

HOPE

GIVING CIRCLE

Helping Others through the
Power of Education

Newsletter

HOPE GIVING CIRCLE

The HOPE Giving Circle brings together influential women in the community with a common goal of supporting students pursuing higher education at Harper College and empowering them to reach their full potential through scholarship support, mentoring and leadership development opportunities. The program provides financial support and on-going mentoring for Harper College students who are completing their final year at Harper and transferring to a four-year college or university to pursue a bachelor's degree. Each HOPE Scholarship award is valued at \$10,000. 100% of donations to the HOPE Giving Circle are tax deductible. Visit harpercollege.edu/hope to learn more.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The HOPE Giving Circle has **44 members**.

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED OR PLEDGES RECEIVED

\$416,000

SAVE THE DATE

HOPE Giving Circle
Mocktails and Cocktails
Thursday, January 23, 2025



FALL 2024

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



“Dreaming BIG: 10 for 10!”

Since awarding our first scholarship in 2016, the HOPE Giving Circle helped 32 students pursue their dreams. As a founding member of HOPE, I did not imagine we would impact so many students.

We dreamed big! We increased the number of awards granted from one to five each year. We supported students who are now leaders in fields such as engineering, nursing, healthcare, business and education.

In 2025, we will dare to dream even bigger. Next year marks the 10th anniversary of that first HOPE Scholarship award. To mark this milestone, we're setting a goal to award \$10,000 scholarships to ten deserving students in 2025.

Just imagine: with your help, we can award ten \$10,000 scholarships to mark the 10th anniversary of HOPE. Will you join me in reaching this goal?

Please renew your membership, rejoin for this anniversary year, decide to become a member, or add a bit more to your pledge. Together we will achieve even more than seemed possible 10 years ago.

In the coming pages, you will read about our HOPE scholars and alumni who are becoming impactful leaders in their respective fields. They inspire us to continue our collective efforts by fulfilling their dreams.

Thank you,

Kathleen Gilmer

Kathy Gilmer, Chair
HOPE Giving Circle Executive Committee

Annual Scholarship Awards Reception



HOPE Scholars, alumni, and members gather at the ninth annual HOPE Scholarship Awards Reception.

2024 HOPE Recipients celebrated at annual scholarship awards reception

The HOPE Giving Circle celebrated the newest class of HOPE scholarship recipients at the scholarship reception in August. This year, the group awarded \$10,000 scholarships to five Harper students: Sonia Ajakaiye, Yosephine Lee, Masuma Muttaqi, Audrey Parker and Ellen Trost-Rekich. Each student spoke about their educational and career goals at the awards reception.

“We were impressed by each of the HOPE Scholarship Recipients. All are driven, hardworking individuals who are juggling so much to move forward and build a sustainable career,” said Anne Pepper, HOPE Giving Circle member and member of the scholarship selection committee. “We are delighted to support these future leaders.”

The collective impact of the HOPE Giving Circle

2016 vs 2024

(HOPE Launch) : (Cumulative)

28
donors

52
donors

\$20,000
raised

\$416,000
raised

1
scholarship

32
scholarships
(5 awarded for
2024-2025
academic year)

\$10,000
awarded

\$320,000
awarded

Meet the 2024 HOPE Scholarship Recipients!

Sonia Ajakaiye



Sonia Ajakaiye is a first-generation college student from Nigeria who moved to the U.S. in high school. She is entering her final year at Harper College and working toward her Associate in Science in nursing. Sonia is interested in neonatal, maternal, or pediatric nursing and aims to specialize in mother-and-baby or neonatal intensive care. Following graduation from Harper, she plans to transfer to a four-year institution to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing and eventually a master's degree to help achieve her career goals.

Yosephine Lee

Yosephine Lee is starting her final year at Harper College, working toward her Associate in Science in nursing. Knowing early on that pursuing a career in nursing was her goal, she began pre-requisites for the Harper nursing program as a sophomore in high school. Yosephine finds inspiration from her mother, who she cites as her motivation for entering the field. She plans to transfer to the University of Illinois Chicago after graduation from Harper to earn a Bachelor of Science in nursing and continue to earn a Master of Science to become a nurse practitioner.



Masuma Muttaqi



Masuma Muttaqi is an international student from Pakistan who chose to pursue higher education in the U.S. at Harper College. She is entering her second year at Harper and working toward her Associate in Science, focusing on clinical psychology. She notes that growing up in a culture with a stigma around mental health led to her passion for making a difference by generating understanding regarding mental health and psychology. She hopes to transfer to the University of Illinois Chicago or the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to earn her bachelor's in psychology.

Audrey Parker

Audrey Parker is entering her second year at Harper College where she is studying engineering, with a goal of obtaining a Bachelor of Science in biomedical engineering. She notes that her interest in the field stems from observing her mother's career as an oncology pharmacist. She hopes to pursue areas such as regenerative medicine, robotic biomaterials, nanorobotics, neural engineering or soft robotics.



Ellen Trost-Rekich

Ellen Trost-Rekich will begin her second year at Harper College in the fall of 2024, studying environmental engineering. A long-time student of Mandarin Chinese with a passion for Chinese culture, Ellen graduated high school early to study on an NSLI-Y scholarship in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, for a year. She cites the experience in that city as further igniting her passion for making positive changes to mitigate environmental crises and ensure a better future for the next generation. She plans to pursue her bachelor's degree at Arizona State University and has her sights set on an eventual dual master's degree in environmental engineering and Mandarin Chinese.



Scan the QR code to read the HOPE Scholars full bios.



HOPE

GIVING CIRCLE

Updates from HOPE Scholarship Alumni

Alex Aleksandrov

Hello HOPE Family! Warm greetings from sunny Florida! I currently work as an outpatient heart failure and left-ventricular assist device registered nurse coordinator in Tampa, FL. Additionally, I am pursuing my Master of Science in nursing, specializing as a family nurse practitioner, at the University of South Florida, with an anticipated graduation in Spring 2026. The most joyous news I have to share is the recent arrival of my daughter, Sofia, in June of this year. She has been a true blessing, and my family and I are so in love with her. I hope this message finds you all well. I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming 10th-year scholarship awards.



Dechen Atsatsang

Hi Hope Giving Circle! I'm excited to share that I'm now attending Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, pursuing a bachelor's degree in international politics with a minor in justice and peace studies. This past summer, I studied Mandarin Chinese as part of the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship Program. I traveled to Dharamsala, India, to participate in the International Tibet Youth Forum organized by the Central Tibetan Administration and the Diasporas United: Cross-Movement Immersion Fellowship organized by United Uyghur Youth, both of which were very impactful. Your support has been instrumental in helping me achieve these goals and continue my journey, and I'm deeply grateful.



Emily Alvia

Hi HOPE Giving Circle! Wow, time has truly been flying by; I am currently a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign studying Mechanical Engineering! Last academic year, I was a part of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, where I helped develop a drive train for the annual engineering open house. Over the summer, I interned at Northrop Grumman as a Mechanical Intern, and I am excited to announce that I accepted a full-time offer. Thank you all for your support, especially my mentor, Georgeanna; the HOPE community has meant so much to me. I can't wait until I graduate and can give back to HOPE and pour into the next generation.



Marion Bensing

Hello HOPE! After two amazing years, I am very happy to say that I have graduated Magna Cum Laude from Boston University with a Bachelor of Science in Behavior and Health! In September, I started my first year in the Rush Doctoral Occupational Therapy program, and I'm excited about the future ahead.



Elda Holbrook

I just started the RN-to-BSN program at Purdue University; I am currently working as a Neuro ICU nurse at Lutheran General Hospital. Right now, I am focusing on being a better nurse every day and taking care of my family. The acronym HOPE, as the name of this scholarship, describes perfectly what it gave me: a hope for a better future, which I am accomplishing.



HOPE

GIVING CIRCLE

Alumni

Kayla Karbowski

Hello HOPE Giving Circle! I am currently working on receiving my master's degree in literacy leadership from Roosevelt University. I will be done this December. After that, I will take the reading specialist test for the state of Illinois and will add that to my professional educator's license. Currently, I am a sixth-grade teacher for the Intensive Instructional Program, which is a special education program at District U-46. I am incredibly grateful to the HOPE Giving Circle for not only the financial support they have given me but also the confidence they have helped me find in myself. Thank you all for believing in me.



Rachel Quiros

Since graduation, I passed my nursing boards. I began officially working at the beginning of July as an R.N. I am currently working at a cancer-focused hospital system called City of Hope as an oncology nurse navigator in an outpatient clinic. I soon will begin additional training to be an infusion nurse as well. I started my R.N. to BSN program this August at Purdue Northwest University. Without the help of HOPE, I wouldn't have been able to afford to continue my education so I could reach the goal of getting my bachelor's degree in nursing immediately after graduating!



Amanda Mirczuk

Hello everyone! This summer, I was very fortunate to have served on the HOPE Scholarship Committee as the HOPE Alumna and present five scholarships with Anne Pepper at the 2024 HOPE Scholarship Awards Reception. Since graduating from DePaul University with my biological sciences degree, I have found a job working for the medical technology company Stryker as a Healthcare Data Analyst. I am happy that I can help make a positive difference for hospital care systems around the country and I am excited to see where this career journey takes me. I hope you enjoy the rest of our colorful autumn season.



Annie Rosas

Hi HOPE members! I am currently attending Roosevelt University for elementary education with a minor in ELL and an endorsement in special education. I am loving school so far and have been enjoying getting to be in more education classes! After Roosevelt, I plan on going to Columbia College to further my degree and get my master's in deaf education so I can teach in an all-deaf elementary school. I am so grateful to be able to continue my passion in education and to further my education in pursuing a career with working with ASL students. Thank you again for all of your support.



Arianna Mormino

Hello everyone, I hope you are all doing well! I can't believe I am now in my third year of veterinary school at the University of Wisconsin, and this year, we will be performing our first spay surgeries! I had a great summer getting to see family and friends while also working. Thank you again for all you do!



Lydia Schultz

This past June, I obtained my Bachelor of Arts in communication and media from DePaul University, graduating with honors and the Summa Cum Laude distinction — completely debt-free, largely thanks to HOPE! In October, I will be teaching English abroad in Madrid, and it will be my first time living abroad. I can't wait!



ni

JOIN THE HOPE GIVING CIRCLE

Membership: Begins with a minimum annual gift or pledge of \$1,000.

Supporter: Begins with a minimum annual gift or pledge of \$250.

100% of your donation is tax deductible and will be directed to the HOPE Scholarship Fund.

Are you 70 1/2 or older? Consider making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to support HOPE students. Contact information below.

To join or learn more, visit harpercollege.edu/hope or contact Shannon Hynes at 847.925.6701 or at shynes@harpercollege.edu

HOPE Executive Committee

Kathy Gilmer, Chairperson
Lisa Christie
Barbara Cragan
Susan Heitsch
Linda Kolbusz-Kosan
Linda Lang
Ella Liberman
Marcela Melendez
Sam Oliver
Michele Smith
Robin Turpin
Melanie Witt

Hazel M. Rilki
Louise Robb
Susan Rogers
Louise Schrank
Dr. Michelé E. Smith
Renee Spacapan
Judy Springer
Judith Stetson
Patti Stickney
Dr. Robin S. Turpin
Sheryl Van Anne
Melanie Witt
Dr. Anna Marie Yates
Heather Zoldak

HOPE Giving Circle Members (\$1000+ contributions)

Dee Beaubien
Lynda Bollman
Dolores Campagna
Joan Carlson
Lisa Christie
Barbara Cragan
Dr. Polly Davenport
Prof. Nancy L. Davis
Amanda Duval-Norwood
Alansa Ferguson
Kathleen Gilmer
Beth Hamparian
Kathy Hartwig
Susan Heitsch
Bonnie Henry
Carol M. Johnson
Dr. Tamara Johnson
Linda Kolbusz-Kosan
Linda J. Lang
Laura Leber
Markel Corporation
Dr. Judith Marwick
Dr. Elizabeth McKay
Georgeanna Mehr
Veronica Neuendorf
Mormino
Sam Oliver
Jody Paine
Anne Pepper
Dr. Christine Poziemski
Dr. Avis Proctor

Program Supporters (\$250+ annual contribution)

Bartsch Fasteners, Inc.
Anne Campbell
Mary Beth Dunne
Linda A. Frank
Deborah Gabriel
Donna Harwood
Rich Hohol
Shannon Hynes
Joanne Ivory
Maria Knuth
Joanne Leski
Lidia Meneses Palma
Amanda Mirczuk

Program Donors (up to \$249 contribution)

Paula Akialis
Donna Brand
Amy Desautels
Sheila M. Foley
Becky Gill
Laura C. Johnson
Darlene Kerwin
Melissa Murray
Stephen A. Petersen
Val Pientka
Pearl S. Ratunil
Raeann D. Shedd
Stryker
Suzette Tolentino
Dr. Ruth Williams

Harper College EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

1200 West Algonquin Road
Palatine, IL 60067

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Palatine, IL
Permit No. 2862

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

PLATINUM SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



**Ascension
Alexian Brothers**



**Ascension
Saint Alexius**

BRONZE SPONSORS

Financial Elements, Inc.
Linda J. Lang
Witt Law, P.C.

BUSINESS CHAMPIONS

Follett Higher Education Group
Heartland Bank & Trust
L & M Financial
Pinderski & Pinderski, Ltd.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Event sponsorships help underwrite the cost of these events so that **100%** of member donations can go toward scholarships. Please contact Shannon Hynes at 847.925.6701 or shynes@harpercollege.edu for more information.

Harper College is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender-related identity, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation. 32628 10/24 KD PSD