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The Better Chance Fund supports scholarship recipients beyond the original scholarship including providing laptops, and assisting with other costs that arise over and above tuition and books, thus enabling the student's continued progress in school and, hopefully, in life.

Chance in the Community

Recently we had the opportunity to have a conversation with six educators who have played a vital role in our core program, the If Given a Chance Scholarship. Each has nominated students. We asked them for feedback on our role in the community. Here is what they told us.

"If Given a Chance is a HUGE part of what we do at Valley Oak. As a continuation school, our business is to rebuild self-esteem, confidence and educate young adults who struggle to simply show up and complete high school. If Given a Chance provides these students with hope for



the future when they thought they didn't have much ahead of them."

—Maria Cisneros
Valley Oak High School Principal

"If Given a Chance gives hope to students I work with. I work to validate the emotions they feel, the goals they set, and the life challenges they face. If Given a Chance takes it a step further, not only by acknowledging and validating them, but by putting the bucks into what they acknowledge and validate."

—Lupe Ramirez
Silverado Middle School Counselor

"If Given a Chance recognizes that there is more to high school than just a GPA. You see that students deserve to be rewarded for overcoming personal challenges while staying in school and completing their diploma requirements."

—Kathleen Brainerd
Vintage High School Counselor

"Often the challenges an If Given a Chance scholar faces make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to qualify for other, academically based, scholarships. For many, If Given a Chance is the only financial assistance and sup-

port they receive. I have seen students completely turn themselves around just by being nominated for the If Given a Chance Scholarship. It seems to give them the inspiration and motivation they need to continue their education."

—Stefanie LaMarca
Napa High School Counselor

"If Given a Chance helps us encourage those who are beginning to turn their lives around, to stay on track. Just singling them out for nomination makes them feel special. They realize that someone really has noticed their efforts."

—Jeanette Mulgrew
Napa High School Counseling
Department Secretary

"If Given a Chance is that glimmer of hope our students need to fulfill their dreams. It lets these students know that SOMEONE believes in them. I can't imagine not having this program to offer hope to these kids. We are really

making a difference in the life of a child by participating in this amazing program. I am proud to be a part of it in my own little way."

—Julie Lovie
Valley Oak High School Teacher

These comments reflect in the education community's words why we are here. We are supporting young students who have been neglected or abused and who have the courage and vision to step away from crime,

gangs, and substance abuse to seek better lives for themselves and their families. Lives are changed, families are strengthened, and the entire community is safer and healthier.



"If Given a Chance gives hope to students I work with."

"... students deserve to be rewarded for overcoming personal challenges."



FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

View from the Scholars

The students we support with scholarships are what If Given a Chance is all about. We exist to reward young people who have chosen to pursue their dreams of a better life, overcoming great obstacles, but who don't qualify for traditional scholarships. We currently have 70 students attending 34 different colleges. Every scholar must re-apply for funds each year to verify that their scholarship funds are spent according to our guidelines, and update us on their progress in their programs. This is a special time for us because we get to "catch up" with these young people as they provide these updates in their applications. Below are excerpts from a few of the letters we have received this year, and which are typical of the feedback we receive.

Mariana Rodriguez—"I am currently attending Napa Valley College. I'm majoring in Biological Science and plan to transfer to UC Davis. My plan for the future is to attend Davis Medical School to become a doctor. If Given a Chance has been a great help. The program has offered me the opportunity to further my education by giving me financial support. Not only do they provide me with money but they even bought me a laptop and a printer. It has been an enormous help. I consider myself very lucky to have come upon this amazing scholarship. In addition to all the financial aid they give me, If Given a Chance provides me with moral support. They are always there for me in whatever I may need. They have inspired me to go to school and come back to give to my community."

Angeles Zaragoza—"This academic year at UCLA Law I have taken courses to prepare for the California BAR exam after I graduate, as well as courses for my degree emphasis in Public Interest Law and Policy and Critical Race Studies. I am also working on an independent research paper that looks at campus racial climate post-Proposition 209 (which prevents the factoring of race and ethnicity within admissions policies at public educational institutions) and the social and psychological



Caring Napers Give Courageous Youths a Chance

"I think this is the greatest program you will find in any community in any state in the country," said Napa County Superintendent of Schools Barbara Nemko. "Only in Napa County would people get together on an annual basis to give upwards of \$100,000 to honor kids who have overcome adversity." Barbara Nemko apparently reflects the feelings of many supporters of If Given a Chance.

From a few dollars to tens of thousands, County residents have lined up in growing numbers behind the mission of the If Given a Chance Foundation. Now in its 13th year, If Given funds



approximately \$150,000 in scholarships annually. The founder of If Given a Chance, Jim King, shared that he knew If Given a Chance was going to be successful when an elderly woman came to him and said she had read about the program and wanted to help. She presented him with a check for \$10. This was indeed a sacrifice for her. A significant portion of the Foundation's funding comes from a large number of residents giving less than \$100.

Individuals, foundations, and corporations, have been consistent supporters of our scholarship program with substantial donations as well.

If Given a Chance exists to recognize youth who have demonstrated exceptional courage in overcoming extraordinary personal challenges, and to provide guidance and financial assistance so they may achieve their educational potential.

Who are our recipients?

57% have experienced abuse

39% have faced neglect

31% have witnessed domestic violence

44% have survived substance abuse issues

31% were in the Justice System

25% came from foster care

70 students are currently attending
34 schools: UC Berkeley, Stanford,
Napa Valley College, Cal Poly . . .

Wish to support If Given A Chance?

Send your donation to:

If Given a Chance
P.O. Box 2607
Napa, CA 94558

For estate planning or to donate stock please contact the Executive Director, Jim King at:

Phone: 707-260-5656
E-mail: chance@napanet.net

How you nominate someone:

Applications are distributed, and posted on our website at in October. The applications are due in February. All students must be nominated by an adult.

Wish to Volunteer?

Phone: 707-226-8890
E-mail: sking@can-v.org

Want to learn more about If Given A Chance?

If Given a Chance
P.O. Box 2607
Napa, CA 94558

www.ifgivenachance.org

E-mail: chance@napanet.net
Phone: 707-260-5656



View from the Scholars (cont'd)

effects that go along with the low numbers of students of color within institutions of higher education, and law schools specifically.

Aside from my academic commitments, this year I am Co-Chair of the La Raza Law Student's Association, as well as the Pacific Region Coordinator for the National Latina/o Law Students Association. I have also created a mentorship program in which I have paired up applicants with law students who mentor them throughout the tedious law school application process.

This is my last application for the scholarship renewal and want to acknowledge what a great help it has been over the last six years of my higher education. I look forward to being in a financial position in which I can contribute back to If Given a Chance in order to help other students trying to pursue higher education."

Tuyen Nguyen—"I'm attending Napa Valley College right now for nursing and also going to Sonoma State University for pre-nursing. I would have never had the opportunity to do this because I could not afford to go to college. If Given a Chance helped me in



so many ways and I thank them for keeping me in school and helping me reach my goals. I won't let you down."

David Diaz—"In September 2005 I became a student at Stanford University. It would be an understatement to say that I am having the time of my life. I have taken classes by Nobel Prize winning professors, leaders in industry, and have been exposed to a wealth of knowledge both in my classes and through the multi-national, multi-cultural student body. I am member of the Stanford Rugby Team and belong to the Kappa Alpha Fraternity. I have been able to concentrate on my studies, enjoy a social life, and participate in sports

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"If Given a Chance provides me with moral support. They are always there for me."



thanks to the funds I receive from the If Given a Chance Foundation. They have made it possible for me to enjoy all the wonderful things at Stanford, helping me to become a well-rounded individual, without having the burden of heavy financial worries. I continue to work towards a double major in

Communications and Political Science with the expectations of attending Law school upon graduation."

Isabel Hernandez—"In school I am doing very well thanks to the support If Given a Chance has given me. I am currently in the student government as the legislative advisor, vice-president of the Administration of Justice Club, coordinating a humanitarian project for African children, I am also a member of the Puente Club, and the representative for Student Senate of Region 2. My goal is to become Senator. I want to create a scholarship foundation, have a bigger impact than Martin Luther King, and reach out to the community. I am also a literacy teacher in the Napa Valley Library."

All of these students started from the same place: on a stage, surrounded by their community applauding their courage and conviction at the If Given a Chance Awards Dinner. We are proud of them, and proud to be a part of the community that supports them.

Caring Napans . . . (cont'd)

Donations come from not only all over Napa County but also from across the nation.

Recently If Given received \$42,000 from a reward fund that was established to assist in the capture of the person responsible for the murder of two young women, one of whom was an If Given a Chance recipient. Adriane Insogna completed her studies at Cal Poly on an If Given a Chance Scholarship and became an engineer. Sadly, two years ago, she was murdered. The person responsible turned himself in and those who contributed to the reward fund felt that by donating the funds to causes near to the hearts of the two young women and their families, they would be honoring the spirit of Adriane and her friend Leslie. A memorial scholarship has been established in Adriane's name.

On May 11, the Foundation will hold its annual Awards Dinner at the Meritage Hotel, at which this year's students receive much-deserved recognition for their courage and character. At the dinner, each has an opportunity to share his/her journey with those who attend this special evening.

The students' stories are so noble and worthy that people up and down the Valley want to be a part of it. One supporter, Don McConnell, an executive with Syar Industries and resident of Napa, says, "I have given for several years now because I see what the money does and I am very, very inspired and awed by how these young people have overcome such adversity."

"Turning one's life around takes courage, commitment and determination. But it also requires support." That's why we are very grateful for the many caring people of Napa County and beyond.

About If Given a Chance

The If Given a Chance Foundation fulfills a unique community mission by providing recognition, financial assistance, professional guidance, support for prevention and intervention related activities, and on-going encouragement to children and young adults who have overcome extraordinary personal challenges such as physical and mental abuse, drug addiction, gang violence and homelessness. If Given a Chance helps these youth build the self-esteem, confidence and hope needed to realize their educational and personal potential.

In 1994, a group of dedicated community members from Napa came together to share their concerns about common problems with today's youth: abuse, gangs, violence, drugs

and dropping out. If Given a Chance was born out of these discussions and the dedication of a determined few. The driving vision embraced recognizing special youth, helping them achieve their educational dreams, and showing them that the entire community cared deeply about their future.

On May 19, 1995, If Given a Chance honored its first scholarship recipients at an inaugural awards ceremony. Twelve youth were each awarded a \$1000 scholarship to use toward their college education. The recipients included teen moms, ex-gang members, a cancer survivor, a young man with cerebral palsy and a young lady who was responsible for raising her siblings after her parents died. Currently, If Given a Chance recipients attend 34 colleges and universities including; Brigham Young, St. Mary's, Napa Valley College, Cal Poly, UC Davis, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, and Stanford.

If Given a Chance has come a long way since that first awards ceremony. Currently, the Foundation awards \$150,000 annually in new and continuing scholarships through the support of the community. It has increased the individual award amount from \$1000 to \$2500 and committed to funding recipients through graduate school. In 2007, the Foundation set a goal to raise \$300,000 roughly doubling funding for its programs.



In addition to the original scholarship program, the If Given a Chance Foundation has created the First Chance and Better Chance Funds. The First Chance Fund extends the Foundation's mission, through referrals from local agencies, to young individuals in 1st through 12th grade. Its primary purpose is to act as a catalyst for prevention and intervention, by providing positive personal growth opportunities.

Upcoming Events

Chance Encounter (watch for news!)
Copia, September 23, 2007

Awards Dinner

