



When I was in third grade, I had absolutely no idea how to spell scholarship, but I somehow managed to win one. Everyone in my class had to write an essay, "Why I Love My Mother." I can't remember what I wrote, but it was definitely fridge-worthy. Back then, I'd do anything to earn a spot on the harvest gold door of our trusted, old Whirlpool. It was the magnetized, centralized, optimized place for all kids' achievements (and the weekly grocery list).

In high school, I learned another thing about scholarships. These awards often came with rewards. And, since I wanted to go to Middlebury, a private liberal arts college in Vermont, I was going to need some serious financial support. My benefactor turned out to be Mr. Jones. Dow Jones. The largest business and financial news companies in the world. Since my dad worked for the *Cape Cod Times*, I qualified for scholarships from the newspaper's parent company. With the help of the Joneses, I kept up with the Joneses. I went from fridge-worthy to Middlebury-worthy.

Back in the '90s, there weren't many scholarship opportunities on the Cape. In fact, The Cape Cod Foundation was established in 1989 with \$10,000 in seed funding from the Snow Family in Orleans. They established a scholarship in memory of Harry Snow which is still awarded annually. After taking that single step, this organization hit the ground running. In the last decade alone, our annual scholarship awards have grown 60%. Today, the Foundation and our supporting organization, The Cape Cod Association, award \$940,000 in scholarships annually.

In my last column, [Our Roaring Twenties](#), I told you that we will share more about our ongoing strategies for Youth Development under our Vision 2020 initiative this year. As you can see by our scholarship history, we've been championing youth education from the start, and we'll continue to do so. We're also interested in providing wrap-around support for young people in programs we're helping to fund. For example, Y Achievers of YMCA Cape Cod provides exceptional college preparation and career exploration for youth ages 12-18, so we're exploring ways to involve donors who would like to provide educational support to these young people.

Awarding multiple-year scholarships is also becoming more and more important. It's not enough to get high school seniors into colleges and universities. We need to help them stay there. Many drop out because financial support drops off after their first year; others are assuming sizeable student loans.

In addition, because the landscape of education has changed drastically since the Foundation started thirty years ago, we need to be responsive to that change. And, as a community foundation, we can. Not everyone follows the same educational path, so we build resources that adapt to the needs of the community. Right now, in addition to "traditional" scholarships, we need—and encourage our donors to create--scholarships for adults returning to school and for students to attend trade schools, obtain professional licensures and pursue professional development courses.

I would not have made it to Middlebury without a scholarship. The opportunity to earn my MBA in Nonprofit Management from Suffolk University would never have happened either. My guess is you have similar stories to tell.

There are 80 scholarship funds with the Foundation. Each one was established by an individual, family, business owner or community group who cares about education and cares about the community. Together with the Cape Cod Association, we awarded scholarships to about 400 students in 2018. That's something to feel great about. However, with over 800 applications each year, many deserving students are inevitably left out.

If you would like to help, you can certainly create your own scholarship. You can also contribute to [The Cape Cod Foundation Scholarship](#). With help from numerous donors, we have been able to increase our support from this fund from one award to multiple, multi-year awards each year.

There's no telling what we can do when we champion education together. Although this isn't the type of award you can put on your fridge, helping to change someone's life is pretty rewarding.

PS: My dad would kill me if I didn't mention I also won the next elementary essay contest: "Why I Love My Father."