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Office Of Alumni and Development

2021

Philanthropic Impact Report FY21

Office of Alumni and Development, Bridgewater State University

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OPENING DOORS Bridgewater State University Gillette 2020 - 2021 PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT REPORT TOYOTA OPTUM*



Dear Friends,

From a global pandemic – which interrupted life as we had known it, imposed incalculable hardships on families and tragically took the lives of more than 600,000 Americans - to the national reckoning over racial justice and deep political unrest, the United States is wrestling with profound questions of national identity and purpose.

During all the profound challenges of the past year, Bridgewater State University has boldly moved forward, confident in who we are and resolute in advancing our values and our mission. We were founded on the promise of the transformative power of education, and we have borne witness over more than 180 years to its positive impact on the lives of individuals, families, and communities. In short, we remembered that BSU opens doors of opportunity for students.

This year, BSU was recognized as the second leading "social mobility elevator" of all public and private universities in Massachusetts by Education Reform Now (and ranked 75th across the entire country). To be classified as a social mobility elevator, BSU needed to meet strict standards for providing access to low-income students and offering excellent academic programs and student services that drive high graduation rates and lead to good jobs.

This success has been the result of all of us, every part of the BSU community, including donors, alumni, faculty, staff, board members and friends, joining together to ensure that all families can aspire to send their sons and daughters to BSU and that all students — without exception — are able to take advantage of the many opportunities and benefits of an excellent BSU education, successfully graduate, fulfill their dreams and serve the larger good.

Together, we continue to open doors for students and families, many of whom would not otherwise have such opportunities, and in so doing we are benefiting ourselves and our communities, as we all gain by having a more prosperous, educated, civically engaged and community-oriented citizenry. The mission of Bridgewater State University has never been more important for those we serve.

In these pages, you will find the moving stories of just a few of the individuals, families, friends and even divisions of the university who are opening doors for our students: From Susan Raskin Abrams, '67, who has endowed a scholarship to assist first-generation students, and Paula Ortet, '12, and Lizandra Gomes, '10, who have endowed a scholarship to assist Cape Verdean students attain a BSU education; to Michelle O'Connor, '88, president and CEO of MEDITECH, a leadership level donor who contributes her time to mentoring our students and advising the Ricciardi College of Business and has hired countless BSU students.

Our faculty have always generously given of their knowledge, time, caring and financial support to advance the lives of our students; faculty like Professor Emerita Dr. Carolyn Petrosino who has created a scholarship to recognize students engaged in promoting racial understanding, healing, and unity; and Professor Emeritus Dr. Roger Dunn of the Department of Art, who endowed a scholarship to recognize student achievement for writing in the visual arts and art history.

BSU leaders and staff have also answered the call to assist BSU students. Our friends in Information Technology have raised close to \$50,000 to support the Ritesh Chandra IT CARES Scholarship. A member of our governing Board of Trustees, Dr. Ned Murphy, and his wife, Ann-Ellen Hornidge, have created a Black Lives Matter scholarship. In discussing their inspiration, Ms. Hornidge cited Harvard Professor Robert Livingston, writing on the subject of advancing racial equity, who wrote, "Your job ... is to translate ... knowledge into action, while keeping in mind that the goal is not to boil the ocean. It's to boil the water in your pot or kettle — the bigger the better — and put it in the ocean. With a sufficient number of pot boilers, a pond will boil, as will a lake, and potentially an ocean."

Let's all boil the water in our pots, however big or small, to keep open the promise of a Bridgewater State University education to all students and families – without exception.

Frederick W. Clark Jr., Esq., '83

President

Bridgewater State University

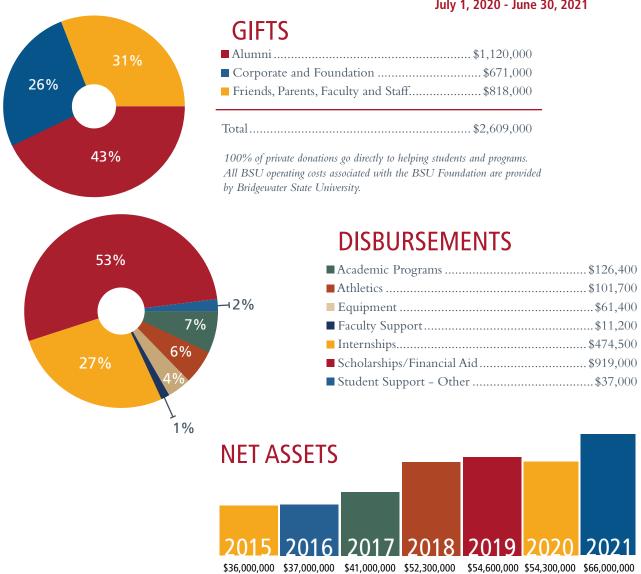
Ellen Cuttle Oliver, '82, G'89

Executive Director, BSU Foundation and Chief Development Officer

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REVENUE

In fiscal year 2021, Bridgewater State University received approximately 29 percent of its revenue from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The remainder of its revenue is from local tuition and fees, government and private grants, contracts, gifts and auxiliary enterprises.





PAYING IT FORWARD

BSU Giving Day - April 21 & 22, 2021

\$160,000

Amount raised.

A 55% increase from the previous Giving Day.

598

Number of donors.

A 42% increase in donors from the previous Giving Day.

670

Number of gifts.

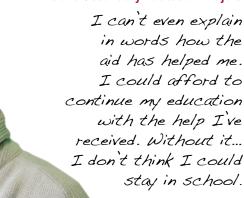
\$239

Average gift size.

The average gift was \$83 when Giving Day began five years ago.

ELLIOT PHILIE, '23





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BE THE CHANGE

The Paula Ortet, '12, and Lizandra Gomes, '10, Scholarship

Finding the financial wherewithal to pursue a college degree is a challenge that has not changed over the years. The constant, however, has been the generosity of those philanthropists who recognize the value of higher education and understand their contributions are far-reaching and benefit students, businesses, our communities, and the world in which we all live.

Typically, a philanthropist's journey begins mid- to late-career, when salaries are solid and the kids are grown. What is beginning to change, however, as evidenced by Paula Ortet, '12, (pictured right) and Lizandra Gomes, '10, is the thought that paying it forward need not wait.

Three years after graduating from Bridgewater, Ms. Ortet and Ms. Gomes got together and decided to create a scholarship to support Cape Verdean students who often struggle not only financially, but also with language and the inevitable culture shock of coming to America from Cape Verde.

Both women are Cape Verdean. "I was born and raised in Cape Verde and immigrated to America at age 17," said Ms. Ortet. "It's a big change, and I definitely experienced a period of adjustment and, on top of that, there's the financial burden."

Ms. Ortet credits Ms. Gomes with helping her adjust, and the two became lifelong friends. "I was a rookie," said Ms. Ortet. "Liz helped ease me into the process. And adapting is even harder for international students who have not experienced life in America."

Ms. Gomes was the perfect person to support
Ms. Ortet as she eased into college life. "I really loved
Bridgewater," said Ms. Gomes, a math and theatre major.
"It was the perfect size and kept me grounded. I tried to
take advantage of all the opportunities available to me.
I worked the front desk in the Academic Achievement
Center and tutored students in English as a Second
Language (ESL) and Portuguese."

Meanwhile, Ms. Ortet, a biology major, found her comfort zone thanks, in part, to Ms. Gomes. She connected with several science-focused groups and joined the Cape Verdean Student Association. Their friendship and their shared experiences inspired Ms. Ortet to invite Ms. Gomes to meet to discuss ways in which they could support the Cape Verdean community at Bridgewater. It was 2015, a mere three years after Ms. Ortet's graduation. The Paula Ortet, '12, and Lizandra Gomes, '10, Scholarship to benefit Cape Verdean students was born that day. The challenge: \$25,000 was needed to endow a scholarship in perpetuity. Not familiar with the process involved in setting up a scholarship, the two were surprised, but not discouraged. Over the years, they contributed to the fund, engaged in fundraising, and looked with optimism to the future.

The future arrived this year, 2021, when their scholarship was added to fundraising options during BSU's Giving Day campaign. That combined with a \$5,000 match by BSU and individual fundraising together with a generous contribution by Ms. Ortet's employer, Fog Pharmaceuticals, "brought the fund over the mark," said Ms. Ortet. The first scholarship will be awarded fall 2022.

"I think it's important to make sure we help pave the way for Cape Verdean students and other students from underrepresented backgrounds, and facilitate in any way, shape, or form their transition to college and to America," said Ms. Ortet, who went on to earn her master's and PhD at Boston University. She is now a medicinal chemist at Fog Pharmaceuticals.

After graduating, Ms. Gomes worked for a telecom company for three years. From there, she moved into political fundraising and today is deputy chief of staff for the Massachusetts State Treasury, overseeing the executive office.

Both Ms. Ortet and Ms. Gomes hope that their creating the scholarship early in their careers will serve as an inspiration to others.

"We both believe in the transformative power of education," said Ms. Gomes. We wanted to provide opportunities to others that, at the time, were not easily available to us. As young professionals, creating the scholarship was hard, but not impossible.

"We believe if you want to see a change, you have to be the change."



A POWERFUL IMPACT

Ritesh Chandra IT CARES Scholarship

For more than 20 years, Ritesh Chandra (pictured above) considered Bridgewater his home away from home. He unabashedly loved the university.

Shortly before his passing in September 2019, Ritesh approached Steve Zuromski, '04, G'09, vice president for information technology and chief information officer, with an idea for a scholarship. The two discussed options and decided to build upon IT's successful volunteer program: IT CARES (Community Assistance Raises Everyone's Spirits). In October 2019, The IT CARES Scholarship became the first and only divisional scholarship at the university. To seed the effort, Ritesh contributed the first \$2,500.

When Ritesh passed after his hard fought and courageous battle with cancer, the IT CARES Scholarship was renamed The Ritesh Chandra IT CARES Scholarship in his honor.

Mr. Zuromski said, "Within 14 months, we reached the \$25,000 threshold to endow the scholarship. We never would have imagined this scholarship would have grown so quickly, and who better to honor than Ritesh Chandra who truly believed in BSU and our students."

In 2021, the Ritesh Chandra IT CARES Scholarship was listed as an option on BSU's Giving Day and total contributions were second only to the Bridgewater Fund.

Mr. Zuromski immediately upped the goal to \$50,000. And in a short time, and as of this writing, it stands at \$44,000, a tangible acknowledgment to the powerful impact Ritesh made on students, faculty, staff, friends and alumni. Next on the horizon — \$100,000.

PATH TO SUCCESS

Michelle O'Connor, '88, President/CEO, MEDITECH

Shortly after her graduation, Michelle O'Connor,'88, joined health care IT leader MEDITECH as a computer programmer. Today, she is the company's president/CEO and credits Bridgewater State as the launching pad to her post-baccalaureate success - both in business and in life.

"As the first in my family to attend college, Bridgewater was definitely the right choice for me," Ms. O'Connor said. "It was college at an affordable price, and it gave me the opportunity to explore my options in a way that I hadn't before.

"I was a math and computer science major, but I also took courses in business, sociology, writing and psychology. I learned so much during my years there that helped me professionally and personally."

Bridgewater was also where she met the love of her life and future father of her two children, her late husband Tom. "My husband and I were able to grow, both as individuals and together as a couple, at Bridgewater. We had the freedom to challenge ourselves, to be who we wanted to be," she said. "After graduating, it was important for me to pursue a career that celebrated life-long learning, so I could continue the journey of becoming the best version of myself."

The company she joined is one that creates electronic health records software for hospitals and physician offices, with an emphasis on supporting positive relationships between clinicians and patients.

"It may sound hokey, but I really do think MEDITECH makes a major impact on community health care. We help ensure that physicians and nurses have the tools they need at their fingertips, to provide the best care to patients," said Ms. O'Connor.

"I am so proud of what we do, and I'm especially proud of how our staff is continually learning and striving to meet the rapidly evolving needs of medicine. We are in a caring profession, and care is exactly what we do every day."

Ms. O'Connor is now giving back to the college that set her on a path to success. Not only is she a leadership level donor, but she volunteers on the board of the Ricciardi College of Business Advisory Council. She also frequently engages with the career center, helping new college graduates to develop



their interviewing skills. And Ms. O'Connor has been involved with our computer science accreditation process — writing in support of a Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program, to help Bridgewater recruit and educate students in cybersecurity and cyber criminology.

"Bridgewater has given me so many opportunities, so why not give back?" she said. "They helped me to become the person I am today. Those of us given a chance to achieve our dreams must do whatever we can to make the path to knowledge easier for others."

As a valued corporate sponsor, MEDITECH supports Bridgewater State University through its Charitable Giving Program. The company continues to recruit many graduates to work in their nearby Fall River office.

COMING TOGETHER

The Murphy/Hornidge Black Lives Matter Scholarship

"Your job now is to translate that knowledge into action, while keeping in mind that the goal is not to boil the ocean. It's to boil the water in your pot or kettle – the bigger the better – and put it in the ocean. With a sufficient number of pot boilers, a pond will boil, as will a lake, and potentially an ocean."

People with first-hand knowledge of the civil rights movement of the 1960s have a unique context for appreciating how many things have changed for the better in the last half-century, but also a profound sense for how much work is left to be done to achieve racial equity in this country. This was underscored in the last fifteen months of renewed racial reckoning in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, and of witnessing the disparate health and economic impacts of the pandemic on communities of color.

Those realizations prompted Ned Murphy, a recent Bridgewater State University Trustee, and his wife, Ann-Ellen Hornidge, retired lawyer and chair of the board of trustees of the Beth Israel Lahey Health System, to reflect on how they could best invest in making a difference. They are both aware of the numerous studies which link access to higher education with greater economic and life opportunities, and how those opportunities are one important building block in making progress toward racial equity.

In furtherance of this goal, Dr. Murphy and Ms. Hornidge and their children created the Black Lives Matter Scholarship at Bridgewater to provide financial support for Black students requiring assistance who are jointly selected by the university's admissions office and the Lewis and Gaines Center for Equity and Inclusion. Under the terms of the scholarship, the recipient receives a full scholarship for their four years at Bridgewater so long as they maintain their eligibility requirements.

"After George Floyd's death, we began educating ourselves to learn how we could best be accomplices in this struggle," said Ms. Hornidge. "Together with our children, we decided to create the BLM Scholarship because of its potential power to positively impact individual lives, and to make available the same educational opportunity that our privilege and good fortune have allowed us to provide for our own grandchildren — namely, the opportunity to graduate from an excellent higher education institution with no student debt."

Referencing the fact that the scholarship focuses on individual students in need of assistance, Ms. Hornidge cited Dr. Robert Livingston's writings (see quote above). "If we 'boil our own pot'," said Ms. Hornidge, "we can hopefully make a small contribution. And if enough of us come together as 'pot boilers' we can make an even greater and more powerful difference."

When asked why they chose BSU as the home for their scholarship, Dr. Murphy said,

"Bridgewater is a great example of how a public institution should function. Its purpose and mission serve the region and its emphasis on diversity and social justice resonate with us."

Earlier in his career Dr. Murphy worked in the criminal justice system, served as the state's commissioner of the Department of Youth Services, and then the state's commissioner of the Department of Mental Health. Among other things, he oversaw the implementation of a consent decree in a class action lawsuit brought by parents of special needs students in Boston seeking access to quality educational opportunities for their children. He currently serves on the board of directors of an autism services company.

"Throughout my career, I have seen evidence of the positive impact that a high-quality education can have. It can be life-changing," said Dr. Murphy. It is that impact that he and Ms. Hornidge and their family hope that the BLM Scholarship will have on its recipients.



^{*}Excerpted from "The Conversation: How Seeking and Speaking the Truth About Racism Can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations" by Robert Livingston, faculty member at the Harvard Kennedy School.



LYNN OMONDI, '24

Marketing Major Recipient of the Murphy/Hornidge Black Lives Matter Scholarship

Lynn Omondi, '24, recipient of the Murphy/ Hornidge Black Lives Matter Scholarship, defines her life as one of serving. It is in her DNA, the foundation that sustains her.

Receiving the scholarship, she said, does even more than provide financial support for her years at Bridgewater. "It gives me more time. More time for academics; more time to serve; more time to immerse myself in campus life."

Given recent events in our country, the Black Lives Matter scholarship sends a powerful message. "There's a lot going on," said Lynn. "It's not new to me as a Black woman. But what is new is the disparities are finally being emphasized in media. Everyone is seeing what's going on behind the scenes. Receiving this scholarship was very emotional for me."

Lynn has declared marketing as her major.

"When I first came to Bridgewater, I was leaning toward a major in psychology or social work," she said. "But honestly, when I think of it, volunteering is what I love. I've spent my years in this world serving. I don't want to turn that into the stress of a job. Marketing is general. There's so much I can do with it."

The scholarship, she said, "has a domino effect. It helps me in ways I cannot begin to say; I help others, and, perhaps, in time, others are inspired to serve."

Lynn's voice quivered a bit when she talked about having received the Black Lives Matter scholarship: "I'm speechless. No words can describe how thankful I am to Dr. Murphy and Ms. Hornidge. I feel so blessed, and I pray every day that their futures and the futures of their families are blessed too."



IN LYNN'S WORDS:

Scan the QR code and hear firsthand what the opportunity to attend BSU means to Lynn in this video.

FACULTY SUPPORTING STUDENTS

The Dr. Carolyn Petrosino Challenging Racial Bigotry and Strengthening Unity Scholarship

Our nation continues the fight for equity and inclusion for all people, regardless of its periodic unsteady steps throughout history. "However, now our country may be at a critical turning point," said Dr. Carolyn Petrosino, professor emerita of criminal justice and co-chair of BSU's Special Presidential Task Force for Racial Justice. "The death of George Floyd prompted what is widely described as an 'inflection point,' a moment marking the beginning of a racial reckoning insisted by the world, caused by the collective witnessing of his death too horrifying to be ignored."

Dr. Petrosino has devoted her entire career to the study of racial and social justice within the criminal justice system with a focus on hate crimes research. Several months prior to Floyd's death, she had established the Dr. Carolyn Petrosino Challenging Racial Bigotry and Strengthening Unity Scholarship. "I want the scholarship to support students who explore this critically important area. My hope is that our students become catalysts for change.

"I was very intentional with the title of the scholarship," she said. "The whole point is to encourage students to work in the areas of racial and social justice and to develop the competencies and abilities needed in an increasingly diverse world."

Undergraduate students from across all disciplines — economics, business, political science, history, criminal justice, theatre arts, and others — who complete a meritorious work in an area related to racial justice are encouraged to apply for the scholarship.

"I cannot imagine many disciplines where some aspect of racial justice does not exist," she said. "When students increase their understanding of the history of race relations in this country and the policies that shape them, they may better recognize and challenge old notions about others, and with a clearer vision, see our common humanity.

"BSU students can become future leaders in the promotion of racial understanding, healing, and unity. That prospect is exciting!"

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom



The Dr. Roger T. Dunn Scholarship for Writing in the Visual Arts and Art History

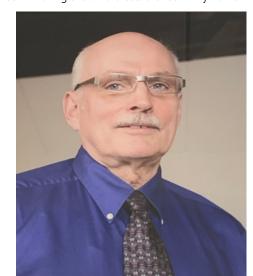
For 34 years, Dr. Roger Dunn (pictured below) professor emeritus in art and art history, immersed himself in doing what he loved best — sharing his knowledge with his students and encouraging them along the way. During his tenure, he was instrumental in further developing and expanding the art history program within the Department of Art and served as chair of the department for three terms.

Not surprisingly, Jonathan Shirland, professor of art history, together with his colleagues in the Department of Art, expressed their appreciation for Dr. Dunn's contributions by voting to name an honorific award after him. Fittingly, the award recognizes a student's outstanding achievement on a written essay on a topic of visual art or art history.

"The award is not restricted to a specific major within the university," said Dr. Shirland. "Anyone writing on the arts could be competitive."

"When I was told about the award established in my name, I felt very honored and pleased for the opportunity it provided our students," said Dr. Dunn, who decided to donate funds to add a monetary component to the award.

"I have the fondest memories of my time at Bridgewater, the excellent students and fine colleagues, and the opportunities for intellectual growth through sabbaticals and research grants. So, my giving back by funding this award came immediately to mind and reflects the deep honor I feel in having this award established in my name."



ELIZABETH EZEKIEL, '23

Art History & English Literature Majors Recipient of the Dr. Roger T. Dunn Scholarship for Writing in the Visual Arts and Art History

Elizabeth Ezekiel submitted her critical analysis of "German Expressionism in the 20th Century" to the panel charged with choosing the 2021 recipient of the newly created Dr. Roger T. Dunn Scholarship for Writing in the Visual Arts and Art History. The panel unanimously chose Elizabeth, who was clearly overwhelmed and humbled by the honor.

"It was wonderful news," said Elizabeth. "Not just that I won, but that the department I so admire sees my work, believes in it, and gave me the recognition."

As her research in German Expressionism unfolded, Elizabeth discovered her passion for art history. She then grappled with the question as to how to continue to tailor her research in meaningful ways. "German Expressionism serves as a precedent for European abstraction as a whole," she said. This thought prompted her to conduct independent research, delving even deeper into Expressionism. Ultimately, she found her niche – Expressionist artworks of the female body.

This, in turn, led her to submit a research proposal to the Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research (ATP), concentrating on how racist ideology impacted the work of Expressionists from 1900-1939. She focuses on three Black women artists from three continents "all of whom are engaged in similar subject matter and all impacted by racism and gender discrimination," said Elizabeth.

Elizabeth does not simply present 'what is,' she investigates the complexities of her topic. "I'm inspired by the contemporary racial justice movement," she said. "I am a white woman, but I feel a personal responsibility to do anything I can to help fight for racial justice in my field.

"I'm so thankful I have this opportunity.
Receiving the Dunn scholarship opened the door
to my receiving the ATP Summer Grant, and it
tells me I'm in the right place and doing the
right thing."



DARING TO DREA



Susan Raskin Abrams, '67, Endowed Scholarship Fund

Much has changed since Susan Raskin Abrams graduated from BSU in 1967 — enrollment (now, more than 10,000 students; then, approximately 1,000); and the overall size of the campus (now, 278 acres; then, approximately 36 acres). But what has not changed is the financial challenges too many students face when pursuing a college degree. First in her family to attend college, Ms. Abrams understands the challenge.

"I had a great education at Bridgewater," said Ms. Abrams, who went on to earn two graduate degrees, an MA in history from New York University and an MLS in library and information science from Simmons. In 2010, Ms. Abrams retired as supervisor of Children's Services for Newton Free Library, a position she held for 25 years.

"I'm very grateful," she said, of the educational opportunities she enjoyed, "and I wanted to give back as best I can."

To that end, after having contributed to BSU for years, Ms. Abrams created the Susan Raskin Abrams, '67, Endowed Scholarship Fund with preference given to first-generation undergraduate students who have a significant financial need and, when possible, a record of high academic achievement.

Of establishing the scholarship, Ms. Abrams added, "I felt there was a need. To give someone the opportunity to go to college through a scholarship is a blessing. My mother, who was a widow at the time, supported my efforts to follow my dreams, and I hope, in a small way, I am helping others to follow their dreams."



ASHLEY SILVER, '21

Social Work Major Recipient of the Susan Raskin Abrams, '67, Endowed Scholarship Fund

Resilience in the face of financial and personal challenges defines Ashley Silver, '21, recipient of the Susan Raskin Abrams, '67, Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Taking it one step at a time, Ashley, a single mom whose daughter was two years old at the time, first enrolled in community college, navigating motherhood, a full-time job, and a part-time course load. Though her resolve was strong, she struggled internally – asking herself whether it was even possible. Could she do it all – be a mom, earn a degree, support her daughter?

Sure enough, Ashley earned her associate degree and transferred to BSU utilizing the Massachusetts Transfer Program. Ashley describes her BSU journey as "empowering." Doubts faded in the face of support from the BSU community. "I love the passion of my fellow students, the administrative staff and my professors, who are accommodating and understanding."

Ashley graduated this year with a BS in social work and, thanks to her personal resilience and the support she received at BSU, she enrolled in the university's social work master's program.

However, her journey was not without its ever-present monetary challenges, only compounded by the events of the past year. "Receiving the Susan Abrams scholarship, especially in the midst of the pandemic, means everything to me,' said Ashley. "This amazing gift helped financially in ways I deeply appreciate. I can't thank Susan Abrams enough for giving me this opportunity and helping me reach my goals."

Currently, Ashley works as a residential coordinator at a congregate community site for adults with physical and intellectual disabilities. Her goal is to become a licensed therapist; her reason, simple: "I want to help make the world better."

A worthy goal indeed.





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Too many students are at risk of not finishing college because they don't have enough money. These students are working – sometimes multiple jobs – but it's not enough.

You can be part of the solution by sponsoring a student. Your gift of \$1,000 or more this fiscal year will be awarded in its entirety next academic year as a one-time scholarship to a student in need.

OPEN A STUDENT'S DOOR — HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- You contribute a \$1,000 gift designated to Sponsor-A-Student by June 30.
- You name your award for yourself or in honor of another.
- A deserving student is selected to receive your one-time named scholarship in its entirety the following academic year.
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Save the date!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23

Visit bridgew.edu/homecoming for updated details and registration information.

Featured Events

- Alumni Champagne Brunch
- Rathskeller Tailgate Tent at Swenson Field Lot
- Reunion Class Celebrations
- Homecoming Fair at University Park
- Homecoming Football Game
- Homecoming "Bear Bash" with legendary musician Jim Plunkett

Get Social with BSU Alumni





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