

BIG IDEAS.
BIG SHOULDERS.
2015 YEAR-END REVIEW.

**Big
Shoulders
Fund.®**





Big Ideas.

Big ideas, inspirations, and brainstorming have made a real impact on the 82 inner-city Catholic schools and the 21,000 students they serve every day.

Big ideas, and all of the successful programs that come from them, truly make a difference in the lives of our students and their communities. Let's start with just a few:

In 2015, Big Shoulders Fund invested \$20 million in teachers, facilities, scholarships, and programs that are the lifeblood of a Big Shoulders Fund education.

- We completed the first full year of our Covered Schools Initiative, keeping seven schools open that would have otherwise closed. Without this Initiative, 1,140 students in high-need communities would have lost their schools.
- For the ninth consecutive year, our financial health, accountability, and transparency earned us a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.
- Our Next Generation groups—the Auxiliary Board and Chairmen's Advisory Council—grew to more than 350 members who engaged in the mission through service to the schools or donations.
- Ninety-six percent of eighth graders with the STEM Scholarship transitioned into quality Catholic or selective enrollment high schools.
- We extended the Access Scholarship, an investment of \$4.2 million allowing more than 1,000 students to remain in Big Shoulders Fund schools.
- We received a \$750,000 grant from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to deepen crucial data analysis and track academic metrics, making a real impact on student achievement.

Turn the pages of our Annual Report and be amazed at the achievements, big and small, that show anything is possible when we all pitch in and support the parents, principals, teachers, volunteers, and students of the Big Shoulders Fund family.



SUIT UP
AND SHOW UP —
THERE'S AN
IDEA RIGHT
THERE.

Big
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Every weekday morning from August to June, the 21,000 students of Big Shoulders Fund schools find their way to 82 inner-city schools in 51 distinct Chicago communities.

Eighty percent of these beautiful children are minorities. 30 percent are not Catholic. And fully 66 percent come from low-income homes. Their families often find our schools simply because they are in the neighborhood. Or through a group meeting with an outreach counselor. Some find us on Facebook. Many hear of us from friends or relatives. This year a record number, 21,000, found their way to the new possibilities, broad opportunities, and bright promise our schools offer. It is our privilege to be these children's destination.





Movers and shakers

Ten years ago, Big Shoulders Fund Director Nick Alexos, Big Shoulders Fund Co-Chairman John Canning, and students at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, had a simple (but very, very big) idea: Why not adopt a classroom of students from an inner-city school and provide monthly one-hour lessons of their own design?

Today, the Inner-City Mentoring Club's 30 members visit Holy Angels School on Chicago's South Side, providing enrichment in science, engineering, culture, field trips, and more. Here, a group of mentees are off on their year-end field trip to Lincoln Park Zoo. No monkey business along the way.



Special needs. Special seeds.

Like the mustard seed, to have faith is to grow. Faith in our inner-city schools means reaching out to a broader student population with new programs and services.

All Are Welcome is a program of inclusion to support students with a variety of physical, developmental, learning, and social-emotional needs in inner-city Catholic schools.

Every year, The Mustard Seed Conference, co-sponsored by Big Shoulders Fund, Aspire, and the Andrew M. Greeley Center for Catholic Education at Loyola University Chicago, provides professional resources and transformative ideas for teachers, principals, and staff.

What a concept!



*The
Schreiber
Family*



For more than 15 years, John and Kathy Schreiber have been deeply engaged in Big Shoulders Fund. When they first became Patrons of St. John Berchmans School, it was on the brink of closure. Today, because of the Schreibers' generous funding, business expertise, and active involvement in fundraising and board activities, 254 students attend this thriving school.

John and Kathy, through their Foundation, support Access Scholarships, a program that provided more than 1,600 low-income students an opportunity to transfer into Big Shoulders Fund schools. The whole family is deeply committed to supporting the Big Shoulders Covered Schools Initiative, providing scholarships, serving as Patrons, participating on school boards, and more. All eight of their children—Jennifer, Heather, Amy, Michael, Matthew, Nicholas, Molly, and Kaitlin—are involved in some manner.



A big idea right in their hands.



This year, our Exelon STEM Scholars finished out their Saturday school with a unique project: they created working prosthetic arms, capable of picking up a single grape without crushing it. Like so many projects, this one wrapped up so many skills in one simple achievement to have and to hold with pride.





A fresh way to attack an old problem.

In its first year, the Covered Schools Initiative kept the doors open for more than 1,140 students in seven inner-city Catholic schools. An intensive, broad approach to each school, the Initiative focuses on the financial, operational, and academic health of the institution by bringing to bear additional resources. Big Shoulders has assembled a talented group of consultants who work together with the school leadership and their communities to take the steps necessary to keep the school doors open.

First, interim financial support provides breathing room for the school to install measures, including deficit reduction and fiscal planning, to increase overall fiscal health. Then, the school, the Archdiocese, and Big Shoulders collaborate on an ongoing operational plan to provide metrics, an actionable funding program, and long-range planning to sustain recovery. Finally, academic enrichment, resources, and curriculum design ensure growth in the quality of the educational mission.

Year one. Together, students, parents, teachers, principals, Big Shoulders staff, consultants, and specialists have begun the journey. **That's the idea.**

BIG CITY. BIG CHALLENGE. BIG CITY. BIG NEEDS.



They say if you want something done right, give the job to the busiest person you can find. Enter Curtis Tarver (R). Law partner. Entrepreneur/owner of South Loop microbrewery masterpiece Vice District Brewing®. Mentor of Gallagher Scholars at Holy Angels School. Passionate about the law, passionate about beer, and driven by the desire to engage African-American professionals in the mission of Big Shoulders Fund. If you're in, Curtis can be found on the Chairmen's Advisory Council. If he doesn't find you first.



Challenge Addressed.

For students in Big Shoulders Fund schools, the margin between success and failure can be paper thin. Hence, inspiration for the Chairmen's Emergency Scholarship, funded by generous friends and the Chairmen's Advisory Council.

For a brother and sister, in sixth and eighth grades at St. Helen School, a car accident could have been the end of their education. Their father was injured and could not work. Luckily, through the generosity of their aunt and uncle, most of their tuition was funded. Except \$2,000. Big Shoulders Fund stepped in with the necessary financial boost, and today they're moving forward at St. Helen School.

A Humboldt Park family lost everything in a house fire. They were up to date in their tuition at Maternity BVM, but lacked the financial ability to continue supporting their four children in a Catholic school. A Chairmen's Emergency Scholarship provided the resources to finish the year while the family recovered from this devastating event.



VOLUNTEERS. TIRELESS HANDS. TIRELESS FEET.

WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT YOU?

EVERY VOLUNTEER HOUR TUTORING, MENTORING, LANDSCAPING, SETTING UP A SCHOOL LIBRARY, BALANCING THE BOOKS—EVERY MINUTE A LABOR OF LOVE. MAY THE ROAD RISE TO MEET YOU, MAY THE WIND ALWAYS BE AT YOUR BACK. NICE IDEA, THAT.

2,660

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
VOLUNTEERS
WHO STEP UP TO PAINT, CLEAN, AND
LANDSCAPE AT OUR 82 SCHOOLS

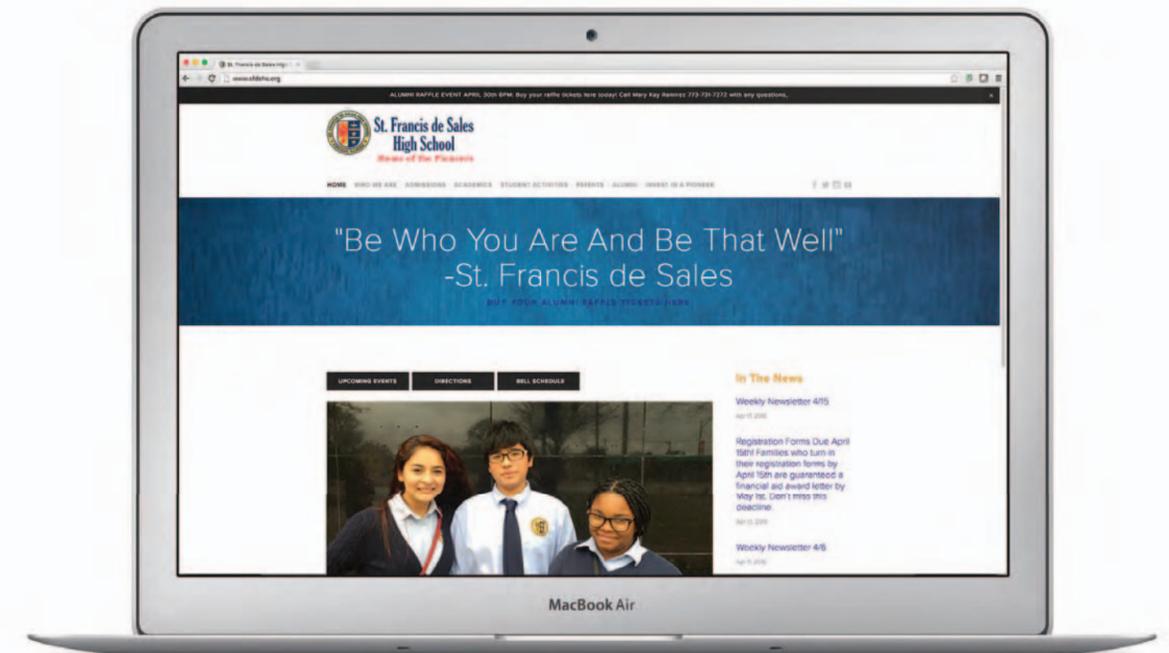
300+

AVERAGE HOURS
OF SERVICE
DURING A THREE-HOUR
GIVE BACK DAY

68

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
SERVICE DAYS
WITH ZERO COST TO A
BIG SHOULDERS FUND SCHOOL

Big ideas while you wait.



Crucial to the survival of inner-city Catholic schools is enrolling and retaining students. Big Shoulders Fund supports enrollment marketing efforts in many schools. For example, we helped St. Francis de Sales High School create a fresh digital communications strategy. Check out their cool new website. At St. William School, we helped with a door hanger campaign that substantially increased registrations, especially in the pre-school. And St. Mary Star of the Sea creates themes for their re-enrollment campaigns every year. Last year, was "Star In A Car." This year is "Star In A Boat," and next year, it's going to be "Star In A Plane." Hear that, United Airlines?



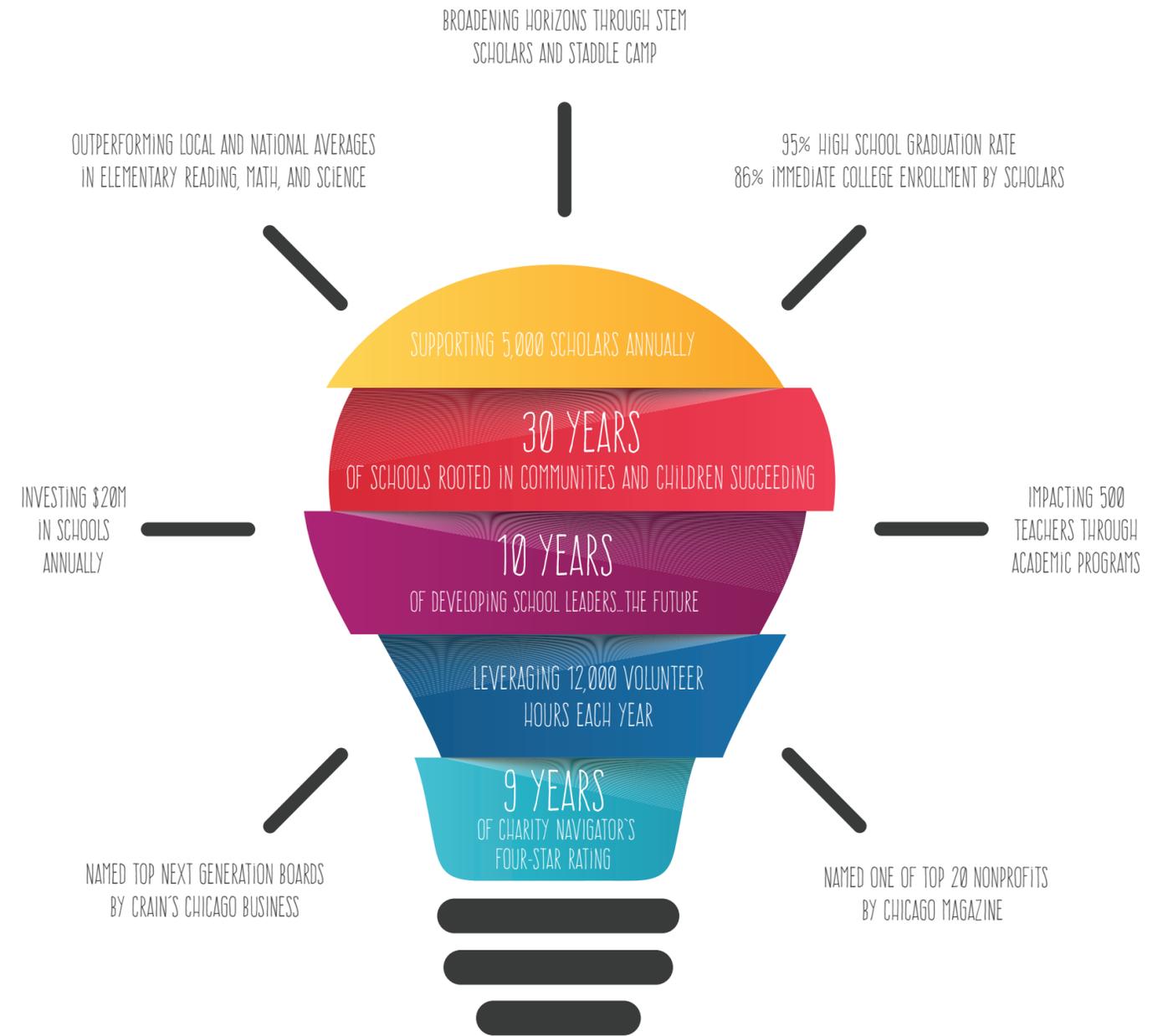
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SHARING THE INNOVATION

When Big Shoulders Fund teacher leaders bring back lessons learned to their schools, those lessons spread across the entire staff. Innovative ways to amplify learning through technology, fresh methods, and new inspiration help point the way forward.

A GLOWING PERFORMANCE





Inspired leadership

Veteran principal Denise Spells and relative rookie Kevin Powers share leadership wisdom in the hallways of St. Margaret of Scotland School. Continuity is crucial so that new principals always have the strong support of those with more experience. Knowledge sharing is a daily routine in Big Shoulders Fund schools, ensuring that school leaders never have to face this demanding job alone. And the Big Shoulders Fund Leadership Development Program recruits, develops, and supports the leaders of the future.

**Big
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Frank Monreal's big idea.

Before he ran two full marathons, before he ran a handful of half marathons, 8Ks, and 5Ks, before his running helped him lose 87 pounds and get in the best shape of his life—before he joined the Big Shoulders Running Team, before all that, Frank Monreal had the big idea of volunteering at his alma mater and Big Shoulders Fund school, St. Agnes of Bohemia School in Little Village, the school his daughter attends. There he offered financial wellness clinics, giving people advice on credit cards, mortgage predatory lenders, and the financial traps people in the neighborhood needed help avoiding.

Today, his volunteer work helps St. Agnes of Bohemia rack up milestone after milestone. Today, he's still running with the Big Shoulders Running Team. Today, he looks forward to the long race and a long life of big ideas. Don't ever look back, Frank.





AUTOMATIC

Here begins a day in the life of the Big Shoulders Fund Math Initiative. Currently 19 schools employ the University of Chicago's Everyday Mathematics curriculum. It spans a wide variety of instructional methods and tools such as problem solving, manipulatives, and advanced digital components. And 29 schools are participating in the Big Shoulders Fund/University of Illinois at Chicago Middle-High School Math Initiative.

Teacher leaders, digital specialists, and administrators receive instructional coaching, professional development, and collaboration opportunities throughout the Big Shoulders Fund network. The Math Initiative impacts 3,600 students and is supported by the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, CareerBuilder.com, The Gallagher Family Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. J. Patrick Gallagher, Jr., Robert E. Gallagher Charitable Trust, Opus Foundation, Tellabs Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Motorola Solutions Foundation, and The Tengelsen Family Foundation.

A photograph of three students in school uniforms sitting on a red door. On the left, a boy stands, smiling and looking towards the two girls sitting on the door. The girls are also smiling and looking towards each other. The boy is wearing a dark blue sweater vest over a light blue shirt and a dark tie. The girls are wearing blue and white plaid dresses with white collars and dark blue cardigans. The door is red with two brass handles. The background is a plain wall.

Be inspired

Think about it. Sometimes it's hard for us to see the significance of a little push, a touch on the shoulder, a hand reached out to help. But these scholars' bright eagerness, their hunger to learn, their deep, shining gratitude makes it clear: every tiny accomplishment, every lesson learned, every single day at a desk in a classroom is a milestone in their lives. Join us. Go the distance. **That's the idea.**

BIG SHOULDERS FUND

212 WEST VAN BUREN STREET, SUITE 900

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607

T. 312.751.8337 | F. 312.751.5235

INFO@BIGSHOULDERSFUND.ORG

BIGSHOULDERSFUND.ORG

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501 (c) (3) charitable tax-exempt entity.

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Writer: Jim Dyer
Editor: Jill Chukerman, JAC Communications
Art Director: Mark Masseur, Symmetri
Photographers: Tom Balla, Craig Andrews,
Michael Flack, Pictureboy Creative

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