

College Access Partnership

2019-2020
Annual Report





Our Commitment

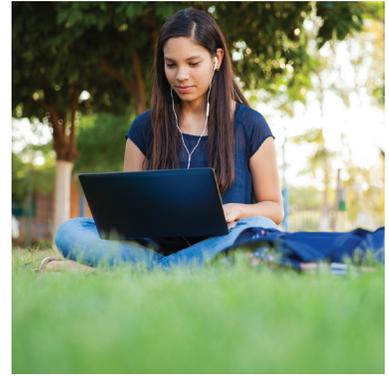
It was with a great sense of hopefulness for our shared future that we launched College Access Partnership, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to providing support to low-income, college-bound students who need assistance navigating college admissions and paying for their college education. It is no secret that the college admissions process and the high cost of a college education are obstacles for many deserving students. These obstacles often cause students and their families to simply “give up” the pursuit of their dreams or incur burdensome debt if the students attend college. College Access Partnership is committed to providing support to these students and their parents to enable them to achieve their goals.

Most people will be lucky if throughout the course of their life they come across someone who is so supportive and so generous you'd think they could be an angel in disguise. These people come to you when you need them most. They help you see your true potential, but they always give you enough room to learn and grow on your own. They can guide those who might have lost their way or they can help someone create their own path if they were stuck with nowhere to go.

College Access Partnership
Student

A Letter from Sue Slotnick

CEO and Chair, Board of Directors



Dear Donors, Partners
and Students,

Our mission at College Access
Partnership has always been one
of hope for the future—the hope
that comes with our commitment

to providing support to low-income, college-bound students who need assistance navigating college admissions and paying for their college education. It is no secret that these students and their families have long faced daunting obstacles, but no one could have anticipated the impact of a devastating pandemic to be one of those obstacles.

The world as we have known it seems to have been turned upside down. Schools have been forced to close until further notice and students are adjusting to online learning platforms in order to receive their education. Furthermore, families are more worried than ever that they will be unable to pay their bills and cannot even imagine paying for college. For students and their families who want desperately to continue on the journey toward college, there is a lot of anxiety.

We are committed to continuing our important work of providing college readiness support to students and their families by transitioning our programs (workshops, counseling sessions, tutoring and test prep) to an online model. And, our students are eagerly responding to the opportunity. Given an extraordinary challenge, students are working hard to achieve their goals and once again, they have become hopeful about their future.

It cannot be overstated that the work we do at College Access Partnership would not be possible without the effort put forth by our students, our team and the generosity of our donors, partners and sponsors. For this, we are very grateful!

With deep appreciation,

Sue Slotnick



What do we mean by *College*?

At College Access Partnership, we recognize that each of our students is on his or her own unique path. Some of our participants seek a four-year college or university upon completing their high school education. For others, a different experience makes better sense. Whether one's path leads to trade school, community college or university, we provide the support that will allow our students to achieve their goals.

What do we mean by *Access*?

Getting to the right school is a complicated endeavor. At College Access Partnership, we are committed to providing the information, tutoring, mentoring and access to the financial support needed to complete the college selection and admissions processes successfully.

What do we mean by *Partnership*?

We partner with our students and their families to understand and navigate the college admissions process. In addition, we partner with other nonprofit organizations and private corporations to extend our services to their constituents by offering workshops and one-on-one college counseling.

Services Provided Free of Charge

College Counseling

College Access Partnership offers assistance through every step of the college admission process, including pursuing financial assistance.

Test Prep and Tutoring

Test prep is conducted via one-on-one tutoring sessions, small group classes and/or online instruction. Formal academic assessments of students are also conducted to identify areas of challenge and the tutoring services needed to address those areas.

Workshops

Workshops are offered to college-bound students and their families covering a variety of topics including: an overview of the college admissions process, funding a college education and finding your career path.

Mentoring

Volunteer adult and peer mentors provide valuable guidance during the student's entire journey.

Meet Our Team



Sue Slotnick
*Co-Founder and Chair,
Board of Directors
College Counselor
and Mentor*

Sue Slotnick has worked as a K-12 Director of Admissions and Director of School Placement at two independent schools in the Los Angeles, California area for 38 years. She is currently CEO of Educational Test Prep, LLC and works as an independent college counselor specializing in assisting students in obtaining financial assistance for their college education. Sue received her certification in college counseling from UCLA.



Davida Koren
*Secretary, Board of Directors
Mentor*

Davida Koren is a 2017 Pitzer College Graduate and Fulbright Research Fellow. She recently received a Master's Degree in Higher Education and Organizational Change from UCLA. Davida's passion for education reform and experience working with underserved populations inform her unique perspective in guiding College Access Partnership's vision and programs.



Lisa Kurstin
*Co-Founder and Treasurer,
Board of Directors
College Counselor,
Mentor and Tutor*

Lisa Kurstin brings 20 years of experience as a classroom teacher and senior level school administrator in local independent schools. Lisa's administrative experience includes having served as a Director of Studies and Director of Admissions, as well as Education Programs Manager at Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge, California where she received the National Hull Award for Educational Excellence.



Margo Long
*Member, Board of Directors
Mentor*

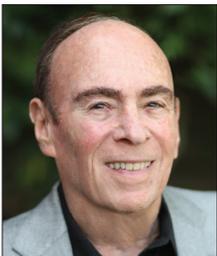
Margo Long is an educator with over 50 years of experience. She has taught in both public and private schools and was Principal of an independent elementary school for 38 years. Margo was co-founder of the Alliance for Minorities in Independent Schools and served as Board member for this organization for many years. She currently serves on the Education Board of the nonprofit organization 'Classic and Contemporary American Plays.'



Juliann Rooke

*Member, Board of Directors
Advisor*

Juliann Rooke is currently the Executive Director of Descanso Gardens Guild in La Cañada Flintridge, California. Her experience includes senior management roles at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and St. James School in Los Angeles. An active community volunteer, Juliann is currently a member of the San Marino Junior Alliance and is a former board member of the San Marino Schools Foundation.



Ralph Slotnick

*Member, Board of Directors
Mentor*

Ralph Slotnick has been an international entrepreneur for over 60 years. Ralph is the founder of the Institute of International Commerce (IIC) which offers an online course on global trade for adult learners. Ralph's expertise in international business makes him the perfect mentor for College Access Partnership students who are interested in this field.



Jim Westerholm

*College Counselor, Test Prep
Expert and Tutor*



Jim Westerholm brings over 20 years of classroom instruction and private tutoring in standardized test preparation and academic high school subjects. Jim has expertise in essay writing and over his years as a teacher and tutor, he has devoted his practice to researching and mastering the art of test taking. Jim developed the online test-prep program offered by Educational Test Prep, LLC.

Advisory Board

Members of the Advisory Board are dedicated individuals who bring their expertise to College Access Partnership thus enabling the staff and volunteers to best serve our students and their families.

Mitchell Butler



Mitchell is a former 4-year letter winner in basketball from UCLA who went on to play 11 years of professional basketball, 8 of which were in the NBA with the Washington Bullets/Wizards, Portland Trailblazers and Cleveland Cavaliers. He spent one year as an Assistant Coach with the Washington Wizards, helping them to the second round of the playoffs for the first time in 30 years, while also working in management as Director of Player Development. He has been a NBPA Certified Agent for the past 14 years. He is the only agent who has played, coached and managed in the NBA. Mitchell was a trustee of his high school alma mater, the Oakwood School in North Hollywood. He served on the Executive Committee and was the Chair the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Reverend Canon Gary Hall, Ph.D.



Gary retired in January of 2016 as the tenth dean of Washington National Cathedral where he served on the Foundation Board overseeing the work of St. Albans, Beauvoir, and National Cathedral Schools and worked collaboratively with the heads of school. Prior to serving in Washington, he served as Dean and President of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, chaplain and teacher at the Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and as English Teacher, Director of Studies and Principal at Oakwood Secondary School in North Hollywood, California. Gary has also served parishes in California, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. Gary received his A.B. at the University of California, Berkeley and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his M.Div. with distinction at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts and has M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English from UCLA. Gary

has taught both theology and English literature at the seminary, college and secondary levels.

Judith Lu



Judith Lu is Founder and CEO of Blue Zone Wealth Advisors, an independent investment advisory firm. She has over 20 years of experience working with high net worth individuals and families on matters of asset management and comprehensive financial planning. She has been recognized by Forbes as a Best-In-State Wealth Advisor in 2018 and 2019, as well as one of America's Top Women Advisors in 2017 and 2018. She has been a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles since 2015 and teaches financial literacy at local high schools around the city. Judith graduated Magna Cum Laude from UCLA with a dual degree in Business Administration and World Arts and Cultures. She has a Global MBA, Magna Cum Laude from Thunderbird, American Graduate School of International Management. Judith is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish.

Ira Pianko



Ira has been a partner with an international accounting firm, Arthur Young & Company, predecessor to Ernst & Young, as well as the Chief Operating and/or Chief Financial Officer at Warner/Chappell Music, The Resmark Companies and Oakwood School. He has served on the Board of Trustees of the Oakwood School since 1992, including his multi-year tenure as Chair of the Board. Ira has been on the Board of Stephen Wise Temple since 2018. He is currently Vice Chairman and a Director of The Resmark Companies. Ira's expertise in finance, business, leadership and strategic planning makes him an extraordinary mentor for College Access Partnership students.

How Do We Measure Success?

Lisa Kurstin, Co-Founder
College Access Partnership



This is a question we are frequently asked. Certainly, we can measure the success of our efforts by tracking the improvement we see in our students' standardized test scores and GPA's. And, by tracking the rate of college acceptance and retention, we know our work is effective. These quantifiable outcomes are important measurements of success, and at the same time, we believe they provide a limited view of the impact of our work.

In the book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell outlines a number of key factors in determining success. Among them are opportunity, effort and meaningful work. These essential ingredients are not easily measured, however they are at the core of our mission.

We serve low-income students and families who desire the opportunity to go to college and earn a degree. By definition, these individuals lack the opportunities that many of us simply can purchase—counseling, test prep and tutoring—all of which are key to competing in today's college admissions climate. Our services, which are free of charge, provide the opportunity for these students to succeed in accomplishing their life goals.

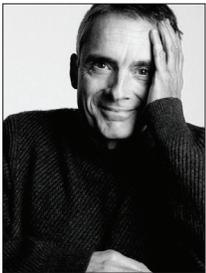
One need only qualify as low-income and have a sincere desire to go to college in order to be accepted into our programs. We don't reserve our services for only the high-achieving students, but rather, anyone who is willing to make the effort and do the work of

trying his or her best in school and caring enough to embark on the college admissions journey can receive College Access Partnership services. There is no question that the work of College Access Partnership is profound and meaningful. When we teach students to be their own advocates, when we guide them to the financial resources that will keep them out of debt, when we observe them moving from self doubt to a place of knowing they can achieve their goals, we find success.

The work we do at College Access Partnership would not be possible without the effort put forth by our students and the generosity of our donors, partners and sponsors. In 2019, we more than doubled the amount of support we received the prior year and were able to provide assistance to more than double the number of students and families. Now, in 2020, we find ourselves in unprecedented times. Fortunately, we continue to move forward with all of our programs, taking advantage of online tools and looking ahead with the optimism our work naturally brings. When we help those who are in need, it's healing for everyone involved. We're grateful for the support of those individuals and organizations listed in the following pages, and we remain committed to bringing immeasurable success to our students.

The Value of Partnership

The Story of Stephen Galloway



It's a cliché, but in this case it's simply true; it is difficult to know where to start with Stephen Galloway. On paper, Stephen's accomplishments speak for themselves—a graduate degree from Cambridge University, a

Harkness Fellowship, nearly 30 years as journalist and editor at *The Hollywood Reporter*, host of *The Hollywood Reporter's* acclaimed Roundtable series, and most recently, Chapman University's new Twyla Reed Martin Dean of Dodge College of Film and Media Arts—and all of this in one lifetime.

Putting Stephen's impressive achievements aside, we know Stephen as the passionate and hands-on founder of mentorship programs such as Women in Entertainment (WIE). WIE is an extraordinary program that pairs young women who are interested in careers in entertainment with leading female industry members as mentors and provides aid in college prep and finance. We were immediately impressed by both Stephen's grace and passion for the project, as well as by the praise he inspires from the girls themselves, many of whom grow teary-eyed when telling us about his generosity and his fierce dedication to advocating for them when few others would.

Today, we are proud to work side by side in partnership with Stephen in both the WIE and the Young Executives Fellowship (YEF) Programs and are

delighted to announce that Stephen Galloway will be awarded College Access Partnership's first Humanitarian Award in 2021. If it's true that we're judged by the company we keep, then College Access Partnership could never do better than to be in Stephen's company. Each of us has been deeply moved by Stephen's heart of gold and spirit of unbridled generosity. He is the perfect partner!

A Message for Stephen

I met Stephen Galloway early in my junior year of high school. Up until that point, I thought I wanted to be an author but I'd always felt like something was missing. I knew I loved to write and I dreamed of being the first in my family to go to college. I grew up in a community that was known for violence, not for producing college graduates. I didn't know how much I needed a role model in my life until I was selected to be a mentee in the Women in Entertainment Mentorship (WIE) Program. Stephen inspired me to become more outspoken and to understand that I had something to say.

Stephen has helped so many students make their dreams of going to college a reality through the WIE Program, and his dedication to advocating for the mentees has changed so many lives, including mine. Stephen inspired me to give back to others and help young women reach their goals like he helped me. I plan on becoming a mentor in the future. I don't think I could ever thank Stephen enough for the opportunities he has given me but I hope to be able to make him proud.

Samantha

Annual Giving 2019–2020

With deep gratitude, we acknowledge donations made to College Access Partnership in the 2019-2020 academic year. These contributions from our generous donors make it possible for College Access Partnership to provide support for college-bound students who need assistance navigating the college admissions process and paying for their college education. These gifts reaffirm the commitment to transforming the lives of deserving young people forever



Donors

All Ways Up Foundation
Robin and Tom Bales
Aviva Bobb
Faith and Jon Cookler
Kyra Thompson and
Chuck Crisafulli
Mary and Don Deckebach
El Caballero Foundation
First Republic Bank
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Susan and Howie Schechtman
Sarah and Stephen Schwartz
Sue and Ralph Slotnick
Paulina and Carlos Smith
Shana Waterman
Jim Westerholm

We extend a special “thank-you” to our volunteers and partners who work with the College Access Partnership Staff, Board of Directors and Advisory Board to provide services to our students.

Aimee Borrayo
Kristin Charness
Don Deckebach
Mary Deckebach
Jaime Dominguez

Rob Evans
William Figueroa
Michael Fiore
Stephen Galloway
Everett Glenn
Jennifer Hennessy
Phil Lopez
Debbie Martinez
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Marissa Pianko
Robin Pianko
Lilia Rodriguez
Mark Rosenthal
Laurie Rosenthal
Susan Schechtman
Hassani Scott
Lee Shube
Carlos Smith
Paulina Smith
Rama Stagner
Tania Velazquez
Rosie Villegas

“Funding College” Conference

Presented by College Access Partnership



When we formed College Access Partnership in 2017, we were clear in our mission to offer quality college-readiness support to low-income families. The exorbitant price of college counseling and test prep was a compelling reality for us, and we knew we could help lower income individuals and families compete in this environment. But we ultimately found that, even with counseling and test prep help, our families still faced an urgent need for help with funding that college education and to be financially literate.

Fortunately, the College Access Partnership Advisory Board brings with it significant expertise in finance and confidence building. Thus, we decided to harness that talent and offer a half day conference designed to teach the ins and outs of funding a college education and, on a Saturday in January of 2020, we welcomed 80 enthusiastic participants to our Funding College Conference in Pasadena.

The morning began with a whole group presentation on the basics of financial aid. This presentation covered the basics of funding college by exploring the unique features of government assistance, scholarships, work study and loans. As the morning progressed, families were invited to dive deeper into topics such as decoding financial aid award letters and how to find private scholarship funding to more general life skills such as

creating a budget, avoiding burdensome debt, understanding credit cards, and understanding credit scores. The event was a great success. Our guests were engaged throughout the entire morning and the feedback was so positive that we have decided to offer this event on an annual basis.

Funding college can be a daunting endeavor. However, we have found that when we become educated about the details of the true cost of a college career and the ways in which we can effectively leverage government aid, grants and scholarships to combat that cost, a college education is in fact, affordable.



Volunteer Spotlight

Robin Pianko



Would you like to see what kindness, insightfulness and a heart for helping others looks like? Then look no further and meet College Access Partnership volunteer, Robin Pianko.

Robin has been a long-time volunteer with our organization. In that she brings 18 years of experience in secondary school admissions work, she offers a valuable blend of compassion and expertise.

Among the most notable personal qualities in Robin is that she truly appreciates the uniqueness and value of each individual student. She has a marvelous knack for seeing the potential young people possess—even when they might not yet realize that potential themselves.

We are grateful for Robin's commitment to our mission and to supporting our programs. Whether she is conducting formal intake interviews with our new high school clients, drafting reports which inform the college lists or volunteering at our financial literacy conference, Robin is an important part of our team and is key to ensuring that our mission is fulfilled.

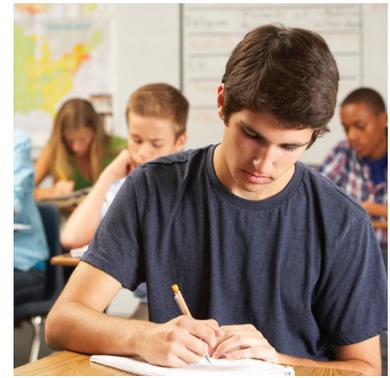


The Students We Serve

The Story of Lucas

By **Jim Westerholm**

*College Counselor, Test Prep Expert
and Tutor*



Lucas has one of those stories that you hear from teachers when they say, “This is why I do this.”

Lucas came to us early in the school year because he was behind in math. This wasn’t unusual for Lucas, since he had never cared much for grades. But something changed this year; he had decided that he wanted to learn. He wanted to turn things around, make something of his academic career and was actually thinking about college for the first time.

When we were discussing his teacher one day early in our sessions, he said that “she uses elements from the textbook, but isn’t very orthodox in her method.” And the really interesting thing was that he never sounded like he was reaching for the biggest words in his vocabulary just to sound smart. He naturally thought and spoke this way.

On that first day, we talked about linear equation problems and then graphed them together. He would say things like, “That’s what that means?” And he was interested.

After Lucas went home that day, we received a call from his mother, saying that when Lucas came in, he said, “Mom, for the first time I understand math.”

He has an uncle who works as a grip in movies and TV, and thinks he might like to do that. But for the first time he’s open to the idea of going to a four-year school and wondering if he can see himself as an academic.

Lucas is among the most admirable of all the students I’ve ever met. It would have been easy to give up, complain about his life and get farther behind in school, but he made up his mind to change his world, and he’s putting in the time to do just that. It’s been gratifying to watch his progress because he’s so easy to like. But it’s even more rewarding just to see a really capable mind like his suddenly turn on like this.

How You Can Help

Donate

You can make a donation now and help us to transform the lives of young people forever. The majority of College Access Partnership funding comes from individual donors so your contribution is critical to the success of our programs. We take pride in responsible stewardship of all gifts to maximize their impact.

Gifts can be made by cash, credit card or wire transfer. College Access Partnership, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by law. For more information about making a donation, visit our website at CollegeAccessPartnership.com or contact Sue Slotnick at SueSlotnick3@gmail.com.

Volunteer

College Access Partnership depends upon volunteers to help with tutoring students in academic subjects that are challenging so they can experience success that comes with support from a qualified tutor.

Mentorship is also a critical program that allows volunteer mentors to help students explore their interests and talents, thus enabling them to develop a relationship with trusted, experienced adults who can help with career advice.

College Access Partnership, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies and programs.



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