

In My Lane

DARA GANNON

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If It Ain't Broke...

Thomas Bertram "Bert" Lance served as director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Jimmy Carter. During his first year, Lance resigned from the administration because of rumblings of mismanagement and corruption when he was chairman of the board of Calhoun First National Bank of Georgia. Scandals in Washington come and go, but great sayings live forever. Lance is best known for his quote in the May 1977 issue of *Nation's Business*:

Bert Lance believes he can save Uncle Sam billions if he can get the government to adopt a simple motto: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." He explains: "That's the trouble with government: Fixing things that aren't broken and not fixing things that are broken."

Well that's good advice—and as political as this story gets. This story's really about a new project, a comprehensive evaluation of The Cape Cod Foundation's Scholarship Program. It's not broken. In fact, it's quite successful. But, here's why we're fixin' to fix it.

SCHOLARSHIP BACKGROUND

The Cape Cod Foundation was established in 1989 with a single \$10,000 scholarship fund. Today, we administer over 90 scholarship funds for many educational paths. In the past 5 years alone, the amount of scholarship dollars awarded has increased 79%.

Last month, The Foundation awarded \$910,687 to 156 local students. Our partnering organization, the [Cape Cod Association](#), awarded an additional \$552,000 to 309 students. Together, the organizations provided more than \$1.46 million in scholarship support in 2022. We celebrated this milestone at a reception for scholarship donors, volunteers, and recipients at the newly remodeled Cape Cod Regional Technical High School in Harwich. Without the support of donors and the 242 volunteers who donated 1,230 hours to the scholarship selection process, these scholarship programs would not be possible. Many thanks also to Lisa Oliver, President and CEO of The Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod, for sponsoring and speaking at the reception, and to our guest speaker, Christin Marshall, Executive Director of EforAll Cape Cod and a past scholarship recipient.

REBOOT OR RE-IMAGINE?

While we've experienced 30+ years of growth, we've also experienced 30+ years of change: changes at the Foundation; changes in our community; changes in education; changes in the world. Since we've consistently strengthened the program over the years, an annual reboot will still have an impact. However, by undertaking a more comprehensive evaluation of what we do and its effectiveness, we can make an even greater impact in the years to come.

We've come into this process with an open mind and a lot of questions: What are the needs? What are the gaps? Who are we serving? What are the barriers to access? What data will help inform our decisions? Are there wrap-around services that would benefit students? What support do students need beyond tuition? How do we build and invest future resources? Does our work reflect our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion? [DEI STATEMENT](#)

We've also come into the project with a mighty team. President and CEO Kristin O'Malley, Scholarship Officer Mary Beth Burwood, and I are leading the initiative with direction and support from our Board of Directors. Two board members have extensive backgrounds in education. Diana Lam, the Board lead on the project, is a retired educator and change agent with a national reputation for raising student academic and artistic achievement. In 2016, she retired from Conservatory Lab Charter School, a music-infused public elementary school in Boston. Vice Chairman Patricia Maguire Meservey served as president of Salem State University, one of the largest state universities in the Commonwealth, from 2007-2017.

We've also partnered with Michelle Duso, Founder and CEO of Power4Good, which provides strategic planning, project management, program and organizational development, policy advisement, and training and facilitation services to nonprofit organizations and city/state government. Areas of expertise include youth engagement and development, process design and facilitation, organizational development, coalition and system building, and equity and inclusion.

Throughout this project, we'll also be reaching out to our partners who are also deeply invested in education and scholarship opportunities: The Cape Cod Foundation's Scholarship Fund Holders and Scholarship Committee Members; the Cape Cod Association Board of Directors and Scholarship Committee Members; student applicants and recipients, Cape Cod Community College and high schools across the region; and other community partners.

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Like most Foundation initiatives, this will take time. But it will be time well spent. We will use the data and intel to inform our work and create a stronger, more impactful program. And, as the largest scholarship provider on Cape Cod, we will share this research with other interested parties to increase community knowledge and support.

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