulders,” said Denise Spells, principal at St. Ethelreda School on Chicago’s South Side. This is a constant refrain from principals at Big Shoulders Fund schools. For Spells and several of her colleagues, however, this message is more literal.

St. Ethelreda and six other schools faced closure in spring 2014 due to challenging financial conditions at both the individual schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago. In response, Big Shoulders agreed to temporarily take on the majority financial responsibility for the schools during a three-year period, in a written agreement with the Archdiocese. Archbishop Blase Cupich reaffirmed the agreement in February 2015 when the Archdiocese and Big Shoulders agreed to increase the “Covered Schools” list from seven to 10.

“While Big Shoulders has committed more than \$1.5 million annually to address financial hurdles, the more important effort is to use this three-year period to improve in key operational areas such as financial viability, academic outcomes, and enrollment,” said Big Shoulders Senior

continued...



“The Covered Schools initiative supports our core belief that, to serve the most economically challenged communities and their families, we must be present. Significant data shows the positive impact of our schools on community stability and student success. As the largest investor in these schools, Big Shoulders is helping ensure they remain viable in the short and long term so all children, no matter their race, color, or creed, benefit from a safe and effective Catholic education.”

—*Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale*

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Big Shoulders Helps Transform Struggling Schools

Director John Moran. “We’re building on our programs and our history with the schools to address key issues, the way a for-profit company would with a struggling business unit.”

Big Shoulders convenes regular meetings at each school and works with school leadership and the Archdiocese to establish and implement school-specific transformation plans. Participants regularly monitor financial projections and key operating metrics, allowing them to drive improvement while reacting to each school’s day-to-day situation. The goal is that, when the Archdiocesan campaign has built sufficient scale, each school can operate within realistic aid parameters.

Joining Big Shoulders Patrons Program staff members Moran, Lea Jesse, and Sara Lanser to work with the schools are several part-time contractors who bring skills in marketing, financial management, planning, and more. The entire Big Shoulders staff is engaged, as the effort takes advantage of the full range of Big Shoulders scholarship, academic, and service programs.

“I love that I’m leveraging my Wharton MBA and professional experience to help the staff and students at St. Francis de Sales High School,” said Katie Bailey, Big Shoulders team member. “St. Francis is a small business, and I’m helping it operate like one.”

“I remind myself and our team regularly that schools don’t need more bureaucracy or oversight to transform, but rather hands-on help,” commented Moran. “We’re fortunate to have people like Katie and Larry Owens, a retired CPA, provide that help where it’s needed—at each school.”

Results after the first year show significant progress in spite of difficult circumstances and challenges many years in the making. Operating deficits at these schools improved by approximately 18 percent from 2013–14 (\$550,000), and enrollment increased by four percent. All seven schools continued or began academic improvement initiatives, while six schools began raising money via the Big Shoulders Alumni Outreach program.

St. Margaret of Scotland School made tremendous strides in all areas. “We’re going through a significant transformation, and it’s helpful to have Big Shoulders and our other partners involved,” said Kevin Powers, St. Margaret’s principal. “Most important, our students see donors in the building caring about them, which increases their expectations and commitment to learning.”

“The Covered Schools program gives schools a chance,” said John Schreiber, a prominent Chicago-area businessman. “When everyone is ready to close their doors, Big Shoulders takes a risk by finding financing and helping the schools find their footing again. The children those schools serve are the real winners, as is the Church, which maintains an active presence in those communities.” ■

Longtime St. Ethelreda School Principal Denise Spells has seen many changes. St. Ethelreda Parish closed in 2007 and enrollment was down. Fast forward seven years and enrollment is up, answering the great need for a quality, values-based education in the Auburn Gresham community.



Scholarships Serve Citywide Needs

Our Lady of Grace's Patricia Lanctot Scholars range from fourth to eighth grades. The eighth graders have been Patricia Lanctot Scholars since the second grade.

While the Big Shoulders Fund scholarship program has changed and evolved over the years, providing access to a quality Catholic education will always be the top priority. Big Shoulders has been providing scholarships to deserving inner-city students since 1987. Today, there are more than 60 different types of scholarships that vary in duration and amount awarded depending on the need and available resources. Last year, Big Shoulders Fund awarded \$8.5 million in scholarships to more than 6,000 students.

A key strength of the Big Shoulders Fund is its ability to provide critical scholarship support to families in need at schools across the city, thanks to generous funding partners. Each scholar goes through an application process and must meet the criteria laid out by Big Shoulders Fund and donors. Since parent and family involvement is critical, no family receives a scholarship for 100 percent of tuition. Big Shoulders tracks students closely and provides resources and support so students can achieve their goals. And scholars are reaching those goals: they enroll in quality high schools and colleges at higher rates than their peers and the national median. Since Big Shoulders began tracking five years ago, 88 percent of all graduating scholars have enrolled in college during the fall following high school graduation.

Following is a small sample of the diverse programs Big Shoulders offers.

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Scholarships Serve Citywide Needs

The **DAVID SPEER SCHOLARSHIP**, established in Speer's memory in 2013, assists academically talented fourth–12th grade students, specifically those with an aptitude for math and science, whose families struggle with tuition. David's wife, Barbara, also sponsors an annual bowling event for the Scholars and their families.

Immaculate Conception sixth grader David Metta could not afford tuition without the Speer Scholarship. "David got the highest scores in the TerraNova Test last year: 95 percent in reading and 98 percent in math," said Sister Katia Alcantar HMIG, principal. "I have a lot of confidence that he will be a very successful student if we just give him the opportunity to try."

Speer Scholar Janet Cortes, has demonstrated significant leadership skills that positively impact her Immaculate Conception classmates. "Her dedication in the classroom, her responsibility toward all she does, is amazing," commented Alcantar.

• • •



Big Shoulders Fund Director Chris Valenti joins Valenti Scholars at their scholarship reception.

Mrs. Patricia Lanctot was committed to ensuring as many children as possible had access to a quality education. Her family created the **PATRICIA LANCTOT SCHOLARS** program at Big Shoulders in 2009 to celebrate her legacy.

"Students receiving a Patricia Lanctot Scholarship are motivated to work to their potential, academically and personally," said Sister Rita Marie Range OP, Our Lady of Grace School principal. "Last year, the majority of these scholars placed on the A or B Honor Roll. Through their academic work and service, the scholars are building a better future for themselves and their community. As our first Patricia Lanctot Scholars graduate next

There are more than 60 different types of scholarships that vary in duration and amount awarded depending on the need and available resources. Last year, Big Shoulders Fund awarded \$8.5 million in scholarships to more than 6,000 students.

May, I believe they will continue to build on the foundation they have received as they face new challenges and opportunities in high school and college, doing their best to make a better world for themselves and others."

• • •

Thomas Reynolds, Jr. loved Big Shoulders Fund schools. When he died in 2008, memorial gifts from his law firm and colleagues established the **THOMAS A. REYNOLDS, JR./WINSTON & STRAWN LLP SCHOLARS PROGRAM**. Providing support from fourth through 12th grades, the program works with students who have a C+ or better average, based on Reynolds' belief in the potential in average students who need encouragement.

Reynolds Scholar Raven Eulingborough, a senior at Our Lady of Tepeyac High School, remarked, "I live in a single-parent household, and I wouldn't be able to attend a Big Shoulders Fund school without a scholarship. My teachers focus on how I learn best. They explain things in a way I understand. I would feel lost in a bigger school, and without this scholarship, that's where I would be."

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The **VALENTI CHARITABLE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** offers support to fourth through 12th grade students with leadership and academic potential from families who have financial need. Valenti Scholars receive mentoring from members of the Valenti family and their friends.

"In our Summer Reading program, we assign Scholars a book that is entertaining but also challenges them to think about themselves and the world around them in new ways," shared Mark Valenti. "The books cover a wide range of topics, fiction and non-fiction, and serve as a basis for some great discussions when we meet as a large group with our Scholars and Mentors at the beginning of each school year."

For more information, please contact Tom Zbierski, Senior Director, Scholarship Programs and School Relations, at 312.751.8365 or tzbierski@bigshouldersfund.org. ■



GENEROUS PARTNERS ENHANCE AGING SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ensuring schools have up-to-date equipment and supplies is a priority for Big Shoulders; clearly, students and their teachers need access to current technology and curricular resources. But they also must have facilities that are clean and safe. And thanks to generous partners, several Big Shoulders schools have benefited from improvements to their buildings.

Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School is starting off the school year with renovated bathrooms in its main corridor, cafeteria, gym windows, and locker rooms. Leopardo, a construction contractor, donated all the labor, and ACRE Project Management contributed supervision of the work. Our Lady of Tepeyac Patrons Kent and Liz Dauten provided funding toward the project, and the school secured foundation grants to cover the remaining costs. And Our Lady of Tepeyac High School also benefits since it shares these facilities.

“Strategically, the Our Lady of Tepeyac schools plan collaboratively in a number of essential areas to fulfill the schools’ mission to prepare first-generation grade school and high school graduates for higher education,” said Joni Thompson, president of both schools. “We focus on growing enrollment so that more families will have a safe, Catholic, academically strong school to attend as an alternative to the troubled local elementary and high schools. The local elementary schools have class sizes of 35 or more and little funding for extracurricular activities or extra help for students with special needs. The local high schools have a graduation rate of 35 percent; Our Lady of Tepeyac has a graduation rate of 100 percent, of which 100 percent attend college.”

The generous support from the Patrons and companies participating in the project are making a significant impact. “Facilities-bathroom upgrades make a strong statement to our families that we care enough to give them safe, updated facilities,” Thompson commented.

Sloan Valve Company recognizes that having safe, clean, well-functioning bathrooms is essential to schools and students. For more than a decade, the company has donated all the materials to refurbish one set of bathrooms in a Big Shoulders Fund school each year, including St. Gall, St. Genevieve, St. Ann, St. Pius V, St. John de la Salle, St. Ethelreda, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Tepeyac High School, and more. By leveraging this significant donation, Patrons, foundations, and individual donors can make an even more impactful contribution to the safety and stability of schools.

Brian Mazzocchi, who represents Sloan Valve, shared how the company began contributing to schools in this way. “Joe Perrino, who was on Big Shoulders’ Golf Classic committee, asked me to look at the bathroom fixtures at a school he had attended. I couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw how old and rundown they were. We know how important hygiene is, so we wanted the kids to have better washroom conditions with upgraded products.”

What has been the result of Sloan Valve’s generosity? “Happy kids with toilets that work!” said Mazzocchi. “It’s reassuring to know that these schools have Sloan products in them. With tight budgets and, sometimes, understaffed facilities, you never know what products may be installed. We can be proud that Sloan is the standard for these schools.”

Mazzocchi is firmly committed to continuing this partnership with Big Shoulders schools. “I said I would continue making this contribution until I retire. I’m 41, so they’re stuck with me for another 20 years or so! Who knows, by then we may be back at some of the schools that have been remodeled doing them over again.” ■

Our Lady of Tepeyac students show their thanks for their updated gym, which both Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary and Our Lady of Tepeyac High School students put to good use.

GENEROSITY



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If you are interested in supporting Big Shoulders Fund with a planned gift, please visit thejosephsociety.org or contact Amy Drozda at 312.751.3850 or adrozda@bigshouldersfund.org to learn more.



In the Community



- 1: In partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, 23 attorneys from across Chicago volunteered in 13 classrooms at seven Big Shoulders Fund schools and taught thoughtful and interactive civic lessons. Steve Mead and Joanna Moscow from AT&T Services, Inc. taught seventh graders at Our Lady of Grace in Logan Square a lesson in "the letter of the law" and "the spirit of the law."
- 2: (L-R) Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale, Co-Chairman John Canning, and Director John Podjasek were among the more than 300 golfers who attended the 15th Annual Golf Classic and raised a record of more than \$600,000 for the Friends of Big Shoulders Scholarship Fund.
- 3: This summer, 200 students spent seven weeks participating in a once-in-a-lifetime experience at Brush Creek Ranch at Staddle Camp. They engaged in hands-on science lessons in a number of subjects, such as biodiversity, by making plant and animal webs, and the food chain, by dissecting owl pellets. They also tested their strength and leadership skills through horseback riding and high ropes courses.

- 4: Young Presidents' Organization members and their families joined Maternity BVM School on Chicago's West Side to create a kid-designed playground with Kaboom!. Coordinated by Big Shoulders Fund Director Rich Carrigan, the group assembled everything from tire swings to bridges, ran concrete, and tarped mulch to bring the school its first playground since its founding more than a century ago.
- 5: PricewaterhouseCoopers employees and interns gave back at seven schools during the 2014-15 school year, thanks to PwC leadership, including Chicago Managing Partner and Big Shoulders Fund Director James Kolar and key members of his team, including Mireya Manigault and Joseph Nocera. PwC's generosity to Big Shoulders has included not only financial contributions but also the time and energy of its employees.
- 6: Big Shoulders Fund Director Jim Hoeg taught basic concepts related to the stock market, investing, and careers in business at St. Pius V School for Big Shoulders' Stock Market Program. During its eighth year, the program expanded into 46 classrooms in 43 schools. Under the leadership of Big Shoulders Fund Director Charlie Bobrinsky and Hoeg, along with 110 Stock Market Program teacher volunteers, the program has helped 900 students improve their financial literacy.
- 7: Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale (L), STEM Exelon Scholars, ComEd President and CEO Anne Pramaggiore (C), ComEd COO and Big Shoulders Fund Director Terrence Donnelly (second from R), and ComEd Corporate Citizenship Manager Paula Conrad (R) were among the sold-out crowd at the Chairmen's Advisory Council Networking Breakfast. Big Shoulders sends a big thanks to Anne Pramaggiore for speaking and Kirkland and Ellis LLP for hosting.
- 8: Director Elizabeth Cole and 20 other Big Shoulders Fund supporters went to Nordstrom Oakbrook for a special Jimmy Choo fashion show, hosted by Catherine Greenspon. The fashion show kicked off the pop-up shopping event attended by even more Big Shoulders Fund supporters. The day was a success with 10 percent of the proceeds, more than \$15,000, benefiting Big Shoulders Fund.
- 9: Big Shoulders Fund's Auxiliary Board and friends, including entertainment sponsor RW Baird, celebrated a new school year at the Ninth Annual Big Shoulders Fund Ball September 25 at Revel Downtown. More than 500 guests gathered to raise more than \$115,000 for the Auxiliary Board Scholarship.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES



Board of Directors
Meeting, 1994

(L-R) William M. Daley, Cardinal Bernardin, Craig Dean, and Philip Delaney, Jr. attend their first Big Shoulders Fund Board of Directors meeting in 1994. All have remained generous friends of Big Shoulders. For example, Craig Dean is still a Director and has been instrumental in leading the transformation of Holy Trinity High School, a Big Shoulders Fund high school. When he first got involved, the school was struggling to remain open. Today, the school is thriving: enrollment has grown by more than 33 percent during the last four years, and this year the school welcomed its largest freshman class in nearly a decade.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, May 26, 2016.**
Big Shoulders Fund will honor President and CEO Josh Hale at the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Humanitarian Award Dinner.

For more information please contact Amy Drozda,
Director, Corporate Partnerships and Outreach at 312.751.8337
or adrozda@bigshouldersfund.org.