

End of year summaries/Thank you Notes
11 ½ St Foundation 2014-15 Scholarship recipients and others

Hello donors!

June 2016

Yesica F

Texas A & M (written at end of sophomore year-2016)

Scholarship means privilege. Receiving a scholarship means someone believed in you, in your potential, and your ability to accomplish your dreams. It is a source of motivation to those who receive it because the recipient knows that their education wouldn't be possible without the help of their scholarship and the humble donors who made an investment in their future. No matter how big or small the scholarship, it means the world to the recipient because it is a sign of hope.

Being a recipient of the 11 1/2 St. Scholarship has given me hope that there are truly great people in this world who are willing to aid me in my journey to success. As an 11 1/2 St. Scholar, I was honored to be the first in my family to pursue a higher education. I've gone against societal stereotypes about Hispanics and gone the extra mile to better my future; to break the cycle of blue collar workers that has plagued my family for as long as I can remember. I was able to attend a major university straight out of high school!

Throughout my first year in college I was able to make many beautiful memories, have many diverse experiences, all while expanding my learning! I volunteered at a special needs dance and several environmental cleanup activities with a campus community service organization. I also became part of Latinas Unidas which is an organization that promotes the involvement and empowerment of women on campus and was blessed enough to have been chosen as secretary for the upcoming school year. I was able to expand my mind to new horizons and enjoyed doing it so much that I did everything in my power to make sure I absorbed everything that was covered in my classes.

And finally at the end of my first year of college, I was given the delightful news that I had made the Dean's List. I reference these unforgettable experiences from my first year of college because I would like to stress a particular point.

Without the 11 1/2 St. Scholarship and the wonderful donors who support it, my incredible adventures and achievements wouldn't have been possible. My pursuit of a higher education would only be a lost dream. And yet here I am looking back at my first year in college and realizing the major change one thing (a scholarship) can make in one person's life. I cannot thank the 11 1/2 St. Foundation and their donors enough for choosing me as a recipient of their scholarship and giving me the privilege to attend Texas State University. Thank you.

Karla G

Texas State University (senior year right before student teaching-2016)

This year was one of the most invigorating years I've had so far in my education. For the second time, I received an academic achievement award from the Department of Mathematics and I'll be graduating this December with my Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics and a minor in secondary education.

Last fall, I took challenging but exciting math courses like differential equations and the history of math. I have learned many interesting things that I wish to share with my students one day. Spring semester was even better as I got to experience for the first time being in a classroom teaching students. I had great professors who encouraged me and supported me to become the best teacher I can be.

However, the most amazing and rewarding part is the students I got the chance to work with. They are truly amazing and now I know that being a teacher was the right choice for me.

As an undocumented first generation student there was a time in my life when I was told that I couldn't accomplish what I have done. However, I'm glad that I decided not to give up on my dream. More than anything I'm glad that I had great teachers in my life who supported me and did everything within their reach to help me accomplish my goal. Thank you for your scholarship and for everything you have done for me. I look forward to one day helping out my students just like you have helped me.

Martin C

University of Houston (end of freshman year 2016)

I would like to begin by saying how grateful I am that you would assist me in furthering my college education by donating to the 11 ½ Street Foundation. I'm currently a freshman studying Computer Science at the University of Houston Main Campus. Without this scholarship I probably wouldn't have been able to pay for the necessary textbooks for my first year.

Transitioning from high school to college level courses was no easy task. It was difficult getting acclimated to the new environment and study patterns. However, after a few weeks of living on campus it became a more enjoyable experience. I'm studying Computer Science, because I want to program and design my own video games in the future. Life here at the university is usually very lively. There is always something to do and plenty of friends to make. It can sometimes become hectic around the time of test and finals. However, after each test (and a good night's rest) I feel far more accomplished.

One of the most challenging courses that I currently take is Computer Science. When I'm not doing other school activities I'm usually studying and practicing my skills while also learning new ones. The amount of possibilities is amazing and I'm always ready to learn more.

I just want to thank the 11 ½ Street Foundation and their generous donors for giving me the opportunity to pursue my dreams. After I graduate I will gladly become a donor and assist in helping future students achieve their dreams.

Marisol M

University of Texas (end of freshman year 2016)

I am writing this letter to express my appreciation for being selected as one of the 11 ½ Street Foundation recipients for the past year, 2015. I feel very blessed and thankful for the financial help that was given to me, making my hopes and dreams one step closer. It was due to people like yourselves that I was able to attend my dream university and to be where I am right now. It has only been a year but I now feel like a completely different person with more knowledge, more open mindedness and am more optimistic and secure about my goals.

I recall telling my mother very enthusiastically that I had applied for the scholarship and she said to me that I was probably not going to be selected because there are many students and that instead I should focus on working and attending a small college here in Houston. Although I was told the same thing by my family and by others, I was convinced that I was going to take my education to another level no matter the obstacles. Although I had doubts myself, by the beginning of my high school senior year I realized all the opportunities and open windows I had in front of me. I began to find scholarships from people who genuinely care about your education and want to help you be successful and achieve your dreams. When I was told that I had received the 11 ½ Street Scholarship, it reassured me and gave me the sense of comfort I needed to keep reminding myself that I was going to leave to UT-Austin.

The scholarship became useful as soon as I began my fall semester at the University of Texas because I underestimated the amount of money I would be needing for food, books, materials, housing, personal expenses, and on other activities required by the classes. I decided to prioritize and divide the money between books, required materials, and in required learning systems and tools. Being able to buy books without having to work a month was very soothing and accommodating. I was glad I was not having to worry about working, paying off my expenses, or asking my parents for money, but instead I was given the opportunity to only focus on my classes. I had been working and going to school since I was 15, therefore receiving this scholarship was like paradise to me.

I am now less than two months away from finishing my first year of college! I am a Kinesiology major in exercise science. I plan on attending a physical therapy school and becoming a physical therapist. These first two semesters of college have exceeded my expectations; it has not been easy to move to a new city with a new environment and with such diversity. The transition from high school to college has also been very difficult. You are now surrounded by people like yourself who are smart, excited to learn, and who also have future objectives. You are also having to find new ways of studying, managing your time, prioritizing and becoming independent. It has not been a smooth transition but it is definitely doable and worth it.

Lastly, I want to give thanks to all the 11 ½ Street Foundation donors once again for helping me with my financial burden. You have inspired me to one day be able to give back to the community and to remind others that there is people who care about them and who are willing to help them. There are no words that can explain my appreciation, thank you for your generosity and for helping others like myself achieve their goals.

Roger A

University of Houston (end of junior year-2016)

My name is Roger Arbizio and I graduated from Jefferson Davis High School class of 2013. I am in my third year at the University of Houston currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

I balance my school with work as I have been working for the past 2 years. I have been working 20 hours a week in Project Management for TransCanada, which is an Oil & Gas company located in downtown. Up to my third year, balancing my time was not an issue, but now I am getting into the meat of engineering and classes are getting tough. All these factors are a reason I might extend my expected graduation date by one year. My goals are to graduate with my engineering degree and further expand my career in Project Management with the help of my mentors at my company. I am also planning on going to graduate school a few years after completing my undergrad studies, but I am still undecided in what exactly to go for.

I would like to thank all the donors along with Ms. Kravetz for the generous scholarship that was awarded to me for the 2014-2015 academic school year. I come from a low income family and I am sure that my situation speaks for most of the Jefferson Davis High School students. With that said, every dollar counts because the prices of books and access codes are only going up. A lending hand is not to be taken for granted and I look forward to being able to donate to this scholarship as well in a upcoming years.

Mayela M

Texas A & M (end of sophomore year-2016)

I am a sophomore Biomedical Science major at Texas A&M University. I am honored to be one of the 11 ½ Street Scholarship foundations recipients and would like to thank you for your generous support.

This semester has been going well so far. I am currently taking Organic Chemistry I, Math, Nutrition and two core requirement classes. I feel like I will end this semester strong with several A's and B's.

Although everything is going well now, my first year in college was a bit rough. I am proud that I overcame those difficulties and have been able to grow and learn from those experiences. My first semester was a bit difficult due to the fact that I had to study harder than I had ever done before, which was something new for me. Coming from high school, I was used to getting nothing but A's and B's; it wasn't until I got to college that I got my first D. This hurt my self-esteem and I began to doubt if college was the right option for me. Around this same time, my grandma passed away and this combination of the bad grades and loss put me in a really bad place. When I talked with my parents and a friend of mine, I realized that I had handled the situation in a completely bad way. While I was questioning whether or not college was for me, one of my closest friends was trying to balance family issues as well as financing her education.

I was lucky enough to not have to worry about the cost of college since my scholarships covered most of my expenses. While I was able to purchase my books on time, thanks to the 11 ½ Street Scholarship, my friend had to find a way to purchase her books after paying for tuition. While I was contemplating leaving college because the situation wasn't pretty, my friend was doing her best to stay. It was her determination that made me realize that if I did give up, not only would I be disappointing myself but also all those that believed in me and helped me with their generous scholarships.

My donors saw something special in me and I sure wasn't about to let them down. I got out of the hole I had dug for myself and finished the year as best as I could. The results were not pleasing but I had this new determination and strength to do better and prove that my first semester was nothing but a slight barrier.

Since my first semester I have been able to improve academically, and now wish to pursue medical school. My dream is to become a doctor, and I would like to thank you for not only giving me the opportunity to get my bachelor's degree but also for the support that comes with being a scholarship recipient.

Jazzmine M University of North Texas (end of freshman year)

I want to thank everybody for raising enough funds in order to give scholarships to students like me. Thanks to this scholarship I did not have to pay out of pocket my first semester at UNT. I used part of the scholarship for my tuition and the rest was used for my books.

I am beyond thankful that I received this scholarship. It was one of the many blessings I received last summer. To say the truth, I was kicked out of my mother's house about a week before the potluck in where she did not give me anything. I thought I had lost it all, but I was wrong because I didn't. The potluck was coming up and an aunt bought me clothes and I was able to go and spend the time with you all. Receiving this scholarship made me realize that no matter what happens I can be successful and this scholarship is helping me go to UNT and one step closer to success.

I really want to thank every single person who donated and who gave me the opportunity to be a recipient of this scholarship. I want to let you know that college was not easy and I did struggle academically my first semester. I did not do as great as I did in high school. College is really hard. As soon as I started school I got tutors for my classes and I was part of study groups, and talked to my professors a lot!

I remember being so scared because I didn't know anybody from Davis High School who went there and I am happy to say that I made so many friends and that I even joined a Sorority! Next year, I plan on joining an organization BESO, which is a Bilingual and ESL student organization.

I am really happy at college and part of it is thanks to you. You have helped me come to UNT and have pushed me to do better.

Madeline P

Lakeland College-WI (graduate, 2016)

This year makes my last year as an undergraduate. As of May, I have graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science and plan on making working in computer science. Thank you for your support throughout these four years. The help that I received through this foundation really made a difference.

This last year of school I ended with a 3.3 GPA at Lakeland College, or Lakeland University as of July. I took a full load both semesters to get all my credits in for graduation. I was also the programming tutor for the past semester as well as working as the online school Collaborative Support on campus. I also had a really fun class, ceramics, during a free mini-semester at Lakeland in May.

Thank you again and I hope that you continue to support students in their academic goals.

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Janet I

University of Houston (end of sophomore year)

I am writing in appreciation of the 11 ½ St. Foundation and I was glad to have been able to receive the honor. Thanks for funding the \$500 scholarship. It helps me to continue to achieve my major in Public Health in order to pursue a career in Nursing. The financial assistance you provided me helped me out tremendously in buying a car to get to college. This scholarship helped me to buy a Ford Focus 2003 that has made a great change in my life.

I'm so thankful. Without this scholarship I could not have afforded to buy my car that has made my life less stressful. It made a difference because before, I had to wake up at 5 a.m. in the morning and bike to the METRO stop to be on time for my class at 8 a.m. When before I would get to class 30 minutes late, now I am able to get to class 30 minutes early. That time was useful to go over material that will be going on that day of class. Also, it was helpful to get my day organized.

Now I would like to share how my second year of college went. It was amazing and full of new experiences that had made me a wiser and a better person. It was nothing compared to my first year of college where I felt lost and stressed out.

My second year was an adventure. I joined three organizations. It was a busy year but full of nice experiences. The first half of the year I was struggling with commuting to the University of Houston. Also, in order to be part of the organizations, I needed to stay late and going on METRO was not safe at all but then after buying my car everything became easier. I was able to stay late even to just study at school. I found it helpful to get my studying done in school rather than at home. Before, I would worry about getting to the METRO stop before it got dark outside. Also, having a car made it possible for me to be part of these organizations and made it safer getting to school and home.

This scholarship made a big impact in my life. I finished my second year of college with a GPA of 3.6. I am proud because one of my goals for my second year of college was to get on the Dean's List. This accomplishment is largely due to those extra hours I was able to stay at school and study and get my homework done because I had a car. It took a lot of hard work and time management.

Also the Challenger Program, Academic Achiever Program and Delta Omega Chi helped me out and made my second year full of experiences. Each organization helps me give back to my community and grow as a leader. In the Challenger Program, I find the support I need in my personal life and guidance in making decisions. I met wonderful people my second year like Ms. Flody who is in charge of the Challenger Program and Ms. Treviño who is in charge of the Academic Achiever Program. With their help, I was able to obtain that extra help to give the best of me in my second year. Delta Omega Chi has opened a new world about what is the health care career and I was able to start my networking in the medical field.

Thanks to the scholarship I was finally able to get to class in time. I did not have to pass through those horrible rainy days or cold days outside waiting for the bus. The only thing I have to stress about is about passing my classes. I am blessed with the privilege of going to college. College is becoming the most wonderful experience in my life. I'm glad that the 11 ½ St. Foundation helped me achieve a higher education. Thanks for being part of my journey for a better future. I will continue my journey until I become a nurse to help others in needed.

Thank you for the opportunity and assistance that you have given me. I am deeply grateful and vow to continue to work hard in appreciation of this foundation's efforts for students like me. Thank you for believing in me for I vow to continue to work hard and make you proud!

