

# 2020

## Annual Report



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# 2020



## Message from Carol Lain

Dear Friends,

As 2020 began we were excited to repeat the success of 2019 in which students from the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) and Sequoia Charter School went to Arizona State University fully funded for four years. Our other programs, Junior RISE Scholars and Fueling Minds with Heart programs met with similar success.

Who could have predicted a worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, would appear and completely change our way of life? Schools began to shut down completely and instruction pivoted to online education. College advising followed suit. For the students we serve, it could mean a year's loss of support and programming to further their education.

The silver lining to be had was in our ability to complete three quarters together with our student population before the shutdown. It was an "Adapt and overcome" moment. The junior high had chosen to conduct a food drive to benefit Mesa Community College's struggling families for their Legacy Project. They. An Eagle Scout project completed earlier in December helped to supply the needy students at the college.

Additionally, with three quarters of our college advising completed, our RISE Scholars program hit a new high with 54 students emerging from the program and receiving four years paid tuition and fees to attend Arizona State University. These First Generation college students were thrilled to have assistance getting through admissions and financial aid. Then we learned during the shutdown that ensued, students did not have the computing power to take their required on-line math test. College Bound AZ responded by providing 17 or 33% of the RISE Scholars with refurbished computers for them to continue through the admissions process. These were delivered directly to homes amid the pandemic. Thankfully, all students successfully reported in to their new world of college online.

We were able to maintain our momentum because of the support of you who understand the stakes are too high to not keep moving forward. Through financial and material support from you, our donors, we survived and even thrived during an historic time.

To all our advocates, partners and friends, thank you for your compassion and support.

*Carol Lain*



**Carol Lain, Board President**  
**College Bound AZ**



## Mission

*Our mission at College Bound AZ is to share the journey to college with aspiring underrepresented students through mentorship, guidance, and support resources for their advancement to a better future through education.*

## Programs



### RISE Scholars

Low income high school seniors get the college coaching support they need in College Bound AZ's RISE (Reaching Impact through Student Excellence) Scholars program. We partner with selected high schools to provide coaching sessions and college tours and serve as a bridge for students pursuing higher education. It's estimated that only 17% of AZ's low income students will complete college.



### Junior RISE Scholars

In 8<sup>th</sup> Grade we partner with middle schools in a year-long program that includes lessons on college and career readiness. Low income students are 20% less likely to pursue college than their more affluent peers. Junior RISE Scholars is a foundation for the necessary college prep work needed throughout high school. College Bound AZ increases the number of low income students who pursue higher education.



### Fueling Minds with Heart

Our food pantry program provides relief to college students by providing canned meat, vegetables, and fruit, power drinks, cereal, protein bars and other items through a partnership with a local food bank and donations from the community. College Bound AZ helps stock the college's food pantry to offer relief for the estimated 59% of community college students facing food insecurity to complete college.



# RISE Scholars Impact

2020 is our second year of new programming to provide more underrepresented students with access to college. A very focused approach was repeated to leverage ASU’s 100% tuition and fees for all four years of college for eligible low-income students. As an in-school program, one-on-one work better ensured the seniors at Sequoia Charter School and the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) could access the financial benefits awaiting them at Arizona State University (ASU). Neither school has formalized college advising for seniors. College Bound AZ can be the catalyst to better outcomes for our low-income students as illustrated below.

**Figure 1. Number of RISE Scholars Entering ASU**

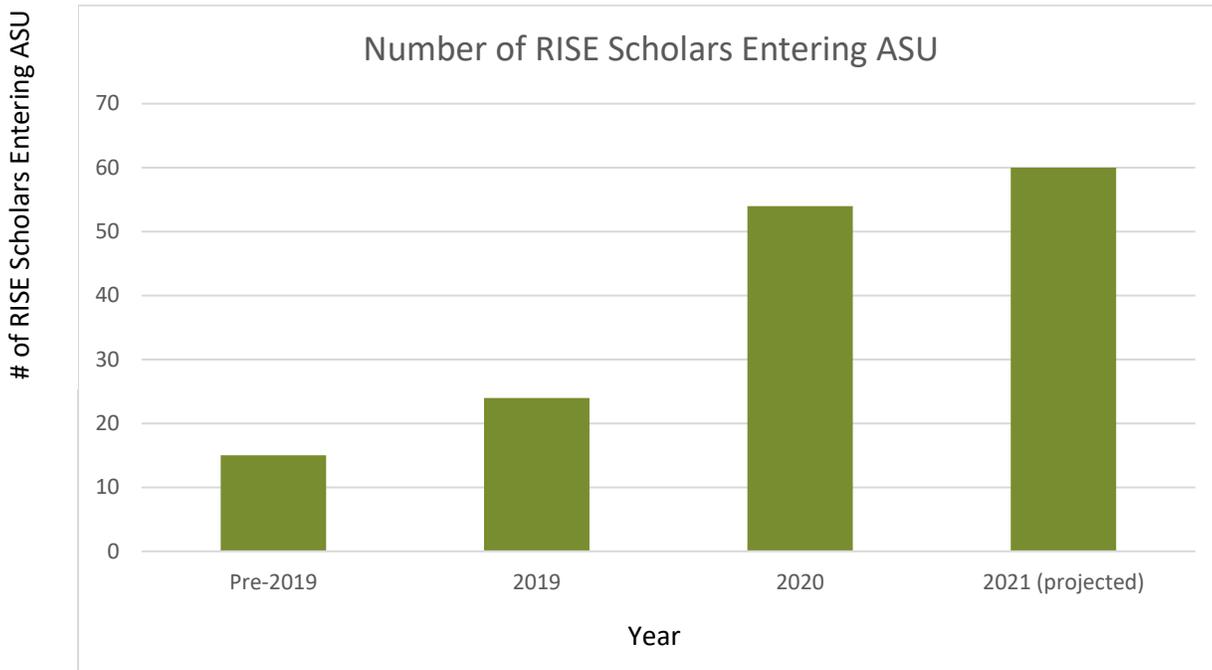


Figure 1 shows the change in the number of RISE Scholars entering college by transitioning to an in-school format. Although the pandemic caused the majority of high schools to shut down, EVIT continued with in-person instruction, following strict COVID-19 protocols. RISE Scholars was able to increase its student numbers.



**Figure 2. Total Dollars in Financial Awards**

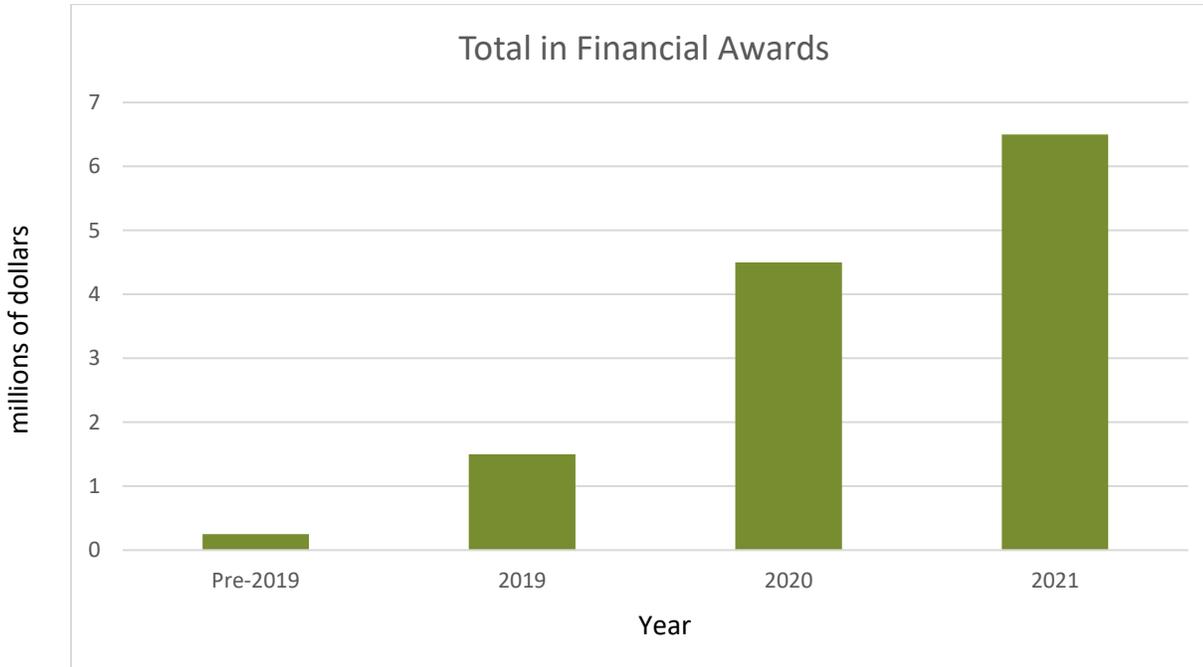


Figure 2 shows the change in financial awards distributed to RISE Scholars. Students who are eligible for financial aid and who have a minimum 3.0 Grade Point Average can receive one of two awards to attend Arizona State University: 1) the [College Attainment Grant](#), valued at \$50,000 and is four years paid tuition and fees; or 2) the [Obama Award](#), valued at \$100,000 and is four years paid tuition and fees, dorm, meals, and books. Staff help with student essays for additional college scholarships.



# Other Program Impact Highlights

## Junior RISE Scholars

Coaching on study skills, community service, career exploration, resume writing



40

Mentoring hours per student

## Fueling Minds with Heart

Delivery of food and hygiene items to Mesa Community College

1662

Meals

200

Hygiene Kits



## Opening Opportunities



**Sandra Avila Lopez**  
**RISE Scholars 2020**

### Sandra Avila Lopez

Sandra first learned of College Bound AZ at the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT). She joined in on a session that would change her future.

RISE (Reaching Impact through Student Excellence) Scholars Sandra Avila Lopez was unaware that she could qualify for the Obama Scholars award from ASU for Fall 2020. Because of her academic standing and financial aid eligibility, College Bound AZ ensured Sandra received a financial award valued at \$100,000 that includes four years of tuition, fees, books, room and board. Sandra learned about RISE Scholars as a high school senior attending the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT).

Sandra's [essay](#) on how she felt about her changed future won her a \$500 cash scholarship from College Bound AZ for her to purchase a laptop for college.

The majority of the students served by College Bound AZ are in the high school RISE Scholars program. Through donations received, College Bound AZ offers two \$500 essay scholarships for students to purchase either a laptop, books, or to go towards their college enrollment fee. The hopes and dreams of First Generation college students is evident in Sandra's winning essay. The unique admissions approach developed by College Bound AZ helped Sandra complete her application prior to the January 15 deadline and receive a maximum financial award. Sandra credited College Bound AZ as the program that provided her the pathway to achieve her dream of becoming an Elementary Teacher so she could realize her passion for helping others.

"I'm absolutely certain that if it weren't for RISE, I would have given up on my dream to go to college," stated Sandra in her winning college essay.



# Opportunities for All

## Brian Valentine

Brian Valentine was raised by his grandmother Julie when his mother became ill. Brian is diagnosed ADHD and is on the autism spectrum. Due to his disability, Brian does better at online school and attended through the Arizona Virtual Academy from his home. The East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) enrolls students from across the east valley, and Brian learned about RISE Scholars as a senior, attending half days as part of the Engineering program there.



**Brian Valentine  
RISE Scholars 2020**

In 2020, College Bound AZ became a Certified Autism Center as part of the Mesa’s initiative to be the First Autism Certified City in the world. A grant from Visit Mesa helped fund the training for staff. With that training came a new sensitivity toward students with special needs and building a bridge to college for families with special needs students.

College Bound AZ helped Brian with the college admissions and financial aid application processes uniquely developed for EVIT and in concert with Arizona State University (ASU). It was determined that Brian qualified for the College Attainment Grant, four years-worth of college tuition and fees and valued at \$50,000. As a Certified Autism Center, College Bound AZ’s trained staff was also able to connect the family to important disability resources such as tutoring and test-taking accommodations that Brian would need to be successful.

“I had no idea how to get Brian into college,” stated Brian’s grandmother Julie. “I was so relieved that there was someone who could help us! Brian is a First Generation college student and having the help means everything,” said Julie of her experience with College Bound AZ. You can view Julie and Brian’s interview on YouTube [here](#).



## Thought Leadership

To better understand why it is so important to help lower income students with their educational pursuits is conveyed in the quote, "Talent is evenly distributed. Opportunity is not." The average Grade Point Average among the students we serve who want to go to college is 3.4. These are students whose academic foundation is firmly in place. Yet lower income students are 20% less likely to go to college, as reported by the US Department of Education. Students who stand to gain the most from four years of college are less likely to go? Curious. Unless you have ever tried to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

This vital application uses terms like Adjusted Gross Income, Dislocated Worker, and Household Size to help establish benefit eligibility. To expect an eighteen-year-old adult (I use the word loosely) to magically understand terms and concepts never before encountered helps explain that phrase: "Talent is evenly distributed. Opportunity is not."

Without a FAFSA on file to identify a student as from a lower income family, education funding that is set aside for a student as a social benefit may not be accessible. Many scholarships are needs-based, such as the QuestBridge, the Dorrance Scholarship, or the Gates Millennium Scholars Program. Right here at Arizona State University, students who are needs-based and have a high school Grade Point Average of 3.0 qualify for four years paid tuition and fees. Our RISE Scholars students need help to access this amazing opportunity. The concept that any of our best and brightest who could go to college but who miss out on college funding because of a form should trouble everybody.

Just as we got the majority of our students through financial aid, COVID hit. It is truly a blessing that we have an aggressive calendar for completing college admissions. Then the first phone call came in from a student who did not have the computing power in her Chrome Book to download the required math placement test software. With a lockdown ordered by the governor, students could not find another means to take the necessary test and couldn't move forward in the admissions process. Suddenly the onion was peeled back on the digital divide.





**Jaleeyah Arnold, accepting her laptop  
RISE Scholars 2020**

We had budgeted for just a couple laptop scholarships, but a growing need emerged. To keep costs down, we began to purchase refurbished laptops and then deliver them to the students at their homes. The scramble was on. At one point, there were no more refurbished laptops to be had. Ultimately, 17 laptops were distributed, filling a critical need for 33% of our RISE Scholars. Did COVID cause this digital divide? No, but the unusual circumstances revealed what has always been there. In June we received a grant from Thunderbirds Charities that exactly covered the costs of the laptops. “Grateful” is an understatement for this timely award! Going forward, we will seek more funding to provide laptops for our RISE Scholars.

We begin prepping students in the 8th grade with the path to college because research shows that those students presented with a higher number of personal experiences are more likely to go to college. Our Junior RISE Scholars perform several community service projects such as marching in the East Valley Veterans Day Parade. Students' experiences are expanded with a field trip day which could be based on science themes or as part of an International Day with students from around the world. They are also coached by current students from Arizona State University on college preparation and

careers post-college. Each student's year results in 40 hours of mentoring as part of Junior RISE Scholars.

Our Fueling Minds with Heart program at Mesa Community College connects the community with the needs of lower income college students. One [study](#) reported 59% of the community college students in our region experience food insecurity. It's not hard to imagine when many are young parents trying to better themselves and finding they must juggle many competing priorities. Easing some of the stress on college students helps them [achieve persistence](#) - to stay in school. We have partnered with our Junior RISE Scholars, the Boy Scouts of America, the Midwest Food Bank, and local businesses to deliver food and hygiene items.

With the help of many, together we remove the obstacles to higher education to the benefit of the lower income among us. With your support, we prove America really *is* the land of opportunity!



## Income and Expenses

### A Decade of Serving First Generation Students

2020 was a very special year, achieving our first 10 years of serving First Generation students. To celebrate and to unveil our work to a wider audience, plans ensued for the October 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Masquerade Ball. We soon realized COVID would cause us to pivot, and event is now called the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary UnGala. We will go virtual and do a livestream live auction in October 2020. Our preparation began in fiscal year 2020, but our UnGala won't occur until next fiscal year. This impacts the financial report below that shows more overhead than is accurate.

The additional funding anticipated by conducting our first ever gala will allow us to serve more high school students in 2021 and provide more laptops to help close the digital divide.

Gift Support	Income	%
Individuals	\$19,747.36	39%
Corporations	\$24,159.43	49%
Foundations	\$6,175	12%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$50,081.79</b>	

Other Revenue	Expenses	%
Interest returns	\$95.95	<0.1%
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>\$50,177.74</b>	

Program Services for Students	Expenses	%
On-site Assistance	\$8,759*	26%
Leadership training	\$997.50	.3%
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$9,756.50</b>	



Supporting Services	Expenses	%
Fundraising	\$0	0%
Management and General	\$23,711.41	71%
Total Supporting Services	\$23,711.41	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$33,467.91</b>	

Net Assets	Net Assets	%
Net Operating Revenue	\$16,334.07	70%
Long-Term Assets	\$6,867.95	30%
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$23,202.02</b>	

\*This value does not reflect the staff that provide On-site Assistance because College Bound AZ is staffed 100% by volunteers. These include the Jr RISE Scholars faculty sponsor and assistants; the RISE Scholars College Coach; the Volunteer Coordinator; the Fueling Minds with Heart Coordinator; and the Executive Director. In-kind values have been calculated and are available.



## Looking Forward

Looking forward, we are growing the program to support the high school seniors who have chosen colleges and universities other than Arizona State University. This will increase the number of students served by College Bound AZ and the number of First Generation students entering college as their next step. This important step will rely on having new staff and volunteers to meet the needs of the students.

### Leadership

We have a diverse Board of Directors leading us. Each has a keen passion for providing education opportunity to First Generation students. Their talent helps us grow the programs so we can meet our goals and make a difference in the community.



**Carol Lain**  
Board President



**Robin Benning**  
Board Vice President



**Caden Gillespie**  
Board Secretary



**Tim Meyer**  
Board Treasurer



**Felecia Rozansky**  
Board Member



**Michael Langley**  
Board Member





**Christa Seagren**  
Board Member



**Nicole Vecere**  
Board Member



**Aryanna Thuraisingham**  
Board Member



**Kina Harding**  
Board Member



**Ralph Wilson**  
Board Member



**Rishi Sood**  
Board Member



**Levi Leyba**  
Board Member



**Heidi Hughes**  
Board Member



**Elizabeth Paulus**  
Executive Director



# We Need Your Help

We are growing! We want to encourage you to give generously to change the life of even one youth – everything helps! Invest in their life today so they can become the leaders of tomorrow.

## Every Penny Matters

You can give online here: [donation page](#)

You can also mail in your donation to: College Bound AZ, 4222 E. Brown Road #33, Mesa AZ 85205



## Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

Not everyone can make a financial contribution. At our workshops and events, you can assist students with activities or chaperone on our college tour. Mentors can help students proof essays or help find answers on college topics. Businesses can set up collection points for community members to drop off food items or hygiene products to help those students already attending college. You can review these ideas and more at [collegeboundaz.org](#)

- Volunteer with the Veterans Day Parade, food pantry drives, or fundraising.
- Volunteer around the office with phone calls and other tasks
- Volunteer in a different way: \_\_\_\_\_

Please visit our website [collegeboundaz.org](#) to learn more or call us at 602.550.3161. Send this form by mail to our office at 4222 E. Brown Road #33, Mesa AZ 85205.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Thank You to All of Our Donors

Our donors share our passion for education, whether it is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or high school program or providing meals to community college students. Their involvement is what changes lives!

\$14,999 - \$5,000	\$4,999 - \$1,000	\$999 and Below
Thunderbird Charities	 <p><b>Kevin Ho and family</b> Donor since 2014</p>	Juanita and Bob Dominguez
Jerry and Liz Paulus		Susan and Rey Contreras
Phoenix Suns Charities		Sandy and Douglas Larson
		Carol and Mike Lain
		Drew Trojanowski
		Patty Watson Kimball
		David Ciccerelli
		Dori and Larry Blessing
		Michael Langley
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	Sara Bennewitz	
	Robin and Beth Benning	
	Ralph Wilson	
	Kevin Ho and Family	

