



At Heritage Fund We Help You Do ***Your Philanthropy. Your Way.***

A young woman came to the United States with her parents as a 2-year-old, learned English, excelled throughout her school years, graduated at the top of her Columbus North High School class and looked forward to attending the college that had granted her admission. The only problem with this “fairy tale” was her undocumented immigration status.

Despite having performed “by the book,” or even better, this student could only attend an Indiana Institution of Higher Education if she paid “non-resident/international” tuition -- despite having lived in the state for 16 years.

The sad fact is that she is not alone in facing college bills that are tens of thousands of dollars higher than those of her high school peers, for the very same classes. If she received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status from the federal government, the immigration policy would have meant most Indiana public higher education institutions would classify her as a “resident” for tuition purposes. But even so, she still would not qualify to receive any school, state or federal scholarships, grants, loans or other financial assistance.

Heritage Fund administers a scholarship program for outstanding undocumented students. Our Hispanic/Latino Scholarship Fund began as a program of the Irwin Financial Foundation Fund and has been generously supported by many here who believe these undocumented students deserve a chance to earn degrees and become contributing members of our community. Philanthropy gives the students a fighting chance and is just one example of how the community foundation enables our donors to do philanthropy their way.

Thanks to philanthropic support, this “fairy tale” did have its happy ending, after all. With that financial assistance, the young woman obtained a nursing degree and is presently employed by Columbus Regional Health. She is one of a number of undocumented students who were Heritage Fund scholarship recipients eagerly hired by businesses seeking smart, hardworking local talent after graduation.

This scholarship fund was established as a financial bridge for a handful of students caught in limbo for a couple of years while the US government sorted out an immigration strategy for the so-called “Dreamers.” That was in 2012. Absent federal immigration reform, that handful became a flow that continues to this day.

Philanthropy is not only creative and responsive, it is patient.

Tracy Souza is president and CEO of Heritage Fund – The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County. Contact us at 812-376-7772 to learn more about how we can help you do Your Philanthropy. Your Way.

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