

# IMPACT REPORT



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**Pinellas Education  
Foundation**

Inspired minds transform lives

# A MEMORABLE YEAR – For Many Reasons

It seems like a vast understatement to call 2019-20 a year to remember. In March, the pandemic upended the entire educational landscape throughout the country – and for all of us involved in the work of the Pinellas Education Foundation. As virtual learning took the place of in-person classrooms, our donors and supporters rallied around the students and teachers who needed them most. It's because of you that we were able to move quickly into action to transform our programs into online settings and provide additional help to students in need. Whether it was internet access or virtual mentoring for students on their way to college, many members of the community stepped up to help through volunteering and donations.

In this annual Impact Report, you'll read more about the Digital Equity Project, along with pieces on our statewide Take Stock in Children Mentor of the Year, the life-changing programs of Reading Recovery and the College and Career Centers, and a late donor whose planned gift will carry on his legacy and commitment to education. Each story is an illustration of our focus as a Foundation – to advance student achievement, particularly by closing achievement gaps and preparing students for all possible options after high school whether that is college, career technical education, military or a career. This year was memorable for so many other reasons than the pandemic. Because of our community supporters, we created transformational programs, awarded millions of dollars in scholarships, and enhanced the educational experiences for thousands of students. **Thank you for your continued support!**

## OUR IMPACT by the Numbers in 2019-2020

### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS OUTCOMES

**97%** of our Take Stock in Children students graduate high school, **16% HIGHER** than other Pinellas County low-income high school graduates and well over the national average of **65%** for low-income students



**9,371** 

Career and Technical certifications earned by PCS students

**1,862**


Future Plans online career assessments completed

**100**

Career and Technical Credentials completed through Youth Connect

**747** Mentors held more than **20,000** mentor sessions 

**276** Youth Connect students served

**\$3,680,000** in scholarships awarded: **539 TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS** 


### SUPPORTS FOR TEACHER EXCELLENCE




**306** teachers trained

**128** classroom grants funded 

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

**719** students participated in Reading Recovery - including **184** students enrolled in one-on-one lessons for students having extreme difficulty with reading and writing, and an additional **535** students who received group lessons. In addition, **60** teachers were trained. 

#### Closing the Gap

**2,813** students directly impacted and a **4.6%** literacy proficiency improvement for boys grades 3-5 

## MENTOR OF THE YEAR MIKE HOKE STRIKES A CHORD

For the past six years, Mike Hoke has been breaking the ice with students in need of guidance – armed with his ever-present guitar, a box of donuts he brings to each session, and his philosophical discussions on life and the future.

This is how Hoke changes lives for the Pinellas Education Foundation. The dedicated Take Stock in Children mentor has made a positive impact on more than 20 Take Stock scholars through his down-to-earth, honest guidance and ability to develop strong personal connections.

He has become a mentoring fixture at Osceola Fundamental High School – and is now the recipient of the prestigious honor as Take Stock in Children’s statewide 2020 Mentor of the Year. He was chosen from more than 9,900 mentors across the state of Florida.

Osceola’s Take Stock volunteer coordinator, Debbie Giovo, steered Hoke toward mentoring after volunteering as a guitar teacher. “We started with several kids, and just kept adding students because he does such great work in a group,” she says. “The kids just love him.”

Former mentee Josh Jones, now a sophomore at St. Petersburg College, first attended one of Hoke’s sessions as a junior and stayed through his senior year.

“I didn’t really have my head on straight as a junior, and I’d just come to the sessions and eat the donuts – we called him the Donut Man,” Jones recalls. “But after several meetings, I really started paying attention. He has all these stories and I realized I could learn from them. It definitely straightened me out.”

*“The students I’ve mentored – usually five or six students in a session – aren’t at a time of their lives where they’ll just open up their hearts and start talking. So my approach has always been to just start talking about my experiences. And gradually they open up.”*

– Mike Hoke, 2020 Take Stock in Children Mentor of the Year



Hoke was one of 747 Take Stock in Children mentors in Pinellas County who collectively logged more than 20,000 mentoring hours this past year – helping seniors graduate with scholarships worth more than \$3 million thanks to generous donor support.

## A NEW ROAD TO HELP STRUGGLING READERS



For Kaitlynn Crowe, the past few months have been marked with major changes – starting with a family move from Massachusetts to Florida in September. But the biggest difference isn’t geographical for the Pinellas mother of two: It has to do with her 6-year-old son Evan’s dramatic improvement in his literacy skills.

Consider it one more success story for Reading Recovery Pinellas, an innovative short-term reading intervention program funded by the Pinellas Education Foundation.

Now in its second year in Pinellas County Schools, the acclaimed national program provides one-to-one tutoring for first-graders struggling with reading. In spite of the disruption caused by COVID-19 last year,

*continued on page 3*



Reading Recovery saw tangible improvement among many of the 180-plus students enrolled in 12 elementary schools. And the program is building on that success, while continuing to allow teachers to get professional development training and earn graduate school credits.

Evan's Reading Recovery teacher, Christina Mont of Ponce de Leon Elementary, is a teacher-leader who trains other teachers in the program. She has been excited not only by his progress but by many of the first-graders in the program.

"I feel that Reading Recovery has given teachers and students the best possible window into how to teach reading – and how to make children successful readers," she says. "Children acquire literacy in different ways. We just try to set up a situation that will allow them to catch up and create a foundation that will help throughout their school years."

*"Evan was quite behind when school started, but I've seen such an improvement. He's putting sentences together and when he watches TV, he'll try to spell words or names out to himself. That's something I never saw before – he wasn't very interested in trying to learn to read because he didn't have the tools."*

– Kaitlynn Crowe, Parent

That includes students like Evan. "He just loves reading with Ms. Mont," his mother says. "The program has made such a huge difference for him."

## CREATING CRITICAL ACCESS TO ONLINE LEARNING

Long before the pandemic took hold, many students nationwide faced a formidable hurdle in tackling assignments online. Simply put, they lacked access. Often referred to as the "homework gap," the inability to log on and learn has posed a serious barrier to education.

In fact, a Pew research study found that among U.S. households with school-age children, 25 percent of Black households and 23 percent of Hispanic households were without high-speed Internet access. By comparison, just 10 percent of White households with children of school age could not connect online.

Fortunately, the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg decided to do something about the disparity three years ago.

*"The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg was a pioneer locally in addressing the issue."* – Stacy Baier, CEO of the Pinellas Education Foundation

The two foundations began partnering in 2017

to address how to make it possible for families in need to connect online. The result was a pilot program called the Digital Equity Project, making broadband Wi-Fi devices available to low-income students through the Pinellas County Schools laptop check-out program at Title 1 schools in order to expand Internet-based learning opportunities.

That work turned out to be crucial as COVID-19 became a stark reality in March. Within a matter of days, when more than 100,000 Pinellas students abruptly transitioned from in-person learning to online learning, the Digital Equity Project was already in place, distributing hotspots in partnership with Pinellas County Schools. The onset of the pandemic greatly amplified the need for access – and crucial support quickly materialized to make that possible.

The Tampa Bay Resiliency Fund – including the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, the Pinellas Community Foundation, Allegany Franciscan Ministries and United Way Suncoast – provided \$150,000 to increase access for families and students without the means to afford them. Many other individuals and companies, such as Tech Data and Suncoast Credit Union, soon came on board to contribute as well.

Early data analysis indicates that the learning loss caused by the pandemic was less than some people feared. But even as distance learning subsides, the need to support online learning opportunities will continue to be a long-term imperative.



# ELEVATING DREAMS WITH NEW COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTERS

Navigating the demands and intricacies of career planning and the college application process can be a formidable challenge for students and their parents. But this past year, that task became far less daunting.

Fueled by \$2.3 million in gifts from the Richard O. Jacobson Foundation and Helios Education Foundation, five College and Career Centers (CCC) were launched in 2019-20 as part of the Elevating Excellence program. The sites, located at Boca Ciega, Clearwater, Gibbs, Largo and Pinellas Park high schools, supported students and families in such key areas as: career pathway and college major exploration; college and career technical education selection and match; application development and submission; SAT/ACT preparation resources; college fair and admission events; financial aid and scholarship planning; and essay preparation and review.

More than 9,500 Pinellas County students were reached by the College and Career Centers in 2020. Yet the results were tangible in another sense. According to Clearwater High School's CCC manager Joanna Boruk, there has long been an information gap around the topic of post-secondary education.

Prior to the program, that lack of information often resulted in students, particularly low-income, first-generation college students, not taking the necessary steps to properly prepare for their pathway after high school graduation. Many students didn't realize there were important actions to take in high school to access a better school and make college more affordable, or that they could push further and dream bigger. That changed this year.



*“For first-generation students, the process was always so overwhelming that they didn't know where to start. For students whose parents went to college, the process had changed so much that parents felt lost in the new system. There was a paralyzing need for students to receive help.”*

— Joanna Boruk, CCC manager at Clearwater High

Ashly S., a senior at Clearwater High School, learned about the Center as a junior and it has helped her enormously. “The Center provided me with resources that I didn't even know I had access to,” she says. “They gave me opportunities to find and apply for scholarships and took the time to walk me through the process of applying for financial aid as well. I barely knew anything before I got in touch with the Center. And I don't believe I would be where I am in my college admissions process without them.”

## 2019-2020 REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

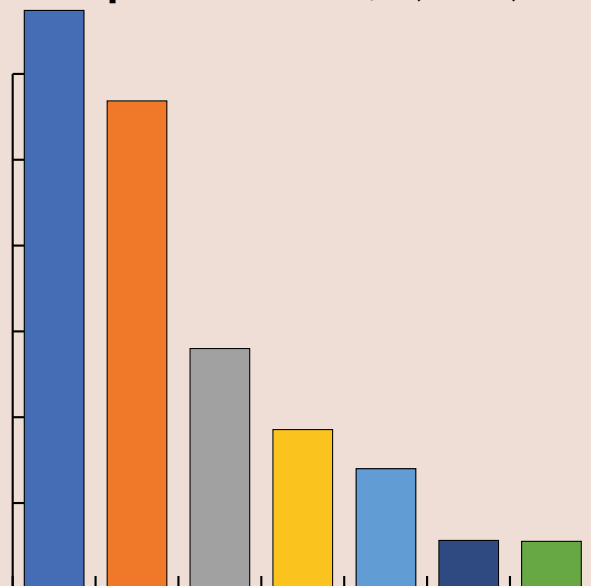
Audited Financial Statements as of June 30, 2020

Revenue: \$9,035,895



Bequests	25%
Foundations	21%
Government	14%
Corporations	12%
Individuals	11%
In-Kind Contributions	6%
Prepaid Scholarship Match Fund	5%
Organizations	4%
Investment Returns	2%

Expenditures: \$6,607,959



Programs and Grants	36%	Stavros Institute	7%
Take Stock in Children	28%	Fundraising	3%
Student Scholarships	14%	Community Relations and Events	3%
Administration	9%		

# A LIFE WELL-LIVED THAT NOW UPLIFTS OTHERS

Two unique education stories unfolded only miles apart in Largo decades ago. Years before the creation of the Pinellas Education Foundation in 1986, David Berolzheimer was busy teaching himself all he could about business and life.

Back in the early 1960s, David started out in a small Largo mobile home. He became a partner in Pinellas County's first import automobile dealership, Vitese, located in Clearwater. His modest abode allowed him the financial flexibility to pursue his passion for learning, as he traveled the world to gain first-hand experiences in different countries and cultures.

He worked on a kibbutz in Israel, crossed Siberia in a railcar, and explored the country in a restored aircraft after earning his pilot's license at St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport. He eventually got into real estate and developed a popular shopping center, the Plaza 100, in Belleair Bluffs. He also helped in the development of Largo Central Park and the city's Central Park Performing Arts Center.

Today, in an unexpected twist, his inspiring story and that of the Pinellas Education Foundation have converged. The result is a substantial gift to the Foundation by a kind-hearted, humble man who passed away in 2019 after making a generous donation to support his passion for education.

David grew up in Evanston, Illinois and, after graduating from military school in Virginia, he moved to Tarpon Springs. Following a time at St. Petersburg Junior College, he set off to enrich himself with life experiences – ultimately leading him two years ago to the Pinellas Education Foundation.



In late 2018, on the recommendation of a friend, David contacted the Foundation office to learn more about the organization's programs supporting students and teachers. He liked what he heard and more conversations took place, eventually giving him the opportunity to make a significant contribution of real estate to the Foundation. His gifts also

included a collection of heavy workshop equipment, precision tools and a library of books pertaining to various trades that were donated to Pinellas Technical College, where he took classes later in life, always eager to continue learning.

"If David were here," Bonnie says, "I think he would have simply

wanted to say thank you – for the opportunity to share these gifts with others so that they, too, might be able to further their education, to enjoy life, and possibly to someday give back."

David's legacy lives on now – through his adventurous spirit and hunger for knowledge, and with the countless students whose lives and futures will be enhanced through his giving.



**Pinellas Education  
Foundation**

Inspired minds transform lives

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