It takes a VILLAGE

Annual Report 2020
In the face of adversity, I am proud of our Advisors and staff for quickly adapting to serve our students and community. Even though some of our events, such as our Scholarship Awards Celebration, changed to a virtual format, we were still able to surprise our Scholars with nearly $700,000 in Access Last-Dollar Scholarships to ensure they can attend their chosen colleges and career schools. These scholarships make the difference in whether our students are able to realize their college dreams.

Our progress over the last year is yielding significant results. We are increasing scholarships by adding two new annual scholarships per high school for the new Western Tidewater region, our college success retention rates stand out at 92% in comparison with the national average of 60% and thanks to our financial aid counseling, our Scholars only have 5% of the student loan debt that other students around the country have.

While none of us know what the future holds, we know that “It Takes a Village.” Support of our students from their families, donors, the community and our Advisors really can make a positive difference not only for our students’ lives, but for their families’ lives and the community at large. In this annual report you will read about Access Scholars like Imani McFarland and Terrance Wilson, who overcame great odds to attend college through the support of their village. Our Scholars never cease to amaze me with their intelligence, innovation and resilience. Our team has mastered all of those qualities as well to serve our students in so many new ways in 2020!

Being a part of Access over the years has and continues to enrich my soul. And you are a part of the village that makes all of this possible. Our students might not be in colleges, career schools or working in their chosen fields in our community without you. Read about our impact and join our journey to help deserving students attain their higher education dreams.

Bonnie Sutton
President & CEO

2020 HAS CERTAINLY BEEN A YEAR NONE OF US COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED.

Last year my primary goal as the Board Chair of Access College Foundation was to build upon the tremendous accomplishments of the past 31 years which include: 1. Expanding our donor base so we can increase our impact and expand services; 2. Successfully launching the new Western Tidewater project; and 3. Implementing the objectives and action steps of our new strategic plan, ensuring that we meet the metrics we have deemed important for our success.

Fortunately, with the help of our staff, donors, community partners and board members, our impact is strong. In our 32nd year, we were able to serve 25,188 students in middle schools, high schools and colleges. Thanks to our funding from Obici Healthcare Foundation, we have effectively launched in Western Tidewater by expanding into three school districts and adding a staff person. Additionally, we implemented the objectives and action steps of our strategic plan and outlined success measures as you will see in our 2019-2020 accomplishments. While we celebrate our wins, we must also be mindful of the year we have all had.

No one could have anticipated the global pandemic that affected so many in 2020. As a result, Access was not able to expand our donor base. We were, however, able to meet all our financial obligations due to excellent stewardship of donor funds.

This upcoming school year will be like no other. We have already seen students pack to go to college just to return a couple of weeks later due to COVID-19. As our students adjust, we must adjust too.

The theme “It Takes a Village” is not just the title of our annual report. It is a call to action. In 32 years, Access has been able to change the trajectory of students’ lives and improve our community by offering an educated workforce whether that be via a trade school or traditional college. Please join me and invest in the future of our community by supporting Access College Foundation.

David R. Mele
Chairman

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Beating The ODDS

ACCESS Scholar Thrives With Village Support
As Marcia Wilson watched the evening news in Baltimore, MD she worried about the future of her young black son. “I was watching 17-year-olds get charged with murder, 16-year-olds go to jail and 15-year-olds carry guns,” Marcia says. “I didn’t want that future for my son Terrance.”

And then the day came that would change both of their lives forever. On the morning of November 18, 2010, a little after 9:00 a.m., Terrance heard what sounded like fireworks. Before he knew it, police officers were rushing him out of his home to safety. At the time Terrance was eight years old.

Terrance later learned that his mom had been shot by his father nine times, once in her face, five times in her chest, two times in her left arm and once in her left leg. As if that wasn’t enough for young Terrance and his mom to experience in one day, Terrance’s father committed suicide.

Marcia survived, but needed a village to support her son as her recovery would have to be split between Maryland and Virginia. With a long road of healing ahead of her, she knew she had to get Terrance out of Baltimore so he wouldn’t become another statistic to gun violence. “Terrance deserved a chance and needed to be somewhere stable,” says Marcia.

Marcia arranged plans for Terrance to live with relatives in Chesapeake, VA and attend Grassfield High School, which is where Terrance and his mom met Mrs. Moorhouse, an Access Advisor. “Mrs. Moorhouse was like a second mother to Terrance,” says Marcia. “When I couldn’t be there due to medical reasons, Mrs. Moorhouse was there. She made sure Terrance didn’t fall through the cracks.”

**IN A STATE OF crisis AND SO CLOSE TO DEATH, THE THOUGHT THAT MY MOTHER COULD ONLY THINK ABOUT MY education HAS DWELLED IN MY HEART FOR YEARS.”**

Marcia was fearful of the violence in Baltimore, but never imagined it would hit so close to home.
Moorhouse works with juniors and seniors at Grassfield High School and Great Bridge High School in Chesapeake. Upon meeting Terrance, Moorhouse recalls, “He struck me as a student with a lot of potential and a quiet personality.” Moorhouse was able to support Terrance by arranging a college tour for him at the College of William & Mary, encouraging him to attend financial aid workshops and helping him fill out financial aid paperwork.

“He’s really overcome some challenges in his life, so I was excited to hear he was awarded one of our largest scholarships, the $25,000 Chesapeake Bay Wine Classic Foundation Access Scholarship, to help him achieve his educational and career goals,” says Moorhouse. “The challenges he faced could have easily derailed him. He’s done so well and he is using that strife to want to help people who have faced similar challenges.”

Terrance was one of 117 students to receive an Access scholarship, but only one of three students to receive the top award of $25,000! “The fact that my mother could only focus on taking me to school and not my medical care that day gave me an understanding of the power of education,” says Terrance. As a 2020 graduate of Grassfield High School with an Advanced High School diploma and a Cybersecurity certification, Terrance just began studies at Old Dominion University, and is seeking a dual major in Modeling and Simulation Engineering and Cyber Operations. “My goal is to develop simulations and modules to help individuals who are mentally ill, addicted to harmful substances and those who suffer trauma,” says Terrance. Terrance’s career inspiration stems from him playing video games to cope with everything that happened.

While Terrance’s childhood experience could have set him up for failure, it was faith, family, friends, the community and Access that provided the support Terrance needed to not become another statistic. “It takes a village,” says Marcia. “We all have to be there for each other. Access was there to close that gap. They provided resources and guidance during this sensitive time of transition for Terrance from high school to college and is still there for him today. If it wasn’t for Access, Terrance would have fallen through the cracks. These are all things I couldn’t do for Terrance, but that’s exactly what Mrs. Moorhouse did.”

**Terrance’s VILLAGE**

Marcia Wilson

“When I couldn’t be there due to medical reasons, Mrs. Moorhouse was there. We all have to be there for each other. Access was there to close that gap. They provided resources and the calm during that storm.”

Meghan Moorhouse

“Terrance struck me as a student with a lot of potential and a quiet personality. He’s done so well and he is using that strife to want to help people who have faced similar challenges.”
## 2019-2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Early College Awareness Program

- **11,000** 7th and 8th Grade Participation
- **28** Low-Income Middle Schools Served
- **1,300** Families Attended Family Night Workshops

### High School Program

- **13,700** High School Students Who Met Individually or in a Group Activity with Advisors
- **33** Public High Schools Served by 26 Advisors
- **$36 M** Amount of Funds Leveraged in Scholarships/Financial Aid

### “Last-Dollar” Scholarships

- **NEARLY $700 K** Amount of Last-Dollar Scholarships to the Class of 2020
- **117** New Scholarship Recipients
- **398** Additional Scholarship Renewals
- **515** Scholars Awarded for this School Year

### College Success Program

- **13** Virginia College Campuses
- **447** Students Received Advisory Services
- **92%** Six-Year Retention Rate*

### Career Connection Program

- **182** ACCESS Scholars in College Participated in Career Development Activities
- **33** Secured an Internship or Job in Their Intended Career Field

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*National average is 60%
TO OUR 2020 EVENT PARTNERS:

Thank You!
You Made Our Special Events Possible

JOAN P. BROCK

COURTNEY & CHRISTOPHER GRAVES

EVAN KALFUS

JENNIFER & DAVID MELE

A COMPLETE ANNUAL SUPPORTERS LISTING CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT
WWW.ACCESSCOLLEGE.ORG/ANNUAL-SUPPORTERS
Access Scholar provides

As an essential worker at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital during the current COVID-19 pandemic, Access Scholar Imani McFarland hasn’t forgotten those who have helped her be in a position to care for others.

McFarland knew in middle school that she wanted to attend college just as her mother Xaviera, a single mom and first-generation college student, did. What McFarland didn’t know was how that was going to happen until she met an Early College Awareness Advisor at Ruffner Middle School in Norfolk. The Advisor, Peggy Johnson, informed McFarland of financial aid options to attend college and discussed career interests with her.

A few years later when the time came to take the SAT at Norview High School, McFarland remembered that Access provided fee waivers for the standardized test and contacted Access for assistance. “My mom attended college, so it was never a question of going. She did all she could to ensure that I was well-rounded and got the best education possible. The question was how was I going to afford it,” says McFarland.

McFarland received $5,000 in scholarships from Access and attended Old Dominion University to study nuclear medicine. “I had family members who were affected by cancer so I thought I wanted to be a radiation oncologist, but then I transitioned into the public health side of medicine because I was interested in research.”

As an Surgery Administrator during the pandemic, McFarland remembers her goal to help others. McFarland often works long hours coming face to face with patients and their families who have been directly impacted by COVID-19.

“IT’s heartbreaking,” says McFarland. “I try to comfort families and assist them in any way that I can. It has been a really tough time especially since many patients’ family members can’t visit them. I usually try to call family members on an iPad using Facetime so patients don’t have to be alone and can see their loved ones.”

Rachal Weaver was McFarland’s College Success Advisor Program Specialist. Imani was a very hardworking student,” says Weaver. “Her mind was set to achieve success. I used to tell her to remember her ‘why,’ to push forward and remember her goal. My job is to help students realize their passion, reach their goal and see them succeed.”

McFarland would go on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science with a concentration in Public Health in 2019. “I don’t think I could have gone to college without the encouragement and help provided by the Access community,” says McFarland.

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Imani’s VILLAGE

Bonnie Sutton

Imani’s story is a perfect example of how the opportunity to go to college or a trade school not only changes the student’s life, but their family’s life and the community. Every day we see Access students working in many fields all across our region.

Rachael Weaver

Imani was a very hard-working student; her mind was set to achieve success. I used to tell her to remember her ‘why,’ to push forward and remember her goal. My job is to help students realize their passion, reach their goals and see them succeed.

Xaviera McFarland

From the moment I first heard my darling Imani’s heartbeat I knew she was a blessing! Since birth, she has been intense and motivated to get everything she wanted and does it well! Imani walked before she crawled, she has been attending some form of formal education since the age of 2 and a half years. Imani never ceases to amaze me and her family, with every idea, dream and decision she makes. It is her determination and strong will to see them all come to pass.

McFarland’s 11-year relationship with Access spans from middle school through high school and beyond college graduation, and Weaver isn’t the only Access team member who is still in communication with her. On a recent trip to the hospital to care for a loved one, Bonnie Sutton, President and CEO of Access College Foundation ran into McFarland in the operating room waiting area. “You have no idea how much seeing her brightened my whole spirit on what could have been a very dark day if things hadn’t gone well,” says Sutton.

McFarland’s story is a perfect example of how “the opportunity to go to college or a trade school not only changes the student’s life, but their family’s life and the community,” says Sutton. “Every day we see Access students working in many fields all across our region.” McFarland is currently attending Liberty University online studying for her Master’s in Public Health. Her ultimate goal is to work for the CDC in cancer and nutritional research.
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Our Access Advisors have been working hard to meet the higher education needs of our students virtually. As a result, we have created virtual offices where students can interact with their advisors via Zoom, attend financial aid workshops, find a listing of virtual college tours, schedule a FAFSA appointment and more!

Joshua Mann

Welcome to Mr. Mann’s Virtual office! All our Access Advisors have created this platform that’s interactive and cutting edge. As you can see, I even created a Bitmoji to resemble myself (handsome guy) and an environment that resembles my office that students are comfortable and familiar with. The best part about a virtual office is putting all of the resources that I would normally use while serving the families at Western Branch together in one location. I’m able to share this live link with families that is real time and allows students to navigate the Access tools. Basically, it’s my own Access website that I can update and adapt as different occasions and events happen throughout the year. This has turned into one of my favorite best practices!

Imagine we are back in school and you just walked into Mr. Kelly’s office. He is helping someone on the phone but you still can find everything you need. My virtual office is an attempt to bring a sense of normalcy and relevance to my students as they work from home and do not have physical access to me. I am trying to maximize the virtual age and give my students a safe and productive way to engage with me during this pandemic and the new normal.

1. The office is completely interactive including videos and recordings.
2. Each picture/tab takes you to a link with limitless information, which I believe is extremely important for the population we serve.
3. There are links for scholarships, links for military information, links for college tours and virtual fairs, and even a link to schedule Zoom appointments with me directly.
4. There is also a freshman and sophomore lobby.

Arthur Kelly

ALL OF OUR SERVICES AND RESOURCES ARE STILL AVAILABLE AND CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.ACCESSCOLLEGE.ORG/COVID-19-UPDATES
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