

INTRODUCING THE CLASS OF 2020



GREENHOUSE
SCHOLARS

In May 2016, Greenhouse Scholars welcomed the newest addition to our community - The Class of 2020. These exceptional young leaders were amongst the top 8% of applicants to the program this year. They have demonstrated a relentless spirit, leadership, accountability, and a strong desire to make a lasting change in their communities. Read on for interesting facts and the inspiration stories of this new group of Greenhouse Scholars.

- **22** new students from the Class of 2020 will join 185 Greenhouse Scholars
- **91%** are the first in their family to go to college
- Their average household income is **\$27,776**
- Nearly **15%** experienced the loss of a home
- The average GPA of these Scholars is **3.9**
- Held a collective **35** leadership positions as captains of sports teams, President or Vice President of organizations such as National Honor Society and the Gay/Straight Alliance, Student Board of Education representatives, and more
- **9** held internships or jobs to support their family
- They represent **11** different ethnicities and nationalities
- They will attend **18** notable universities such as Yale, University of Pennsylvania, DePauw, Georgia Tech, Lehigh, University of Texas at Austin, University of Colorado, University of Illinois, and Pomona College
- **100%** are positively relentless in the diverse ways they will impact their communities

COLORADO CLASS OF 2020



BRUNO

Graduated: Denver South High School

College: University of Colorado Boulder

Career Goal: Engineering

Bruno remembers his parents, who themselves did not go to college, encouraging him at a young age to think seriously about his future and his ability to excel. In addition to challenging himself academically, Bruno set out to be a catalyst for change in his high school community. He advocated for his peers as a Board of Education student representative, collaborating with board members, local officials and other leaders to improve the Denver Public Schools community. In this role, his advisor proclaimed him a 'major force for change'. As a senate leader for all four years, he joined the Black Student Alliance and Muslim Student Alliance so he could better understand and represent the diverse needs of his school.



GRACE

Graduated: Roaring Fork High School

College: University of Colorado Boulder

Career Goal: Geography

Peers and teachers alike describe Grace as strong beyond her years, in addition to having an incredible empathy. She is impassioned in assisting troubled children with tattered families like her own. Grace serves as a role model in her community, inspiring other young scholars to be brave, thoughtful, and diverse, and making an impact through service-learning opportunities on a global scale. In addition to working at Habitat for Humanity, Grace also served as varsity volleyball captain, held positions on student council, and is now graduating in the top 10% of her high school class.



JUNO

Graduated: Arrupe Jesuit High School

College: Colorado School of Mines

Career Goal: Engineering

Raised by a hard-working single mother of 3 boys, there were times when Juno did not have a place to call home. In these hard times, his unparalleled positivity and perspective fueled him forward. As a role model for his younger brother and the first in his family to attend college, Juno made education his priority to bring stability to his family. Juno's positive approach in the face of adversity also held weight with his peers: he was elected Vice President of Student Government and Captain of the basketball team, leading the team to its most successful year, ever.

COLORADO CLASS OF 2020



KAREN

Graduated: Denver School of Science & Technology: Green Valley Ranch

College: Colorado State University

Career Goal: Public Health

Karen is both dreamer and do-er, taking on leadership roles to solve for systemic issues she saw in her community. Her teachers selected Karen as 1 of 6 students for an entrepreneurial service trip to Rwanda and Uganda, where they collaborated with a number of social enterprises to create a clean water curriculum for local schools. She shared her experiences after returning to her high school to convey the importance of serving a community, rather than simply fixing a problem, and also highlight that any and all students can pursue positive engagement with the world.



KELLIE

Graduated: Gateway High School

College: University of Colorado Boulder

Career Goal: Law / Public Health

Kellie's parents left Vietnam as refugees, settling in Colorado to work as house cleaners and provide a better life for her and her older brother. While Kellie did not speak English consistently until she entered school, where she drew motivation from her mother's often repeated refrain of "work hard and show everyone you deserve everything you have." Kellie worked diligently to earn a 4.0 in the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

As a young Vietnamese-American leader, she has tutored and mentored younger students at her local middle school and acts as a translator and guide for recent Vietnamese immigrants.



MAKDA

Graduated: Denver School of Science & Technology: Stapleton

College: University of Colorado Boulder

Career Goal: Political Science / International Affairs

One of 6 siblings, Makda's parents impressed the power of education on their children as a way to break out of poverty. Makda says: "I see how the lack of education can significantly impact opportunities, as my mother had no formal education growing up in Ethiopia, which limits her job opportunities in America. I hope to pave the way for students filled with aspirations, but limited resources."

Makda cares deeply about helping others; she serves her community by mentoring students at the local elementary school, participating in mission service trips during school breaks, and interning with a food justice nonprofit to provide healthy and affordable food options in a local "food desert" community.

COLORADO CLASS OF 2020



RASHIB

Graduated: Overland High School

College: University of Washington, Seattle

Career Goal: Biology

Growing up in Nepal, Rashib saw his best friend nearly die from a lack of access to basic medical care. After emigrating to the U.S. with his family, Rashib joined the pre-med club at the beginning of high school and “found my passion and hope for my future.” He became the club’s President and tripled its membership to 60 students.

In pursuit of his future career goals, Rashib was selected for the Teen Leadership Program at St. Luke’s Medical Center, held a prestigious internship at the Anschutz Medical Campus, and volunteered with University of Colorado Hospital and Porter Adventist Hospital for several years.



RODINA

Graduated: Overland High School

College: Occidental College

Career Goal: Microbiology and Public Health

Rodina and her parents fled Sudan as refugees. After facing discrimination in a workplace environment, Rodina formed the Sudanese Student Association, an organization that provides opportunities for other Sudanese-Americans to engage in community leadership and cultural awareness.

A life-long community service advocate, she founded the organization Blazers for Change at her high school, which she states is “dedicated to making a positive impact within my school as well as by encouraging students to get involved in community service.” The organization collected school supplies for students at her high school who could not afford them.



STEPHANIE

Graduated: Denver East High School

College: Colorado State University

Career Goal: Biomedical Sciences

As a young learner, Stephanie was frustrated by the challenges of dyslexia, until a teacher encouraged her to think differently about how she defined herself. She says, “I would write ‘you are good at math’ all over my hands just to prove to myself that I was indeed good at math.”

Her positive and relentless spirit led her to be part of her high school’s Gay Straight Alliance, eventually becoming the club’s President. This leadership role enabled her to encourage other students to feel comfortable being themselves and she utilized her own coming out experience to highlight fearlessness, openness and acceptance within her school.

ILLINOIS CLASS OF 2020



ANNA

Graduated: Walter Payton College Prep

College: Colby College

Career Goal: Computer Science

As a minority and a member of the LGBTQA+ community, Anna knows what it is like to be discriminated against and wants to make the world a better place for marginalized people. Seeing each of her parents exhibit strength and positivity in the face marginalization due to physical disability and an English language barrier, Anna is a beacon of inclusion, dialogue, and acknowledgement to recognize everyone as a human being worthy of consideration and respect.



CLINTON

Graduated: Phillips Academy High School

College: Bradley University

Career Goal: Dentistry

Arriving in the US from Ghana his freshman year of high school and knowing no English, Clinton experienced bullying because of his accent. Placed in lower-level classes because of his language barrier, Clinton sought to challenge himself by working harder in his studies, petitioning to be moved to higher level STEM courses, improving his English, and becoming a champion for anti-bullying in his school, church and community. His peers selected him as Best Student of the Year his sophomore year and he became captain of his soccer team his senior year. He graduates in the top 5% of his class.



DAISY

Graduated: Northside College Prep

College: University of Texas at Austin

Career Goal: Business

Daisy found a lifelong passion and an outlet for giving back in the practice of Jiu Jitsu. While developing her confidence, health awareness, and self-discipline, she became the female pioneer in her dojo, and is now responsible for passing on the values she has learned to younger students as an assistant instructor. In an effort to promote cultural appreciation and an exposure to the outdoors, she co-founded Zen Garden, which planned, fundraised, and constructed a Japanese garden on her high school campus. She also dedicates her time to food and health awareness, helping to grow crops in urban farms for local soup kitchens.

ILLINOIS CLASS OF 2020



JEANETTE

Graduated: EPIC Academy

College: University of Illinois at Chicago

Career Goal: Engineering

Raised by a single father, who Jeanette touts as being her biggest supporter despite working hard to make ends meet, Jeanette sought academic excellence. Now graduating as valedictorian of her high school, Jeanette has been inspired by her aunt to be a strong advocate for African American females in STEM fields. Pursuing a career in electrical engineering to help developing countries solve issues relating to infrastructure and growth, she aspires to the title of “technical humanitarian”.



JESSICA

Graduated: Auburn High School

College: Yale University

Career Goal: Bioengineering

Jessica’s passion for biomedical engineering was ignited when her father was diagnosed with a heart condition and his doctor invited her to hold the medical device that would save his life. As valedictorian of her high school, Jessica was also a leader of Key Club, where she received the District Distinguished President award. She says: “Volunteering at events, I realized the beauty of my city and the people within it, that even young minds are capable of enacting change. Yet, this beauty is only made possible by the love and care put forth by ourselves; we’re byproducts of our communities, after all. I learned the true meaning of service was not in the immediate results or in the recognition given for my help, but the resonating impact I leave for the future.”



JOSE

Graduated: Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep

College: Marquette University

Career Goal: Business and real estate development

Raised by a single mother in a poverty-stricken town, Jose was irrevocably affected by his mom’s fight to find their family government housing. The poor housing conditions were a shock to Jose, prompting his vow to change these conditions for families like his own. He says: “I aspire to become a real estate developer to provide affordable housing in peaceful environments for families in need. I believe all hard-working families deserve to have a safe, comfortable home that can satisfy their needs. I know what it is like to feel when there is no hope for a future. I know it, I have lived it, and now, I want to change it. I am ready to give back.”

ILLINOIS CLASS OF 2020



MELITON

Graduated: West Aurora High School

College: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Career Goal: Political Science

As a first-generation Mexican-American, Meliton was the translator for his family. Realizing the power of his communication ability, he found a passion for public speaking, eventually winning statewide speech contests and speaking in front of thousands of people.

Meliton served as the national Co-President of Boys 2 Men, an organization that inspires young men to excel academically and lead their communities. He was the Master of Ceremonies for U.S. Representative Bill Foster's Immigration Reform community discussion and also spoke at the 8th annual student leadership conference to over 600 students in Fresno California.



VERSHAWN

Graduated: Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center

College: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Career Goal: Pharmacy

Growing up in one of Chicago's most violent neighborhoods, Vershawn was surrounded by the deaths and imprisonment of his friends. Vershawn chose, instead, to attend a selective-enrollment high school and put himself on the path to higher education. There he forged a path of leadership, becoming the first African-American National Honor Society president at his high school.

Vershawn hopes to make an impact in his family and his community through a career in pharmacy. After obtaining his pharmacy license at the young age of 16, he sought a part-time job at a pharmacy to support his family and launch his career.



YASMIN

Graduated: Gage Park High School

College: Lehigh University

Career Goal: Undecided

Yasmin grew up with a strong, single mother, who herself wasn't able to receive a high school education, in a community surrounded by drugs, gangs and one of the highest homicides rates in Chicago. Her mother's strength and courage showed Yasmin that although the odds might seem stacked against her, she must focus on her education and bettering her world. Today, she is valedictorian of her high school, and she says: "If you envision yourself negatively, you will never move from that state of mind. But if, on the other hand, you challenge yourself and engulf yourself in optimism, you will radiate."

GEORGIA CLASS OF 2020



CLYDE

Graduated: Cedar Shoals High School

College: Pomona College

Career Goal: Environmental analysis and international relations

Clyde moved to GA from Kenya, with his sister and mother. At his new high school, he joined the cross-country team, eventually becoming its captain and taking the team to states for the 1st time in over 30 years. In his community where 1 in 4 children live in poverty, he mentors younger, at-risk high school students and motivates them to strive for higher education. Clyde has a global perspective on his impact and plans to study engineering to one day bring sustainable water filtration systems to developing countries.



ELIZABETH

Graduated: Dutchtown High

College: University of Pennsylvania

Career Goal: Medicine

Elizabeth developed a passion for medicine when her grandmother fell ill; she assists with her grandmother's caregiving to this day. Elizabeth completed her Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) during her junior year, far ahead of the average graduate of the program.

She was President of Sisters of Virtue at her high school, organizing mentoring and community service for her peers. Curiosity and tenacity led Elizabeth to pursue tennis in the 8th grade, and she eventually became varsity captain and was named Georgia's Most Positive Athlete in Girls' Tennis.



JESSIE

Graduated: B.E.S.T. Academy

College: Georgia Institute of Technology

Career Goal: Engineering

The second oldest of 6 children, Jessie fell in with the wrong crowd as a kid. A failing grade on a critical math test made him re-evaluate his future. Turning his life around, Jessie worked diligently on his academics and now graduates as salutatorian of his high school.

Witnessing the violence and the wail of daily sirens in his neighborhood prompted Jessie to build houses with Habitat for Humanity as a means of creating positivity amidst the chaos in his community. Additionally, he interned at Georgia Tech, leading the engineering portion of a ground robotics program. The Director of this program says of Jessie: "He is a dedicated, ambitious, hard-working young man who consistently strives to better himself and those around him."

GEORGIA CLASS OF 2020



KALEB

Graduated: B.E.S.T. Academy

College: DePauw University

Career Goal: Public health and political science

Kaleb took advantage of his role as President of student government at an all male institution to enact change in his community and foster a sense of openness and acceptance for gay and straight students alike. Kaleb has embraced being an inclusive role model for those who identify as LGBT and has published articles educating youth and adults about updates in local education and sexual health. Kaleb found his passion as a peer educator at Grady Hospital, presenting information on STD prevention and birth control to teen patients. He plans to utilize his strong voice to pursue a career in public health and policy.