



WILLIE
ELIZABETH
SHIPLEY

Foster-care youth who “graduate” from the system at age 18 start their adult lives with nothing more than their personal belongings.

For those who aspire to earn a degree of higher education, the lack of parental guidance compounded with financial need, may make the barriers seem too great.

By matching Miss Shipley’s Great Gift with the Plaza Scholarship Fund – a fund that was assisting foster-care youth – the Oklahoma City Community Foundation created a program to help what may be the most needy of students: former foster-care youth. Through the Oklahoma Youth with Promise Scholarship Program, we work with state agencies and volunteer mentors to address the needs of former foster-care youth who want to pursue higher education. This program has proven to be successful in not only providing financial assistance but also in serving as a safety net for these students who have overcome incredible odds.

After spending 10 years in foster care, Allen C. received a Youth with Promise Scholarship to help defray expenses as he earned an undergraduate degree. Today, he has a master’s of divinity degree and is employed as a full-time pastor. Married with two children, Allen says the scholarship “came at a critical time and was a tremendous opportunity for me to start my education and set the stage for my future.”

For Crystal D., a student working toward a degree in nursing and who spent most of her youth in foster care, the scholarship “has helped relieve some of the financial stress of going to school. I really appreciate the help as it allows me to finish my education.”

One single Great Gift made more than 20 years ago has had an enduring impact on the lives of productive adults such as Allen C. and Crystal D. and many

others just like them. Three key ingredients make this possible: Miss Shipley and her desire to help “needy students,” the need of former foster-care youth and the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

If you are interested in supporting the Oklahoma Youth With Promise Scholarship Program or want to discuss how you can make a Great Gift like Miss Shipley’s, please contact Jennifer Stewart at 405/235-5603 or j.stewart@occf.org.



Jean Lehr (left), an Oklahoma Youth with Promise Scholarship supporter visits with Kathy K., a former foster-care youth who recently earned her master’s degree.

Great Gifts

Willie Elizabeth Shipley wanted to help “needy students” obtain a higher education.



Through a Great Gift to the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Miss Shipley is doing just that, more than 20 years after her death.

Since 1981, the Willie Elizabeth Shipley Fund has assisted hundreds of “needy students” – good students with a financial need – in securing an education beyond high school. For the past seven years, Miss Shipley's Great Gift has funded the Oklahoma Youth With Promise Scholarship Program which provides former foster-care youth with both tuition assistance as well as mentoring as they obtain degrees of higher education.

Helping donors like Miss Shipley help the community they care about is what the Oklahoma City Community Foundation has been doing for 35 years. To find out how the Oklahoma City Community Foundation can help you reach your philanthropic goals, contact Jennifer Stewart at 405/235-5603 or j.stewart@occf.org.

Great Gifts



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