



The success of our remarkable students is made possible through the collective support of our community. Through the Philadelphia Scholars program, students receive not only **scholarship dollars** toward their education, but also practical tools for academic success such as **calculators, planners, and other learning resources**. Throughout the year, students are even surprised with “way to go!” gift cards – small but meaningful reminders that their hard work is seen and celebrated.

Financial support and supplies are just the beginning. Personalized guidance and mentorship are equally critical to student success. Each first-year student **meets one-on-one with program staff** (more than 80 students this fall alone), and sophomores, juniors, and seniors can connect for additional support as needed. These conversations help students make informed decisions, fully utilize campus resources, and navigate financial or personal challenges as they arise.

Together, this combination of financial support, mentorship, and encouragement empowers Philadelphia Scholars to persist and thrive in college and beyond.

For more information about the Philadelphia Scholars program, please contact:

Allison Kelsey, M.Ed.
akelsey@philaedfund.org
267-606-0819

2025-26 School Year

Last Dollar Scholarship

\$650,000 awarded

141 students

\$4,500 average award

Private Scholarships

Managed by Scholars

\$82,000 awarded

17 students

5 funds

State Grants (PATH)

\$398,000 granted

Overall

\$1,130,000 awarded

182 students

Who are Philadelphia Scholars?

Philadelphia Scholars are college students who participated in the Philadelphia Education Fund’s College Access Program (CAP). CAP provides college access support and mentorship to very low income 9th - 12th grade students in 6 low graduation-rate high schools in the School District of Philadelphia. In 12th grade, students with a minimum 2.0 GPA and a completed FAFSA can apply for a Last Dollar Scholarship of **up to \$7,500** per academic year for up to 6 years.

Unlike a typical scholarship, **the Last Dollar Scholarship is tailored to each student’s financial position:** their costs (tuition and fees, and housing and meal plan if living on campus) and supports (university and government grants, and student loans) to determine if there is a gap for us to fund through a scholarship. Also, our **students can reapply every year** that they’re enrolled full-time and making satisfactory academic progress. If there is no gap, the student is still considered a Scholar and has access to programming such as skills, study abroad, and job search webinars.



Furness High School College Access Program Coordinator Kelsey Smith (foreground) with several graduates she supported through the College Access Program, August 2025.



Scholar Profile: Yerobi Garcia

From Olney High School to Future Physician Assistant



First Day at Drexel University (2021)

Yerobi Garcia graduated from Olney High School in 2021 after spending much of his final 15 months of high school not in a classroom, but at home under COVID-19 lockdown, studying Biology and Chemistry on his laptop.

Transitioning from remote learning to college-level, in-person coursework at Drexel University was challenging, but Yerobi’s hard work and determination carried him through.

In June 2025, Yerobi graduated from Drexel University with a degree in Biological Sciences—the **first in his family to complete college.**

Because of donors like you, PEF was able to be part of Yerobi’s journey at every critical stage. At its most visible level, your support helped make college financially possible. With guidance from his College Access Coordinator, Yerobi applied for two private scholarships in addition to his Last Dollar award – and won both.

But your investment went beyond tuition assistance. Through the Philadelphia Scholars program, Yerobi had the **advising, encouragement, and accountability needed to persist and thrive.** He met regularly with his Scholar Advisor, Allison Kelsey, to navigate academic pressures, connect with campus resources, and plan for life after graduation.

continued p.3

With the stability and confidence made possible through donor support, Yerobi enrolled in Thomas Jefferson University's EMT course to earn the clinical hours required for Physician Assistant program applications.

Today, he works full-time as an EMT while he prepares for his next step. He also **volunteers with the Philadelphia Scholars** program, paying forward the support he once received. Your generosity helped turn possibility into achievement and continues to shape the future of students like Yerobi.

“This scholarship provided more than financial support—it gave me the confidence to fully focus on my studies while continuing to aspire toward my goal of becoming a Physician Assistant.”



Graduation Day at Drexel University (2025)

Helping Scholars Build First-Career Networks

Today, nearly **80% of jobs in the United States are filled through personal or professional connections** – networks most first-generation, low-income (FGLI) students do not have. Our Philadelphia Scholars are these students, and their career needs extend far beyond the connections a single staff member can provide.

In early 2025, PEF partnered with CareerSpring, an online platform designed specifically for FGLI students to explore careers, connect with professionals in real time, and access high-quality internship and job opportunities. Best of all, CareerSpring is **free** to PEF and to our students, allowing us to expand support without additional cost. To ensure Scholars are prepared for life after college, participation in CareerSpring is now required to remain eligible for the Last Dollar Scholarship.



“I appreciate PEF sharing this resource, especially the informational interview opportunities. Those sound really valuable as I start mapping out next steps.”

Seth Khammassi, Penn State senior



Deepen Your Support for the Philadelphia Scholars Program

Last Dollar Scholarship

Help close critical funding gaps that keep students enrolled and on track to graduate. **Even with \$1.13 million invested, demand exceeds available funds, and many Scholars face “super-gaps” of more than \$7,500.**

40th Anniversary Gala

Celebrate Scholar achievements while supporting college access and success. Sponsorship opportunities offer visibility, connection, and meaningful impact. And, to make it easier to attend, it will be an evening event. Date TBD early June.

Private Scholarships

Partner with PEF to **design a scholarship** aligned with your philanthropic goals. To honor a legacy or invest in a field of study, PEF will manage the process from A to Z. Contact Allison Kelsey with your ideas.

In-Kind Assistance

Donate recent model laptops and tablets, share your career path and network, offer a paid internship.... Contact Allison Kelsey to discuss!



Scholars



Devario Gboho, Gwynedd Mercy Univ

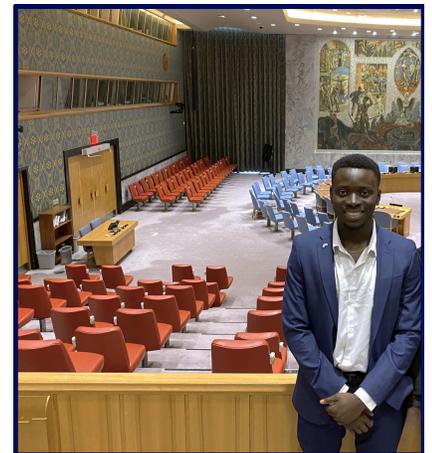


Angelina Patete, Kutztown University

Outside



Danielle Thompson, Eastern University



Ibrahim Byaese, Penn State University

the Lecture Hall



Dahmir Gonzales, Virginia State University (2nd L)

If you are interested in investing in the future of our region through its students, please contact Emily Jordan, Development Director, at ejordan@philaedfund.org or 215-767-1019.