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**2019  
Annual Report**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What does it mean to have access to education? That's a question we ask often at the Forman S. Acton Educational Foundation.

For some, it means having the freedom to choose your own path. It's the freedom to be able to say "yes, I can" when others have told you "no, you can't."

For others, having access to education means exploring the unknown. It's pursuing a goal or major that you're truly passionate about rather than doing something because you feel you have to.

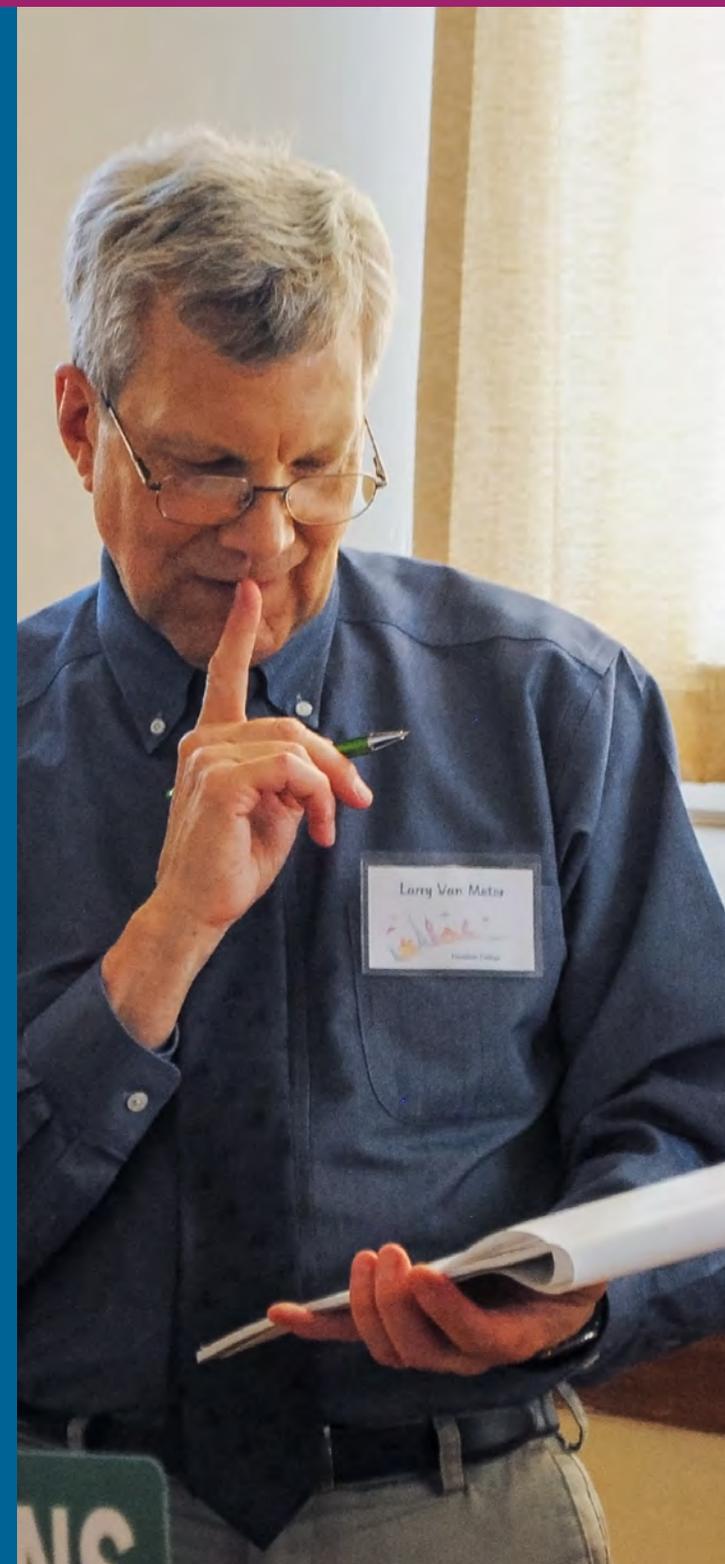
For all of us at the Foundation, helping young people all over Salem to succeed in post-secondary education isn't just what we do – it's what we believe in. We believe in the power of education to break personal barriers. We believe in the power of education to transform not just individuals, but families and even communities. We believe education is the seed – or in our case, the acorn – that turns opportunity into a tangible reality.

As the president and CEO of the Foundation, I have had the privilege to meet some extraordinary young people from Salem, including our Forman Scholars, Acorn Fund recipients, and Youth Board members. Salem is full of students who are so much more than bright and capable. They are kind and compassionate. They are generous and courageous. Every day, each of them makes me proud of my family's roots in Salem.

This past year was a memorable one for me in many ways. It was my first as the leader of the Foundation, and it gave me the chance to see up close the challenges and opportunities of Salem. The future we have in front of us is an exciting one, and I can't wait to see where it takes us.



**LARRY VAN METER, PRESIDENT & CEO**



# ACORN FUND

## Opening College Savings Accounts & Unlocking Future Opportunity

Initially launched in 2016, the Acorn Fund remains one of the only programs in the country that makes annual donations into college savings accounts for every child from birth through high school in a community. In 2018, we introduced high school Graduation Bonuses of up to \$1,000 as an additional deposit into eligible Acorn Fund holders' accounts. Students who graduated high school in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 are still eligible to apply.

### Funds Distributed to Colleges



# \$1,075,000

Total grant amount from our Foundation to create the Acorn Fund

# 883

Total children with Acorn Fund accounts

# 73

Total college students who have had an Acorn Fund distribution



# SCHOLARSHIPS & MENTORSHIPS

## Recognizing and Empowering Those Who Follow Our Founder's Footsteps

Helping motivated students in Salem who have high academic ability, demonstrate family financial need, and are as hardworking as Dr. Acton was our very first initiative. Throughout 2019, our commitment became stronger than ever as we rewarded even more of Salem's standout students with college scholarships. These students are proudly known as Forman Scholars. Through the program, we provide each of them with \$40,000 during their undergraduate years. We guide them through the college experience, provide them access to financial counseling, and give them opportunities to foster relationships by staying involved with the Foundation and helping the next generation of Forman Scholars.



# \$915,000

Awarded since the inception of the Foundation



# 3.29

Average GPA of current Forman Scholars



# 12

Forman Scholar college graduates



# 26

Forman Scholars currently in college



# 3

Forman Scholars currently attending graduate school



# 30

Colleges and Universities attended



# COMMUNITY GRANTS

## Nurturing Programs Designed for Career Inspiration

In 2019, we continued to provide aid to organizations that give Salem students opportunities for growth and achievement. We believe in the importance of empowering Salem's youth in multiple ways. Here's just a selection of the schools and non-profit organizations we provide grants.



### Girl's World (STEM Mentoring Program)

Girl's World (STEM Mentoring Program) is a three-year program that encourages young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics by exposing them to development activities and service projects. This year, we sponsored three girls through a \$6,500 grant. We also sponsored South Jersey Robotics, a sustainable, robust robotics program that promotes STEM.



### Rowan University STEAM Academy

This was the fifth year Salem students attended Rowan University's three-week long STEAM Academy, which exposes high school students to college campus life through a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics learning experience. In 2019, we paid for 15 students to attend and provided an additional \$50,000 grant, which will cover more students until about 2021.



### One Village Alliance

One Village Alliance provides a variety of services for the Salem community. This year we helped fund its summer program with \$75,000 total including a \$25,000 grant and its after-school program with a \$50,000 grant. The programs offer homework help and tutoring, their own curriculum to support learning objectives, and mentoring through real life situations.

# TESTIMONIALS



The aid of the Forman S. Acton Foundation has been a safety net for me through unexpected turns in my college journey. When I found out I would need five years instead of four to complete my degree, I was able to adjust my plan and stay on track because of the support and generosity of the foundation. In addition, the financial literacy training provided to each Forman Scholar has helped me to face this change of plans with flexibility and confidence.

**Elise Davenport**

*Acorn Fund account holder & Forman Scholar*



The Forman S. Acton Educational Foundation has afforded me an amazing group of supporters throughout my first year of college. I'm extremely grateful for the staff's kindness and passion for helping students like me. The Foundation not only helps in making college affordable, but also with opportunities to network and meet many people to be there for you throughout your career. The Foundation is more than just a scholarship, it's a lifelong family of motivators and supporters. I'm excited to continue my college career with them by my side.

**Aliyah Thomas**

*Acorn Fund account holder & Forman Scholar*



I'm grateful for all of the opportunities I've had because of the Foundation. With their help, I was able to study abroad and nearly finish my minor while also working towards my CPA and earning 150 credits. Along with my educational opportunities, I've created a life-long friendship with my mentor from the Foundation. Without her, my time at Rutgers would not have gone so smoothly. The Foundation has enabled me and given me the support to pave the path for my future.

**Arianna Lapp**

*Acorn Fund account holder & Forman Scholar*



I like the fact that the Acorn Fund has invested in the community and my son. He's benefitted from it, and it continues to be a blessing. To make the future better you have to keep investing in your kids. If I had this opportunity when I went to college, it would've been a huge gift. My other kids look forward to planning to go through the program as well. You can't beat it. It's a wonderful program. My son realizes the big picture of how lucky he is now.

**Laura Dale**

*Parent of Acorn Fund account holder*



The Foundation has always been very supportive along every step of the way. They make me feel like I have a strong support system backing me up no matter what I'm going through. They're always there to help guide me through all the different stages of college. Not only has their financial support been a huge relief, but it feels great to have a friendly and supportive team that I can rely on.

**Tamijah Street**

*Acorn Fund account holder  
& Graduation Bonus recipient*

## CONNECT WITH US



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