

Justice High School Scholarship Fund – 2024 Update



Dear Friends,

2024 was both rewarding and challenging for the Justice High School Scholarship Fund (JHSSF) and scholarship recipients. Rewarding because, with your help, we were able to award a record \$300,000 in scholarships to 91 outstanding Justice students. We also had the joy of co-hosting, with JHS, the **inaugural Scholars Breakfast**, which brought students, their families, and teachers and staff together to celebrate the achievement of our scholarship recipients. What a privilege to share in the pride and excitement of the students and their families. **Read about this wonderful event and some of the 2024 awardees inside.**

The need for scholarship support keeps growing. 505 students graduated from JHS this year compared to 450 in 2023. Application essays and teacher recommendations confirm that Justice graduates are enormously bright, resilient and focused on obtaining college degrees so that their lives and the lives of their families and our community will be better. We must and are finding new ways to support Justice students.

For example, community members may establish a single year or continuing scholarship to honor or memorialize a loved one. For their 25th reunion, the Class of '99 created a single-year award in memory of classmate, Jeannie Ahn, whose life and career were cut short by gastric cancer in 2003 after her graduation from UVA. Family and classmates of Rachel Nash, Class of 2005, established a continuing scholarship in her memory. Rachel enjoyed a meaningful career as a secondary school teacher and literacy coach before succumbing to breast cancer in 2022. **Read about this special scholarship inside.**

Though more challenges may lie ahead this year, we are more optimistic than ever, in no small part because of JHS' new principal, Sean Rolon, who will be a strong partner in making sure that the dream of college becomes a reality for the Class of 2025 and beyond. **An interview with Principal Rolon** is included inside. We are also excited about our **new "College Connections" program**, which pairs prior scholarship recipients at various colleges with new recipients at their schools who might need mentorship or just a guide to college life.

Please consider sharing your electronic contact information using the QR code on page 4. Using electronic communications allows us to spend less money on stamps and more on scholarships and offers quicker and more versatile ways of learning about the impact of your support. **We promise we won't inundate you with messages and will make it easy for you to opt-out at any time.**

We are truly grateful to all our generous donors, who have made it possible to navigate this year's challenges and many opportunities. Please make an online tax-deductible donation at www.jhsscholars.org/contribute or use the enclosed envelope to send a donation. **None of our work is possible without your support.**

Gratefully,
James R. Schroll, President
Justice High School Scholarship Fund



In a room filled with laughter and excitement, Justice High School Scholarship Fund (JHSSF) winners gathered this past June for the first-ever Awards Breakfast. Held before the Justice High School Convocation, it was an opportunity for teachers, staff, families, and volunteers to celebrate the achievements of JHSSF scholars.

Addressing the gathering, 2024 graduate and scholarship winner Maysam Ider talked about what the scholarships mean to students:

"It is a symbol of hope, empowerment, and trust. It is a reminder that our hard work and determination are recognized and valued. As we move forward with this scholarship, we commit to using it wisely, staying focused on our goals, and making a positive impact in our communities. We will continue to strive for excellence, push beyond our limits, and make our mark in the world."

Ider, who is now attending Georgetown University, added, "To my fellow scholars, let us continue to support each other and lift each other up as we embark on this new chapter."

The breakfast was also attended by scholarship winners from the Bailey's Crossroads Rotary Club, Thurgood Marshall Fund, and Casey Schulman Foundation. These groups also provide scholarships exclusive to Justice High School students.

JHSSF board members and JHS College and Career Specialist Deidra Anderson planned the breakfast because the number of scholarship recipients has grown so large that it is no longer possible to recognize them all during the school's award ceremony - a wonderful sign of growth and success!



JHSSF was excited to launch the new **"College Connection"** program this summer, to connect recent JHS graduates with returning students at the same college. In this first year, nearly two-dozen past JHSSF scholarship recipients (from the classes of 2021-2023), representing 12 different colleges, volunteered to serve as on-campus "guides" to answer questions and share their experiences to help the incoming first-year students adjust to college life. One guide, Laura, shared, "I think this program is a wonderful idea and I would have benefited from it when I was in high school since I am a first generation student!"

IMPACT - THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Since our inception in 2005, the Justice High School Scholarship Fund and our partners have awarded close to \$3 million to help over 1,000 Justice graduates take the important first step toward a college degree.

CLASS OF 2024 IMPACT

91
scholarship
recipients

\$300k
in
scholarships
awarded

99%
took
IB
classes

79%
first in their
family to at-
tend college

92%
speak a
language other
than English
at home

97%
were eligible
for free or
reduced-price
lunch

80%
Pell Grant
eligible

RECIPIENT SPOTLIGHT

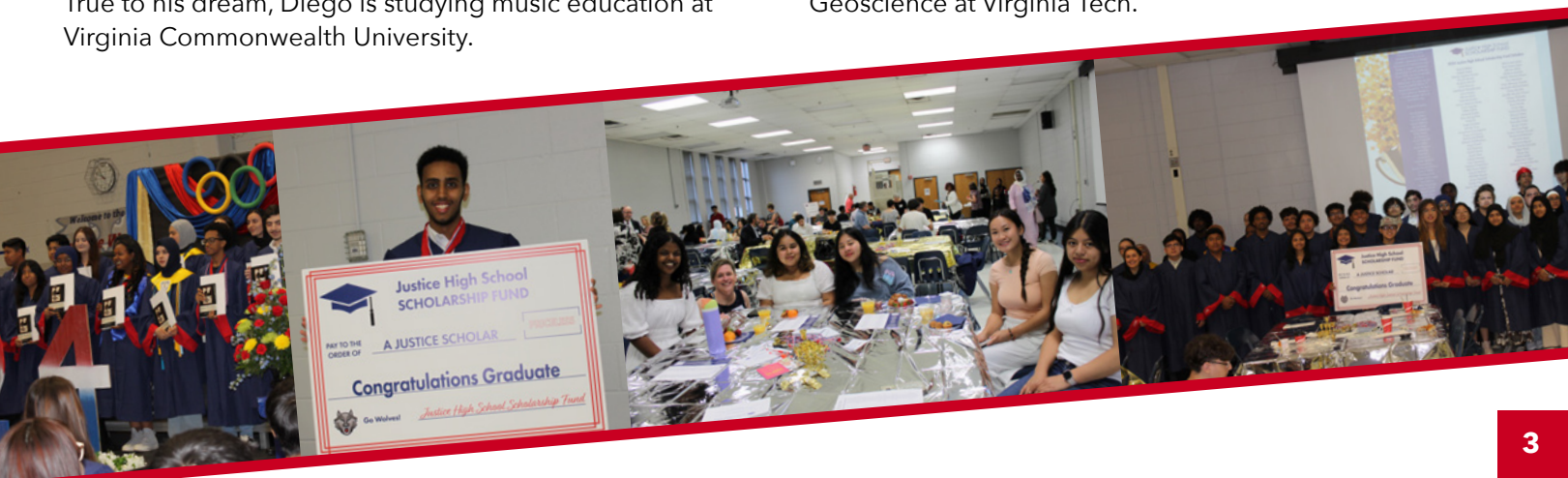
We are proud of all 91 Justice High School Scholarship Fund recipients in 2024. They have made impressive accomplishments, often achieved in the face of major obstacles in their personal lives. These young people are resilient, hard-working, community-oriented, and motivated. We wish you could meet them all, but here are some of their stories.

Started in 2023 by a grateful alum, the Resilience Scholarship is awarded to a student who has a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence and pursuit of a four-year college degree, and has displayed courage, compassion, and curiosity on the journey. **Janna** was chosen both because of her academic excellence, which includes an extraordinary 4.4 GPA as an IB diploma candidate, and because of her "compassion and collaborative spirit," as noted by a teacher and echoed by her counselor and the president of the community center where she volunteers. The child of immigrants from the Middle East, Janna started a club at Justice HS helping address mental health issues, represented Northern Virginia at a national convention focused on civil rights and liberties, and actively participated in the Science Honor Society and STEM Club. Janna will pursue the fields of biology and medicine at George Mason University, motivated by her goal of affecting positive change.

Diego is the 2024 recipient of the Ms. Ozzi Mask scholarship, given to honor the retired Stuart teacher who taught English and Journalism, and who was also a sponsor of Raiders' Digest, cheerleading, and drama. Diego is passionate about music and aspires to be a music teacher. Starting in grade school, Diego has been an integral part of the Fairfax County Band program, playing in the concert and marching band at Justice, earning placement as a clarinet player in All-District and All-State band, and serving as assistant band director. Diego has overcome significant adversity; he lost his mother early in life, and his father worked long hours. During his Sophomore year, Diego began helping middle school students after school to learn to play music, which gave him immense satisfaction. He realized he could do what he loved while also helping others. True to his dream, Diego is studying music education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Katerin will study nursing at Simmons University—a fitting choice for someone with "a heart of giving," notes her JHS counselor. Facing a serious medical issue in her late teens, Katerin emigrated to the U.S. from Peru. Ever optimistic, she literally leaped at the opportunities she discovered. Within just months of entering the U.S., Katerin successfully applied for two prestigious summer programs—Youth Engaged in Science via Smithsonian Natural History Museum and Ready to Lead at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute—a feat that "blew away" her AVID teacher and IB extended essay advisor. She also pursued an IB diploma. From working at the Smithsonian Museum to launching a student group to support UNICEF's work, Katerin actively seeks to connect past to present as a means of enriching the future. She intends to use her experience and learning to uplift her community and advocate for a more accessible and equitable healthcare system.

Andy is the recipient of the Norene Thomas Scholarship, given to honor a committed Stuart parent, PTSA member, and Band Booster volunteer. Andy views his passion, paleontology, as a way to "learn more about this beautiful planet" and the "many more secrets and stories that are waiting to be told." Andy is focused on pursuing paleontology as a career, and has a stellar academic track record to support it. As a first-generation college student raised by a single mother, Andy has had to balance helping out at home and working with his love for soccer, playing on a club soccer team. Andy has focused on excelling academically and pursuing higher education not just for himself, but so he can support his mother and honor her sacrifices for his family. Andy is studying Geoscience at Virginia Tech.



NEW PRINCIPAL AND ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE STUDENTS

Belonging and connection for all students are top goals for Justice High School's new principal, Dr. Sean Rolon. JHSSF spoke with him about his advice to and goals for Justice students. On behalf of the Justice community, Dr. Rolon thanked JHSSF donors and the wider community for their generosity.

When should students start thinking about post-graduation plans?

I'm determined to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access rigorous and advanced coursework, because that's one of the best indicators of post grad success. It's important for freshmen to start thinking about it.

Do you have any specific goals that you're focused on?

I would like all kids to have an opportunity to participate in honors or advanced classes. We are an IB-for-all school, and our students do have that opportunity. I really want all of our students to be exposed to that rigor. I also want our students to all feel like they have a staff member in the building that they can speak to as an advocate and to get advice, mentorship.

I want our school to expose students to a variety of different programs for post-graduation, whether it's for college or a trade or career. We also want students to know they don't have to have it all figured out right now. And we do have exceptionally strong programs already at Justice such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and our college and career center.

What else do you want us to know?

We definitely have the best students in Fairfax County. Our kids are amazing. They are kind, they're compassionate, they're thoughtful, they're collaborative, and they want to be successful.

Our teachers are amazing, so supportive of our kids and helping them meet their goals. Our community is supportive of the school and I have felt that support coming into this new role.

ALUMNA HONORED WITH NEW SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, the Justice High School Scholarship Fund awards a number of scholarships created by donors who wish to honor specific individuals. This year, members of the Class of 2005, family, and other friends created a scholarship in memory of **Rachel Nash**, who lost her battle with breast cancer in 2022. Rachel earned a master's degree in education from Johns Hopkins University and served as a secondary school teacher and Literacy Coach for Baltimore City Public Schools. The scholarship's sponsors describe Rachel as someone who had a remarkable ability to connect with a diverse range of people, creating a space where everyone felt free to be their true selves. She was beloved for her quick wit and sense of humor, and known for her wide ranging interests and passions, including travel, social justice, music, and writing. This \$4,000 scholarship was awarded for the first time this year to a student, Jasper, who shares Rachel's passion and commitment to education and the arts.

Justice High School Scholarship Fund is grateful for the creativity and support of our newsletter partners: John Conway, Welsh Printing and Karen Donohue, KLD-design.com

CONTRIBUTIONS BY CHECK SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

Justice High School Scholarship Fund
P.O. Box 4612, Falls Church, VA 22044

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www.JHSScholars.org/contribute



If you are a federal employee, you may contribute via the CFC charitable giving program. Our Agency Designation Number is **28018**. Many companies offer matching gift programs that double or even triple a donation's value. If you have questions about your company's matching gift program, contact your HR/personnel office.

We are now able to receive donations of appreciated securities. This is a tax-friendly way to donate to a great cause. Please contact Jim Schroll at jrschroll@gmail.com for details.

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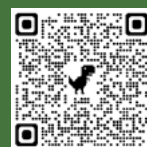
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The Justice High School Scholarship Fund is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that provides academic scholarships to Justice HS graduates attending accredited post-secondary education programs. The Scholarship Fund obtains all of its funding from members of the larger Justice HS community, including parents, faculty, student alumni, businesses and service organizations, neighbors and interested friends and relatives. The Scholarship Fund is an all-volunteer operation that devotes over 95% of revenues to scholarships.