

Million-Dollar Scholars

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Vegas, she earned three letters in varsity sports and headed to the University of Nevada, Reno, after graduation. But when she came out to her family during her sophomore year, her parents rejected her. Her mother insisted Julie was not her child and wished her dead; her father, a devout Catholic, preached scripture that he said condemned her sexual orientation. She lost 95% of her financial support and had to work three jobs to continue her education. Now a Point Scholar in graduate school at Columbia University, Schell, 31, is researching a doctoral dissertation about the effects of trauma on the intellectual lives of LGBT students. "Without TPF's investment in me," she says, "the world would be short one agent in the fight for social justice for all."

"I feel emotionally supported by this group of people, who not only care about the work I have done, the work I am doing, but what I hope to continue doing," says Point Scholar Marcie Fisher-Borne, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "I cannot believe, on an emotional level, what's available."

The Point Foundation wants its beneficiaries to continue their hard work: In exchange for the foundation's support, the scholars are expected to maintain a high level of academic performance, complete service projects, and support the foundation's growth.

This more-than-just-money scholarship program is the heartfelt brainchild of Bruce Lindstrom and Carl Strickland, partners of six years, who in 2001 decided to create a scholarship program because no nationwide foundation existed to serve LGBT scholars of all disci-

plines and levels of college education.

In its first year of operation, 2002-2003, the foundation awarded \$114,198 to eight scholars, six of whom are still supported by scholarships today.

Since then, Lindstrom and Strickland have recruited 10 additional well-connected gay and lesbian trustees for the foundation, including Hollywood producer Jane Berliner, Navy veteran and gallery owner John Pence of San Francisco, and New York financial guru Jennifer Hatch, managing partner of Christopher Street Financial, as well as out philanthropists Rand Harris and Harvey Shipley Miller.

"A lot of [gay and lesbian] people who are in their 50s or 60s had traumatic experiences personally," notes Nancy Cunningham, executive director of Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues in New York City, commenting on the remarkable largess that Lindstrom and Strickland tapped into with The Point Foundation. "As they were growing up, the world was a different place, with very few role models or support systems."

"What Bruce and I envisioned," says Strickland, 30, "was a community and a family. For some scholars, this is their only connection to role models of happy, healthy gay people."

"Being alone in your 20s can be difficult," adds Lindstrom, 58, who was abandoned by his family for 15 years because he is gay. "Part of our philosophy was to play a meaningful role in [the scholars'] lives. I always wanted to be involved in helping LGBT youth have an easier transition from youth to adulthood." To that end, each scholar is paired with an older LGBT mentor — The Point Foundation equivalent of a Big Brother or Big Sister. "I don't want anyone

else to struggle with finding a place in the world like I did," says trustee Hatch. "As a mentor, I can at least try to smooth their path. Mentoring is really putting your money where your mouth is."

Vance Lancaster, Executive Director of TPF, has set aggressive growth goals for The Point Foundation, hoping to build a \$1 million endow-

ment within a year. "The need is great, much greater than the 1,000 who apply," he says. "It's really critical for us to raise more funds to help more kids."

Within a year, Lancaster plans to further expand programming to support even more students. The application process is rigorous, involving an extensive written application, resumes, letters

of reference, and, for finalists, face-to-face interviews with the trustees.

Whatever public profile The Point Foundation may build in future years, Lindstrom says the current scholars have already proved themselves: "They're the Rhodes scholars of the gay world."

MICHAEL HUFFINGTON OFFERS \$150,000 CHALLENGE GRANT TO THE POINT FOUNDATION



Michael Huffington

This fall philanthropist Michael Huffington stepped forward to offer his financial and personal support to The Point Foundation in the form of a new \$150,000 challenge grant.

This generous donation marks the first time that the prominent business leader, and former congressman, has publicly supported a LGBT charitable organization.

Huffington gave an initial \$100,000 grant to The Point Foundation earlier this year, challenging the organization to create a \$1 million endowment — a goal the foundation achieved within merely 90 days of Huffington's challenge. He decided to issue the second matching grant after meeting with some of the current Point Scholars.

"This is the first time I have taken a public role for a LGBT non-profit, even though I have contributed financially to several others. After meeting with a few Point Scholars, it's clear that they possess enormous talent and ambition, and are now able to reach their potential thanks to the support of The Point Foundation. Other than love, there is nothing more important that we can give young people than a good education. And that is why I have decided to lend my support to The Point Foundation," concluded Huffington.

The Point Foundation is committed to raising an additional \$850,000 by June 30, 2005 to match Huffington's contribution.

"This year we were able to give 25 scholarships," said Executive Director Vance Lancaster, "but there are so many more deserving students in need. This challenge is both wonderful and daunting. Last year, Michael Huffington gave us a tremendous challenge to build an endowment, and people in the community stepped up to help us meet it. We will only meet this new challenge to raise \$850,000 if other generous individuals step forward to support our mission. I am confident it will happen. We are grateful to leaders like Michael who are willing to make a significant commitment and support these outstanding students."

The Point Foundation

A Scholarship Lifeline for LGBT Students

P.O. Box 11210, Chicago, IL 60611

Individuals who would like to make a donation to support current and future Point Scholars can donate online at www.thepointfoundation.org or call toll-free: 1-866-33-POINT.

Winter 2004 – 2005

The Point Foundation



Lifeline

Gay Students Offered Scholarships

CNN.COM

Alyn Libman won a \$15,000-a-year scholarship to the University of California at Berkeley with a resume that showed more than just Libman's athletic achievement and academic potential. It also showed years of ridicule, beatings and threats, along with Libman's decision to become a boy in 11th grade.

"It felt amazing to actually be embraced by someone who didn't just dismiss me for being different," said Libman, a 19-year-old aspiring civil rights lawyer and the first transgendered person to win a scholarship from The Point Foundation, a Chicago nonprofit organization that has awarded more than \$1 million to college-bound gays since 2002.

The Point Foundation recognizes that youngsters who come out of the closet are sometimes cut off by their families and suffer financially because of it.

Sexual orientation alone is not enough to get these scholarships. Success against the odds, scholastic aptitude, extracurricular activities and leadership also are needed to qualify — the same qualities philanthropists have always sought to celebrate by endowing college scholarships.

But the essays these students write in their applications are something different — they tend to include tales of confusion and rejection. Many of the recipients are estranged from their families or were tormented in high school.

"The ability to take individuals who have had enormous disadvantage and to give them the ability to succeed in life is what's important to society," said Point Foundation creator Bruce Lindstrom, 59. He was abandoned by his own family when he revealed he was gay in his mid-20s.

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Million-Dollar Scholars

THE POINT FOUNDATION HAS GIVEN AWAY OVER \$1 MILLION TO LGBT COLLEGE STUDENTS CUT OFF FROM OTHER RESOURCES. BUT IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT MONEY, ITS FOUNDERS SAY, IT'S ABOUT BOOSTING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

BY RYAN MACDONALD
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"It's important to go back to those places that are hostile," says Lawrence Robinson, 23, a first-year law student at New York University who's already planning to use his degree to fight homophobia back home in Arizona. "We have our safe places, but it's time we create one universal safe place. That's going to be the rockiest phase of the movement."

Robinson, who came out in the eighth grade,

attended a Phoenix high school populated by Mormons and the sons and daughters of migrant farmworkers. As an out teenager of African-American heritage, Robinson knew he stood in the center of an intersecting cultural identity. "Because I was caught in the middle," he says, "I became an advocate for change." He also became a three-time class president, student body president, a media relations associate at the ACLU, an intern at the Human Rights Campaign, and an honor

student at Claremont-McKenna College in California.

Those accomplishments earned him yet another honor: a scholarship from The Point Foundation, a nonprofit group dedicated to providing crucial financial support to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students who demonstrate leadership and scholarship in their communities, particularly those rejected by society, family, or peers.

Many of this year's class of 25 Point Scholars have one thing in common: They would have been unable to attend school without the foundation's financial boost. Take Julie Schell, for example. A high school honor student in Las

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www.thepointfoundation.org

DEAR FRIENDS,

We now support a total of 25 scholars, up from 12 last year. However, *we had more than 1,000 worthy applicants this year, and their need far exceeded the resources available.* To better meet the demonstrated need of some of the youngest, most vulnerable, and most promising members of the LGBT community, we have established aggressive goals to bring more resources to The Point Foundation. Through your support of these goals, we can realize the hopes and dreams expressed by one of our current scholars, who remarked, “Your gift gives us all hope that one day, no one will have to live through the things we’ve lived through and we will all be treated equally, the way it should be, the way it CAN be.”

— VANCE LANCASTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE POINT FOUNDATION



mtvU and The Point Foundation

TWO \$10K SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED TO EMPOWER LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

mtvU, the 24-hour college network, highlighted lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students across America with “Out On Campus” Week, starting October 4th and ending on National Coming Out Day, October 11th. Throughout the week, mtvU explored the state of the college LGBT community and profiled students who are out on campus and have compelling stories to tell.

As part of the week, mtvU took a closer look at fraternity and sorority life for LGBT students including a profile on a gay fraternity at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, mtvU hosted a national discussion as LGBT students at New York University spoke with straight students around the country about the myths surrounding sexual orientation. mtvU, in partnership with PublicInterest.org, also kicked off its search for same-sex couples on college campuses willing to share their story with the mtvU audience.

Additionally, mtvU has teamed up with The Point Foundation to offer two \$10,000 scholarships that will be awarded to students who demonstrate leadership, scholastic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, involvement in the LGBT community, and financial or emotional need. LGBT students, along with students of all orientations, are welcome to apply by visiting www.mtvU.com.

For complete information on mtvU’s “Out On Campus” Week including programming, events, scholarships and more, visit www.mtvU.com.

The Point Foundation



Point Scholar Participates in International AIDS Conference in Bangkok

BY TONIA POTEAT, POINT SCHOLAR
Jet-lagged from the 24-hour journey from Atlanta to Bangkok, I could still feel the excitement of attending my first International AIDS Conference. Despite 15 years of AIDS activism, I had never been able to attend an international conference before. I was blown away to find myself in the company of 20,000 people from around the world gathered in one place for the sole purpose of fighting AIDS.

The theme of this year’s conference was “Access for All,” and I was delighted to see that attendees took that message seriously. Those typically excluded from mainstream conferences on AIDS had a powerful presence here. Young people, poor people, drug users, people of color, sex workers, immigrants, and activists provided a



Tonia Poteat, Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health

constant reminder of the uphill battle we still face against not only the virus, but against stigma and discrimination as well.

Even mainstream speakers had powerful words in support of the disenfranchised. United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, opened the conference with this insistence:

We need leaders everywhere

to demonstrate that speaking up about AIDS is a point of pride, not a source of shame. There must be no more sticking heads in the sand, no more embarrassment, no more hiding behind a veil of apathy... Leadership means daring to do things differently, because you understand that AIDS is a different kind of disease. It stands alone in human experience, and it requires us to stand united against it.

During the course of the five day conference, I frequently felt humbled by the presence of those doing so much with so little in places where running water is a luxury. I left the conference even more motivated than before to complete my public health degree so that I can put those skills to use and strengthen the committed corps of people dedicated to wiping out HIV and the inequities it magnifies around the globe.

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By supporting diversity in the academic environment, TPF hopes to create a greater level of acceptance, respect and tolerance within future generations for all persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. You can help us make the world a better place through your generous support.

You Can Make a Difference Now

If you want your gift to provide immediate resources for our scholarships, we welcome gifts of cash, securities, property and corporate matching gifts. These gifts can be made in any amount, and may permit you to claim an income tax charitable deduction in accordance with IRS guidelines. Gifts of long-term appreciated securities and property can also allow you to enjoy additional tax benefits; consult your financial advisor or contact us for more information. Gifts of cash should be made by check, money order or credit card.

You Can Make a Difference in the Future

A number of gift plans that secure future revenue for TPF also offer a number of financial benefits for you today, from lifetime income for you and your family to various tax savings. Vehicles for these gifts range from charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder and other types of trusts to beneficiary designations on life insurance policies and retirement plan accounts. As you consider your gift to The Point Foundation, bear in mind that every philanthropic dollar will be used to support our Point Scholars.

For more information on how you can make a difference in the lives of deserving students, contact The Point Foundation, either through the Web site, www.thepointfoundation.org, or by calling 1-866-33-POINT (337-6468).

Mentoring Program is Cornerstone to Point Scholar’s Success

BY RYAN JAMES KIM, POINT SCHOLAR

So often it is the case that though an organization’s intentions are well meant, when it comes to scholarships, the end result is simply the slap of a check in someone’s hand and a brief wish of good luck. Luckily, The Point Foundation differs from this norm through the many connections it offers to highly successful men and women, the highlight of which is the Mentoring Program.

I met my mentor, Harvey S. Shipley Miller, in New York City in a café on the Upper East Side this past summer. Immediately, I was fascinated by the myriad of topics he could discuss with ease and intrigued by his current field of interest, art philanthropy, of which I knew practically nothing. Our discussion took us through so many different subjects ranging from taking a company public to writing books to buying art all around the world. In just one conversation, I was able to learn much of what will eventually be invaluable to me later on in my own life. Perhaps that is the quintessential part of The Point Foundation’s Mentoring Program, the passing of one’s life knowledge to others

who can apply it further in the future.

From that first day to the present, I am proud to say I continually learn from Harvey — I have even taken an interest in art — yet still, some might wonder if mentoring is even necessary for the



Ryan James Kim, Princeton University, and his mentor Harvey S. Shipley Miller

group of driven young women and men that make up the Point Scholars. For all of us, I firmly believe the Mentoring Program is essential. Many of us have little to no family support and because of that, it is so easy to feel as if no one cares about our academic progress. Because of The Point Foundation, I now have a mentor who is interested in my success,

someone whom I can consult when others call their parents.

The Point Foundation’s Mentoring Program is a powerful aspect of the organization and one for which I am extremely grateful. It has been the centerpiece of the strong support network The Point Foundation has given me and the education I receive from my mentor will last a lifetime. There are very few organizations in this nation that display a strong level of interest in the all-around well-being of its students and I’m proud to say that The Point Foundation is one of them.

Gay Students Offered Scholarships

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So far, the foundation has handed out multiyear scholarships covering tuition, housing and books to 27 undergraduate and graduate students.

“We try very hard to balance the issue of need versus the issue of leadership ability,” he said. “We are trying to identify those who have the capacity to make change in the world, to increase tolerance, and it’s a hard thing to balance those two things.”

Julie Schell, 30, a doctoral student at Columbia University’s Teachers College, came out as a lesbian 10 years ago while she was an undergraduate at the University of Nevada-Reno. The disclosure alienated her from her family and college roommates. One day she found “dyke” scrawled on her car.

Now in her second year as a Point Foundation Scholar, Schell said the money has allowed her to continue her studies, but the emotional support is what enables her to succeed. The foundation pairs students with openly gay professional mentors. Schell’s is the president of Roosevelt University in Chicago.

“I had someone to call and say, ‘I got three A-pluses at one of the world’s greatest educational institutions,’ and have that be validated by people who aren’t saying, ‘Well, you got three A-pluses, but you’re gay so it doesn’t count,’” Schell said.



Every dollar you contribute directly supports Point Scholars. The Board of Trustees and an anonymous donor cover all administrative and fund-raising efforts required for our success.

www.thepointfoundation.org