

USA Funds-Supported Center Helps Hundreds Plan for College

Zohhny Washington has a plan for college. The 17-year-old senior at Tolleson Union High School in Arizona is planning to attend Johnson & Wales University in Denver to study culinary arts management, with the goal of one day opening his own restaurant.

Thanks to a new USA Funds®-supported college resource center in Phoenix, he is on his way to making his dream come true.

"It is by the grace of God that I found the College Depot," says Washington. "I had been looking for ways to find scholarships and for help completing the FAFSA, and the advisers at the center are helping me do that."

Washington learned about the College Depot through a family friend. His cousin and 14-year-old sister also visit the center for college planning advice.

The College Depot opened June 10, and is a full service college planning destination for Phoenix youth and their family members.

Since its opening, the center has assisted 635 students and had more than 1,150 visits.

USA Funds awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Arizona Community Foundation to help the City of Phoenix develop the facility and its services.

"We are pleased to partner with the Arizona Community Foundation on the College Depot," says Bob Ballard, USA Funds senior vice president, program and corporate development. "I am confident there are many more success stories from students like Zohhny. This exciting endeavor has the potential to truly improve the college-going rates for Phoenix students."

Free assistance

Free services from the College Depot include:

- ♦ Workshops for students and families on topics such as:
 - ♦ College readiness.
 - ♦ Financial aid, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
 - ♦ Scholarships.
 - ♦ College applications.
 - ♦ ACT and SAT test preparation.
- ♦ One-on-one assistance with the college planning process.
- ♦ Appointments with university and community college counselors.



College Depot director Judy Reno, from left, and Phoenix City Council members Michael Nowakowski, Thelda Williams and Peggy Neely help open the college resource center in June.

Each student visit consists of an evaluation to see how the center staff can best assist the student. They discuss the student's current situation and goals and create a plan based on the evaluation.

The center offers many of the workshops and programming in Spanish as well.

Recently, a local Spanish-speaking television station ran a story on the College Depot and the services offered. The next morning the center had 56 voice mail messages, and the phone rang throughout the day with questions for the center staff.

"Students and their families are seeking out information on how to go to college and how to pay for college," says Judy Reno, director, College

Selected Grants Awarded by USA Funds April 1–June 30, 2009

USA Funds awards grants to advance its nonprofit mission to enhance postsecondary education preparedness, access and success.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Indianapolis

Project Learn More Indiana
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$270,000

USA Funds supports the Learn More Indiana Web site — www.learnmoreindiana.org — which raises awareness of the benefits of and options for education after high school and the importance of early preparation. The site is a one-stop source for Indiana residents regarding education and careers.

Thurgood Marshall College Fund

New York City

Project USA Funds/TMCF Scholars Program
Geographic Scope National
Amount \$100,000

USA Funds' grant supports need-based scholarships. The Thurgood Marshall College Fund provides resources, opportunities and advocacy to public Historically Black Colleges and Universities, students and alumni.

University of Nevada Foundation

Reno, Nev.

Project Dean's Future Scholars
Geographic Scope Nevada
Amount \$75,000

Dean's Future Scholars encourages culturally diverse middle school students to enter a college readiness program, and provides support services for the students and their families each year until they graduate from high school.

Riley Children's Foundation

Indianapolis

Project 2009-2010 School Program
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$51,000

The school program at Riley Hospital for Children helps children, adolescents and teens with chronic or life-threatening illnesses be successful in school and prepares them to re-enter their own schools after extended absences.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

Washington, D.C.

Project Ready 2 Lead
Geographic Scope National
Amount \$50,000

R2L focuses on college admission and financial aid in motivating, educating and empowering Latino high school students to serve and lead in their communities. CHCI seeks to develop a civically active Hispanic community participating at local, state and federal policy decision-making levels.

Indiana Black Expo

Indianapolis

Project IBE Educational Conference
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$50,000

The focus of this statewide conference was to increase cultural competency for educators and school administrators. USA Funds is in its seventh year of support for Indiana Black Expo programs.

The Regents of the University of California

Oakland, Calif.

Project Ninth Grade Student Leadership Conferences
Geographic Scope California
Amount \$50,000

This academic preparatory program seeks to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and become community leaders.

YMCA of Greater Indianapolis — Urban Mission Branch

Indianapolis

Project Black & Hispanic Achievers Program
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$50,000

This program helps provide social and financial awareness of higher education for low-income students by connecting them with adult mentor-coaches and facilitating placement, tuition assistance and college entrance. Students in the program participate in college tours and receive information about college admission and financial aid.

Youth Entrepreneurs of Kansas

Wichita, Kan.

Project YEK Classroom Program
Geographic Scope Kansas
Amount \$50,000

YEK offers students business and entrepreneurial education and experiences that help them become contributing members of society. USA Funds' grant provides entrepreneurial education classroom support for high school youth.

The Fund for Hoosier Excellence

Indianapolis

Project 26th Annual Scholarship Awards
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$25,000

The fund encourages outstanding minority students to excel in school and remain in Indiana as leaders. The Fund for Hoosier Excellence has awarded more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to 240 Indiana students.

Center for Leadership Development

Indianapolis

Project Project MR. (Male Responsibility)
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$20,000

This six-week intensive program educates adolescent African-American males in key attitudinal and behavioral traits.

Girls Scouts of Central Indiana

Indianapolis

Project Girls of Distinction Awards and Scholarships
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$10,000

Student scholarships support the Girl Scouts' mission to "inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service so that they become happy and resourceful citizens."

Wishard Foundation

Indianapolis

Project George H. Rawls, M.D. Scholarship Program
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$10,000

USA Funds is in its second year of support for this program, which provides full tuition reimbursement for minorities to study at the Indiana University School of Medicine.

YMCA of Greater Indianapolis — Urban Mission Branch

Indianapolis

Project From Day 1 Summer Camp
Geographic Scope Indiana
Amount \$10,000

From Day 1 Summer Camp introduces incoming freshmen to high school by helping participants develop realistic goals and expectations before beginning the high school experience.

State Higher Education Executive Officers

Boulder, Colo.

Project 56th Annual SHEEO Meeting
Geographic Scope National
Amount \$5,000

USA Funds continues sponsorship of this annual event for state-level coordinating boards that are integral to the governing, financing, academic policies and other state-level interests of higher education.

The Victoria Foundation Inc.

Phoenix

Project Advocates for Education Luncheon
Geographic Scope Arizona
Amount \$5,000

This event recognizes individuals who have championed educational opportunities for Arizona residents. Proceeds from the event support educational scholarships for area residents.

USA Funds Employees Walk to Honor Colleague's Memory, Raise Funds

Every three minutes a woman in the United States is diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2007 that statistic hit home at USA Funds. Barb Davies, USA Funds product market strategist, was diagnosed with the disease. She passed away in 2008.

Because Davies was a longtime colleague and friend to many, the entire organization — and others in the financial aid community — felt her loss.

Today her memory lives on at USA Funds. During her chemotherapy, Davies took up painting, and one of her paintings hangs in a conference room at USA Funds' headquarters. And to honor her memory and help in the fight against breast cancer, a group of her co-workers banded together to create a walking team named Blisters for Barb.



Barb Davies

In 2005 Carole Ann Simpson, a USA Funds debt management consultant, started her annual participation in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Research in San Francisco. She walked in honor of her mother, who also had battled breast cancer.

By 2007, when Davies was diagnosed, George Covino, USA Funds senior director, debt management, and Anne Fischer, also a USA Funds debt management consultant, had joined the team. Together they walked in honor of Davies and other loved ones who had been touched by the disease.

Rewarding experience

"In 2007, we walked with a sense of hope," Simpson says. "But by 2008 Barb had passed, so 2008 was tough because it was a memory walk for Barb."

"Even with the sadness, the walk is a very rewarding experience, and emotional when you realize the impact of this disease. You reflect on the people in your life who have been affected by this disease, but you go from a moment of sadness to hope when you see all the people working together to find a cure."

This year the Blisters for Barb team has included Simpson, Covino and Fischer of USA Funds; Chris Conway and Dina Birmingham of NELA® Services; Nina Flood, formerly of USA Funds Services; and Nancy Hines of USA Funds Services.

Last year the team honored Hines, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer. This year she was able to walk with the team — cancer-free.

At the Avon Walk in San Francisco this July, team members joined more than 2,800 participants from 42 states, including 256 breast cancer survivors. The walk is a two-day, 39 mile event.

Efforts net \$30,000

Overall, the Blisters for Barb team has raised more than \$30,000 to help fight breast cancer.

Each person who walks in the Avon event must raise \$1,800. The money goes not only to research for a cure, but for awareness and treatment for those who cannot afford it.

Team members credit their USA Funds colleagues and the USA Funds gift matching program as great resources for fund raising. Through the USA Funds gift matching program, USA Funds contributes one dollar for each dollar an employee contributes to a civic, community, health or human service organization up to a total USA Funds contribution of \$5,000 per calendar year.

"The USA Funds matching gifts program has helped our team members tremendously," says Covino. "USA Funds' focus on its philanthropic mission also encourages employees to fulfill our own philanthropic mission. It's been a huge asset to our team."

The Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Research season consists of nine walks in locations across the nation. In October a Blisters for Barb team will participate in the Avon Walk in New York City. In 2010 the team will walk in Boston and again in San Francisco.

As the members of the Blisters for Barb team continue their efforts to honor Davies' memory and raise funds to find a cure and prevent breast cancer, they often are in contact with Davies' family. Davies' mother, Kay Meisenbach, is a supporter of the team and its efforts.

"I am very honored to contribute to Blisters for Barb and especially grateful to the team for their continued remembrance of Barb's life," Meisenbach says. "It's great to see her memory live on as we fight to find a cure for this disease."



Carole Ann Simpson, from left, George Covino and Anne Fischer of USA Funds and Nancy Hines of USA Funds Services take part in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Research in San Francisco.

USA Funds-Supported Center Helps Hundreds

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Grace Smith, USA Funds customer relations manager for Arizona, left, and Kim Naig of Grand Canyon University are among those who attended the grand opening of the College Depot in Phoenix.

The College Depot, shown below at its grand opening, is located within the Burton Barr Central Library downtown.

Depot. "We are growing and learning, and so excited by how well we have been received, and by the number of students we have been able to help."

Meeting students' needs

The Burton Barr Central Library is the site for the College Depot. Centrally located in Phoenix, the library is nationally recognized for its Teen Central Center — which attracts nearly 400 youth a day, many of whom are in the same target audience as that of the College Depot.

The staff at the College Depot worked with students when designing the facility and curriculum to ensure they were meeting the needs of the students.

Two College Depot/outreach advisers join Reno as the center's full-time staff. Both advisers are bilingual. Before the facility opened, the outreach coordinators began working in the community to build excitement for the College Depot opening and bringing curriculum and programming to organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix.

"The students and families we have worked with are thrilled to have this resource available to them," says Reno. "The schools are excited as well because guidance counselors just don't have the resources to meet with each and every student to help them make a plan. We are working to fill that gap."

The College Depot features the use of Envictus Corp.'s Navigation 101, a Web-based college planning program that provides customized curricula and management of information for each student enrolled in the program. USA Funds has partnered with Envictus to bring Navigation 101 into select schools in a number of states, including Arizona. High schools use Navigation 101 in conjunction with a formal curriculum that uses



specific learning objectives to guide students through the process of planning for college.

"The advisers at the College Depot are hands-on and so willing to help," says Washington. "They are so in-depth with the help they give and show me step-by-step what I need to do to get to college. The center has truly been a blessing."

Embracing College Access to Enhance Community

By
Deborah Dillon
Director, City of Phoenix Youth and Education Programs

Creating a college-going culture in Phoenix is not only a noble goal, it is an economic imperative if the city is going to thrive.

The City of Phoenix is committed to increasing the college completion rates for low-income youth. As the fifth largest city in the country, Phoenix wields tremendous economic potential both regionally and nationally. Yet, according to the U.S. Census, Phoenix ranks 49th in the country in the percentage of 25-year-olds who have a baccalaureate degree and 42nd in the percentage of people age 25 and older who have completed high school, including those with General Educational Development diplomas.

Changing these statistics by creating a “college-going culture” is a priority for the City of Phoenix. Although the City does not have jurisdiction over schools, it has been involved in education in a variety of ways — through an arts-in-education grants program, after-school programs, school resource officers, and a youth and education commission.

In 2006 the City ramped up its efforts in education.

Led by Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon, in 2006 the city’s voters approved an unprecedented bond issue to build an Arizona State University campus in downtown Phoenix. The City of Phoenix also was instrumental in bringing the University of Arizona College of Medicine to downtown Phoenix. The building of these campuses brought new opportunities to make college accessible to first generation, low-income students.

Even with a campus in downtown Phoenix and five community colleges within our boundaries, however, access to information about going to or returning to college still was not readily available to all students. So, with the vision of creating a community-based college access center, the Phoenix Youth and Education Office convened representatives from organizations interested in college access for first-generation college students.

Planning College Depot

The group developed a business plan, with financial assistance from The Education Resources Inc. (TERI) — and the idea of the College Depot was born.

Representatives from GEAR UP, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and USA Funds took part in the initial planning process and provided grants to raise the necessary funds to build and operate the College Depot.

As with many projects, timing was everything. The Burton Barr Central Library in downtown Phoenix was undergoing a redesign, and the mission of the College Depot was compatible with the library’s vision of an information mall on the second floor of the library. The library committed 2,400 square feet of dedicated space for the concept. A Community Development Block Grant enabled us to hire an architect



Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon addresses those attending the opening for the College Depot.

to plan and build a contemporary space. The design yielded an enclosed space that is flexible for working with students and parents in large groups and in private consultations.

Now the dream of making college information more accessible to Phoenix students and families is a reality. College Depot opened its doors on June 10 and already has helped more than 600 students and families.

Community effort

Someone once asked me the question, “How did College Depot become so embedded in the community?”

As I considered that question, I thought about how the planning group came together because of the individuals’ passion about college access. They invested their time in planning the concept, assisting with fund raising, hiring a director, and creating a vision that college planning should be accessible to everyone. The mayor and Phoenix City Council endorsed the project, and the Phoenix Public Library believed in the project as part of its larger mission to provide information and resources to the community.

And I arrived at my answer: College Depot is entrenched in the community because College Depot *belongs* to the community.

In This Issue of USA Funds Education Partnerships

USA Funds-Supported Center Helps Hundreds Plan for College

Learn how the College Depot is guiding Phoenix students on the path to pursuing their dreams.

USA Funds Employees Walk to Honor Colleague's Memory, Raise Funds

See how USA Funds staffers are joining in the fight against breast cancer and honoring a co-worker who lost her own battle against the disease.

Embracing College Access to Enhance Community

Read why an official from the City of Phoenix says the city's administration is committed to advancing higher education access for local citizens.



Walk for breast cancer research

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