



Rise Together Education

2019 Annual Report



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Mission Statement

Rise Together Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving college graduation rates by providing support and financial resources to low-income Palo Alto High School students who have been accepted to 4-year colleges or 2-year community colleges with a direct transfer agreement.

Did you know that RTE scholarship recipients receive financial assistance even before setting foot on campus? We help with housing and tuition deposits.



Michel (Paly '2017), Stonehill College

History and Background

Our inspiration was Stephanie. She spent her entire life living in poverty, helping to care for her siblings, and working while going to school. Despite the odds, she graduated from Palo Alto High School (Paly) in 2015 and was accepted to several universities, including San Francisco State University, her school of choice. Thanks to the efforts of the Palo Alto community, Stephanie was provided with mentoring and funding for college. Rise Together Education (RTE) began in 2015 as a proactive response for students like Stephanie, who attended school in one of the wealthiest school districts in the country, yet lived in poverty. In the 2019/2020 school year, 10% of the 2,190 students are enrolled in Free/Reduced Lunch Program and 9% are children of parents who did not attend college (aka first generation college students). We are proud to announce that In May 2019, Stephanie graduated from San Francisco State University with a 4.0 GPA and is currently studying in a Master Degree program.

Stephanie's statistics are against all odds. A national [study](#) published by the US Department of Education (2018) which followed three groups of students from sophomores in high school, college freshman and graduates concluded that the first generation college students were at a disadvantage. These children, as compared to those whose parents had a college degree, were less likely to go to college (46% vs 26%) and if they did attend college, at three years into college, they were more likely to drop out (33% vs 14%) and also less likely to graduate on time (48% vs 66%). Many studies have shown that coaching or mentoring contributes to the success of college students and increases graduation rates. However, in a [study](#) from 2018 by Strada-Gallup, data showed that 15% of first generation college students said that they did not have any mentorship with their college professors and staff. Moreover, most first generation low income students are burdened with working many hours a week to meet their expenses.

Statistics show that first generation college students are more likely to drop out and less likely to have a mentoring relationship with a faculty or staff member on their college campus.

Rise Together Education (RTE) is a Palo Alto-based nonprofit that provides multi-year mentoring to eligible low-income Paly students and financial support to Paly's graduates who are attending 4-year colleges or 2 year-colleges with a direct transfer agreement. Our long term commitment to the students starting in high school is unique to our organization. Our students

must meet the criteria of being on the federal [*Free or Reduced Lunch Program*](#) for Palo Alto Unified School District, which is equivalent to an annual income of \$47,000 per year for a family of four. We consider that if the student is low income and is qualified to enter higher education, then we will help provide financial aid regardless of their grade point average.

Working with Paly staff, RTE first identifies potential scholarship recipients during their years at Paly. RTE assists Paly's 12th graders as needed through their college decision process. When the students graduate from Paly, RTE continues to work with these students through their years of college. Most of our budget goes to providing scholarships to help these college students with their financial aid gaps. The number of students and the amount of scholarships RTE is able to provide is dependent upon fundraising efforts; however, our financial goal is, one day, to be able to provide scholarships up to \$5,000 per year for each student. We aim to have enough money raised to provide all of our current students through four years of attending college. **We are a nonprofit organization that helps deserving students get to college and through college.** As of Fall 2019, we provide \$2,500 per year to each 4-year college student and \$1,000 per year to each 2-year (community college) student. After the community college student completes their associate degree, we will provide \$2,500 per year for them to attend a 4-year college for up to two additional years.

RTE assists Paly's 12th graders as needed through the college application and decision process. Once in college, RTE stays in contact with the scholarship recipients to ensure that they receive the encouragement and financial assistance that they need to stay in college. We also connect them to other important resources such as people in their field of study and career interest.

Board Members

KIM DIORIO, EdD Kim is an experienced educator and student advocate who proudly served as the Principal of Palo Alto High School from 2013-2018 and as Assistant Principal starting in 2007. She also worked as a counselor at JLS Middle School and Henry M. Gunn High School. Kim holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Science in Counseling from Villanova University, Villanova, PA. Kim completed her Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Change from Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, CA. A progressive leader, Kim is passionate about equity and access for all students, and innovation in education.

DANIELLE HAAS-LARSON, PhD, JD Danielle grew up in Atlanta, has an undergraduate degree from Cornell, a PhD from Georgia Tech and a law degree from Stanford. She practices law in-house at Google. Volunteering has always been an important part of Danielle's life. In addition to numerous years as a room parent, she was previously the Sisterhood Co- President of The Temple in Atlanta, on the board of a (now closed) school for children with severe ADHD, and on the board of Palo Alto Girls' Softball. Danielle read the story about Stephanie in Palo Alto Online and reached out to Laura to kick off our foundation and has been serving as its founding Vice President ever since then.

MICHAEL SULLIVAN Michael is a local real estate developer and philanthropist with a strong interest in promoting and supporting access to higher education. He is a founding board member of Rise Together Education. Michael has volunteered with the Family Care Network where Michael provided mentoring and support services to children in foster homes and as a mentor and instructor with the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula. Michael attended California Polytechnic State University graduating with a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance.

RTE was founded in 2015.

We became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2016.

**The members of the RTE Board of Directors
consist of community members, Paly teachers
and are all unpaid volunteers.**

TIDA VIOLANTE, DrPH., MPH Tida is a graduate of Palo Alto High School. She is grateful for PAUSD and her teachers for helping her learn to speak and write English when she first moved here from Thailand and wants to pay that forward. She has worked as an evaluator for public health programs domestically and abroad. She has served on the board and worked in the trenches for many nonprofits in Montgomery County, MD and Marin County, CA. She earned a MPH and a DrPH from the University of California, Berkeley and a BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

KIMBERLY SCHWAN Kimberly recently concluded a successful career as Vice President of Human Resources for a private equity firm where she worked for over 16 years. Since her retirement she has dedicated her time volunteering weekly at Palo Alto High School's College and Career Counselling Center. Through this experience and helping her daughters through the college selection and application process, she became enlightened to the challenges that low income, high achieving children face in the college application process. She joined RTE hoping to break down some of the barriers for these young adults. She received her BS in Business from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

DAWN BILLMAN Dawn has significant management experience in both the for-profit and nonprofit world. She currently works at Stanford University. Following a successful international career, she brought her business talents to nonprofit organizations with deep knowledge and consistent success creating excitement and managing large community events. As a twenty year plus Palo Alto resident, she has been an extraordinarily active volunteer. Dawn is passionate about supporting the social and emotional health and welfare of all children and teens and providing opportunities for our youth's continued learning and development.

ANGELINA BENA MICHAEL, MS Angelina most recently worked as the Wellness Outreach Worker at Palo Alto High School and is also a graduate of the school. She earned a BS from Brigham Young University and Master of Science from Johns Hopkins University. She is passionate about working with diverse populations in regard to reproductive health, maternal health, child health, and nutrition. Her passions have led her to live and work around the world including two years in Ghana.

RUBY IBANGA, MA Ruby Ibanga is a Math Teacher and a Teacher Advisor at Palo Alto High School. She is the Faculty Advisor for the Girls in STEM club on campus. She also teaches with the Summer Bridge Enrichment program to help prepare rising 9th graders for high school mathematics. She is passionate about increasing more girls in STEM. Ruby earned her Bachelor degree in Chemistry-Physics from Harvard University and a Master degree and teaching credential from Stanford University.

PALLAVI HOMAN, MBA Pallavi is grateful that her kids have had the opportunity to experience such amazing schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District. A graduate of both Cornell University and Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, Pallavi has worked in the technology sector in Product Management since moving to Silicon Valley in 1998. This included stints at companies such as Yahoo!, eBay and now Apple. Pallavi is excited about this opportunity to give back to the community and is passionate about leveling the playing field for low income students.

MIGUEL FRITTORIA, MS Born and raised in East Palo Alto, Miguel graduated from Palo Alto High School in 2008. At the University of Rochester, Miguel double-majored in Political Science and Psychology and a Master of Science in Human Development from the Warner School of Education. Miguel is currently the Palo Alto Unified School District's Coordinator for Student and Family Engagement. Previously, Miguel was the Program Director for DreamCatchers. Recognizing the need for a multi-faceted approach to tackling the opportunity gap, Miguel joined the Board of Rise Together to create a natural bridge between RTE, the school district and the Palo Alto community.

ADAM PAULSON Adam is the current Principal of Palo Alto High School, where he previously served as the Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning since 2014. Prior to coming to Paly, Adam was an elementary school principal in San Carlos, CA, a high school Assistant Principal, and a high school History/Social Science teacher in both public and urban charter schools. Adam holds a Master degree in Education from Pepperdine University and a Bachelor degree from the University of Colorado. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education Administration from the University of San Francisco.

ELIZABETH MUELLER Liz Mueller grew up in Palo Alto and attended Palo Alto schools. After college, Liz returned to work at Paly, first as a Special Education Paraprofessional and later as a teacher. Liz has worked at Paly for over 20 years, teaching Special Education and a range of support classes, and for the last 6 years classes for Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). Liz has made equity a focus of her career at Paly, consistently working to narrow the achievement gap not only through her teaching but through participation on Site Council, Education Council, the Palo Alto Unified School District Equity Team, and Camp Everytown. She is very excited to work with RTE to drastically increase educational opportunities for many deserving Paly students.

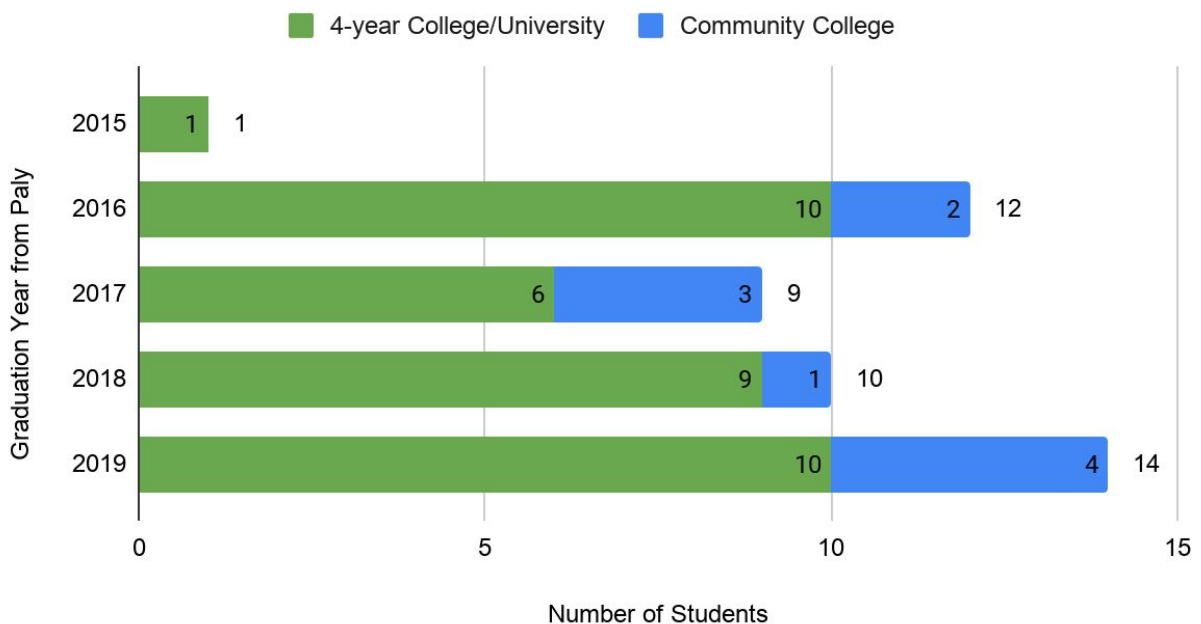
Our Scholars

In the fall of 2019, we had a total of 45 scholarships recipients who attend colleges and universities across the country. All except for 5 students are the first generation in their families to attend an institute of higher education. Not only do they bring pride and joy to their family, but they have also made their teachers and staff at Paly very proud as well.

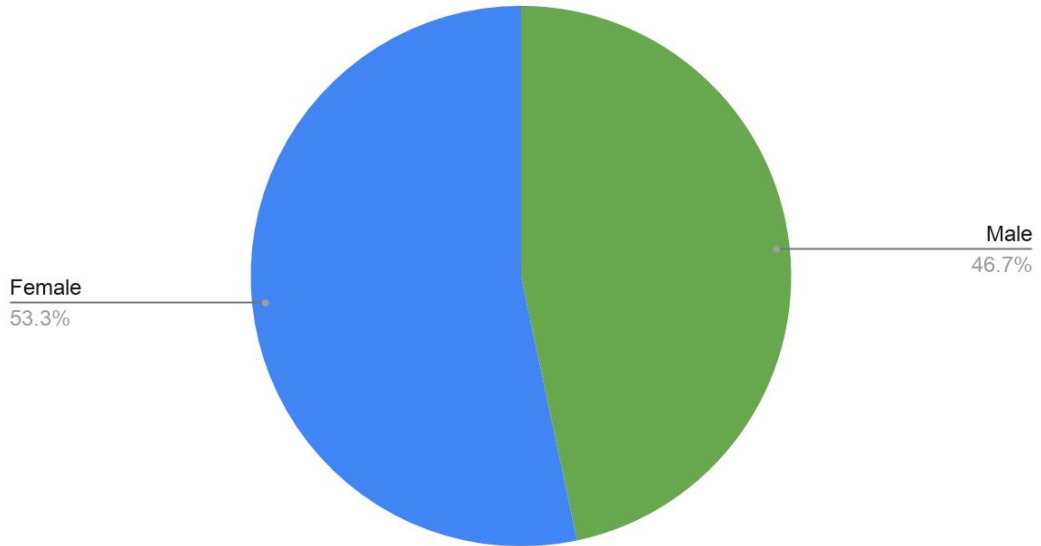
The number of students whom we supported from each Paly graduating class are listed below. Having established our program with the Paly community, we anticipate a large increase in the number of applicants in Spring 2020 to about 27 students.

Data show that first generation students tend to have a lower retention rate but our RTE scholarship recipients have continued their course of studies and one has graduated from college within four years.

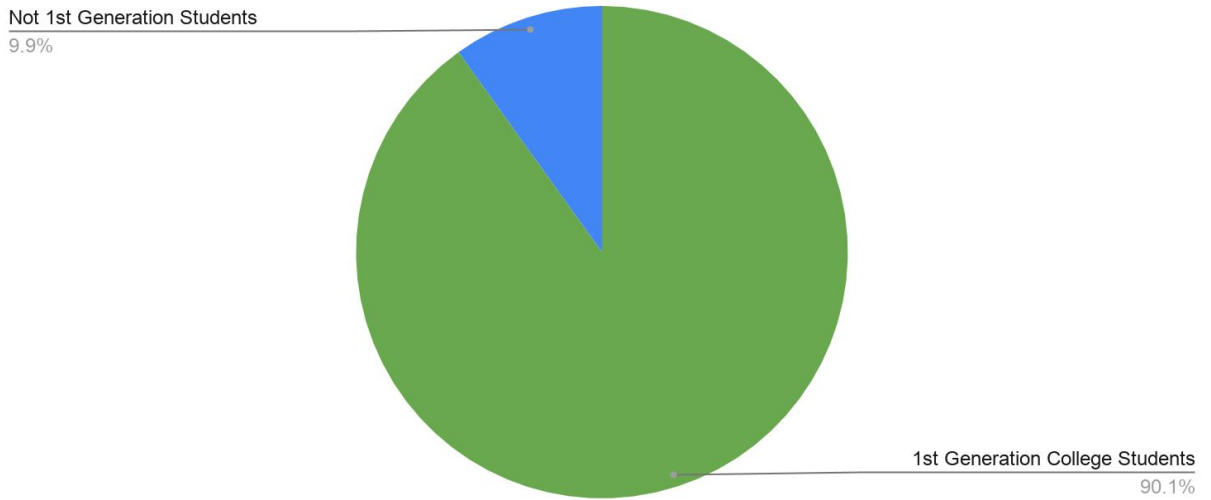
Number of Students at 4-year Colleges & Community Colleges



Scholarship Recipients by Sex

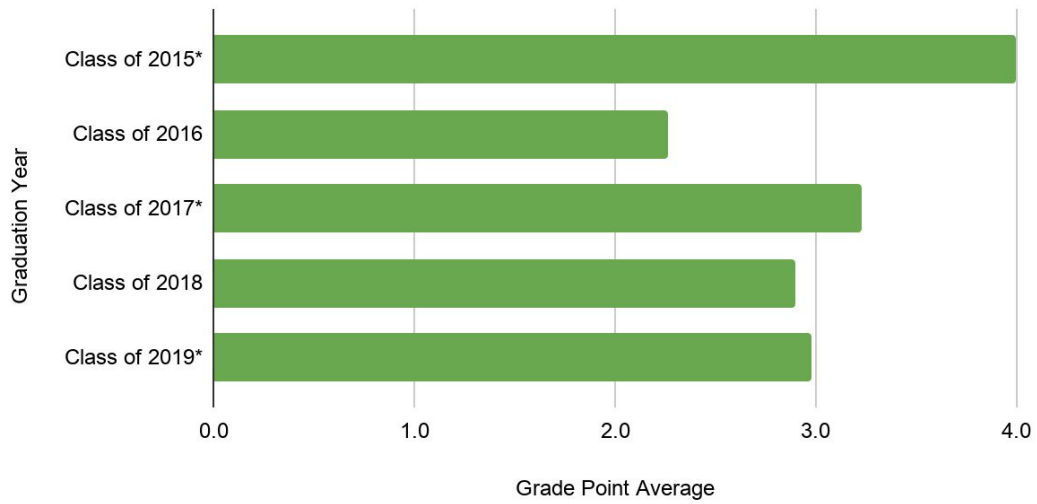


Scholarship Recipients by Parent College Status

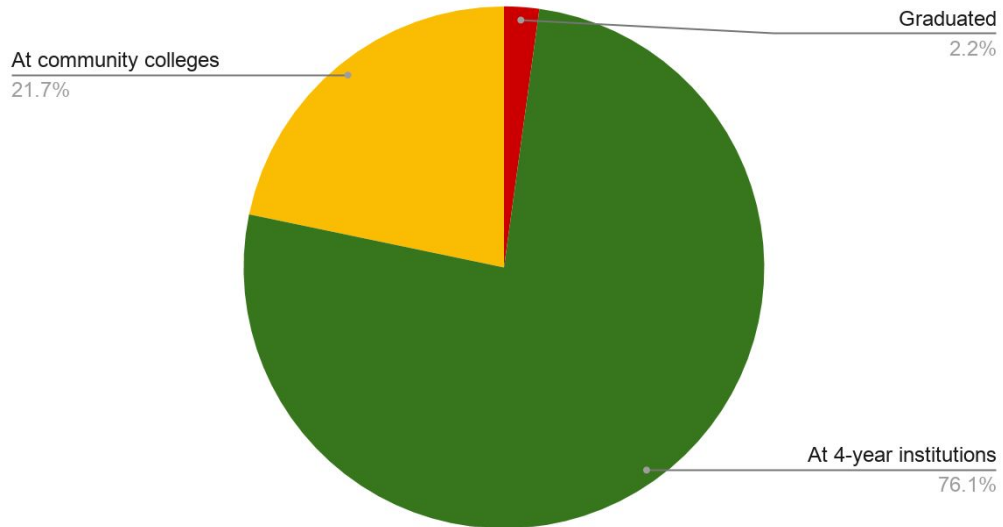


Cumulative Grade Point Average

End of December 2019*



Educational Status of Scholarship Recipients end of 2019





Allison at Paly graduation, May 2019

Current Colleges & Universities of Our Scholars

- Amherst College
- Allegheny College
- California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- California State University, North Ridge
- California State University, Channel Islands
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Chico
- College of San Mateo
- De Anza College
- Emory University
- Humboldt State University
- La Verne University
- Menlo College
- Notre Dame de Namur University
- Northeastern University
- Pitzer College
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Stonehill College
- Sonoma State University
- Stanford University
- Tufts University
- University of California, Merced
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Connecticut
- University of La Verne
- University of Redlands
- University of San Francisco
- Whittier College
- Williams College



David Wei (Paly '19)

One of these students is David Wei, a freshman at San Jose State University. Go Trojans! David was ecstatic that RTE was able to help him last August to put down a housing deposit for a last-minute opening for an on campus dormitory. RTE is flexible and we work with students to help them through unexpected circumstances. We also help provide David with financial support for his education. David is enjoying studying Computer Engineering and meeting new people in his classes. We hope that with our fundraising, we will be able to ultimately provide larger

scholarships to our students. Currently, community college students receive \$1,000 per year and 4-year college students receive \$2,500 per year.

For more stories and videos of our scholars, please visit our website:

<http://www.risetogethered.org/student-stories.html>

Financial Summary

As an all-volunteer board, *Rise Together Education* raised money from individuals, family foundations, and events at Palo Alto High School. In 2019, through a dinner gala, at a local venue, we were able to raise more through ticket sales and donated auction items from local businesses and community members. Our expenses from 2019 included costs associated with the venue, a professional auctioneer, and fees paid to an agency for large auction items. We have spent the past five years establishing our program. Moving forward, we aim to spend 90% of the funds raised on scholarships. The majority of our expenses each year are scholarship money to college students.

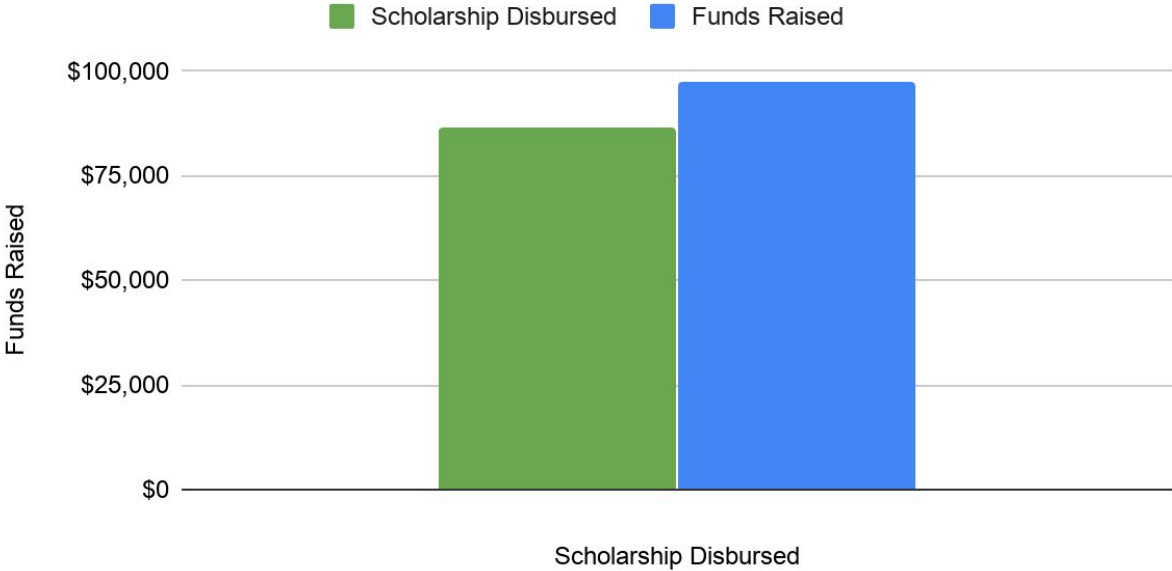
Fiscal Year	Funds Raised	Amount Disbursed	Number of Students
2015	\$1,734	\$0 from RTE	1
2016	\$81,286	\$34,431	13
2017	\$134,837	\$42,650	21
2018	\$118,054	\$60,280	30
2019	\$97,491	\$86,700	46*
Total	\$433,402	\$224,4061	46

In fall of 2019, the Board of Directors felt secure in the amount of money raised and voted to increase the scholarship amount to \$2,500 per year for four-year college students and \$1,000 per year for community college students (for the maximum of two years). At the end of 2019, our total asset was \$173,600. For fiscal year 2020, with an increase in applicants, we anticipate disbursing \$109,750.

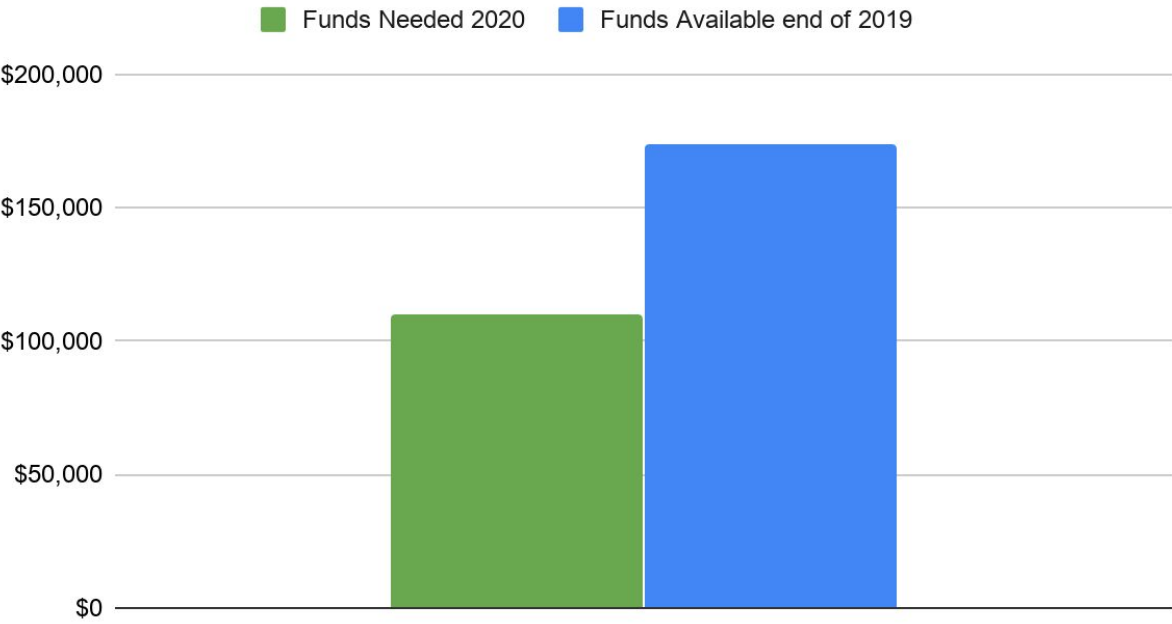
*One student graduated in May 2019.

Funds Raised vs. Scholarship Disbursed

Fiscal Year 2019



Funds Available vs Needs for 2020



RTE in 2020 and Beyond

As RTE has firmly established itself with the Palo Alto community, we have also increased promoting the program on the Paly campus and reaching out to Paly students and teachers in 2019. We are currently preparing for the potential of an additional 27 students graduating from the Class of 2020 who may qualify for RTE scholarships. As always, we are partnering with Paly's College and Career Counselors and sharing information with other similar organizations in the area to find more ways to help these students. We are fortunate to have the Paly Principal and two Paly teachers on the Board. Paly teachers are reaching out to low income and first-generation underclassmen to help make sure that they are college-ready and know that RTE will be there to help them.

We are working towards a steady stream of income to securely provide a larger scholarship in the future. In addition to our fundraisers, we are reaching out to local private foundations to apply for grants. We plan to work with the district to help students with the college application process through assistance such as paying for application fees, and offering a summer workshop to prepare the students to enter college.

RTE is an all-volunteer organization. We are proud to help Paly's low-income students get to and through college. We invite you to be a part of our mission to help more hardworking students like Stephanie, David, Michel, and Allison to successfully graduate from college and reach their goals in life.

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RTE is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt
organization

Tax ID: 47-4218680



Thank You to Our Auction Items Donors

Ada's Cafe	Hobee's	Pizza My Heart
Alaska Airlines	Homewood Suites	Pizzeria Delfina Palo Alto
American Girl	Howie's Pizza	PrAna
Anatolian Kitchen	Hudson Grace	Pure Barre
Asian Box	Il Fornaio	Ridge Vineyards
Athleta	Italico	Ruti
Barbara Kollin	Izzy's Bagels	Salt and Straw
Baylands Golf Links	J. McLaughlin	Sam's Chowder House
Beauty & the Cutie Portrait	Joanie's Cafe	Sigona's Farmers Market
Blue Mercury	Joie	Spoke & Weal
Boudin	Juut Salon Spa	SRE Asset Management
Brin Wojcicki Foundation	Keen	Stanford Department of Emergency Medicine
Buca di Beppo	Kirk's Palo Alto	Steam/Tai Pan
Cafe Pro Bono	La Boheme	Sun of Wolf
Chipotle	Lady M	SusieCakes
Core Power Yoga	Le Boulanger	Sweaty Betty
Corner Bakery	Leaf & Petal	Terun
Cream	Lemonade	The Bar Method
Creekside Inn	Lisa Deneffe Photography	The Counter
Crowne Plaza Hotel Palo Alto	Lulu's	The Creamery
Design Within Reach	Lululemon Athletica	The Market at Edgewood
Dinah's Garden Hotel	Mayfield Bakery	The Westin
DJ Dacia	Morgan Lewis	Theatre Works
Domenico Winery	Motion Street Studio	Tin Pot
Douce France	Nest Bedding	Tonik Cycling Apparel
Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley EPA	Nobu Hotel Palo Alto	Tyler David Lake Florists
Galaphotoandfilms.com	Nothing Bundt Cakes	Verve Coffee Roasters
Garden Court Hotel	Oceano Hotel and Spa	Brian and Viki Vierra
Gott's Roadside	Palo Alto Players	Watercourse Way
Grocery Outlet, Palo Alto	Palo Alto Police Dept	Yoga Source
Hair International	Patrick James	Zareen's
Half Moon Bay Golf Links	Peet's Coffee	Zombie Runner
Hanna's Chocolates	Peninsula Creamery	



Watch a gratitude video from our scholarship recipients [here](#).

**We would like to thank the
hundreds of individual
supporters who believed in our
mission, provided time and
financial support.**

