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Locals helping locals: 6 success stories you need to know about

BY FLINT STEPHENS, WRITER FOR BRANDFORGE | May 3, 2016 @ 1:46 pm



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Arizona residents understand charitable generosity, both from the giving and receiving perspectives. From Larry Fitzgerald and his [First Down Fund](#) to Paul Goldschmidt's [Goldy's Fund 4 Kids](#), high-profile locals demonstrate the importance of giving back to those in the community who are deserving.

However, the majority of area residents who provide and benefit from charitable giving are anonymous and unheralded. As an example, generous donors provide funding for the [Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation](#), which provides millions of dollars in scholarships and financial awards that enable area resident to pursue dream of higher education.

According to information from the foundation, here are examples of [some of the scholars](#) helped by generous contributions:

Autumn Barber

Barber was the Women's Philanthropy Circle Scholarship recipient for the 2014-2015 school year.

She returned to school to finish her degree after the death of her police detective husband. When Tim Barber died from prostate cancer, Autumn was pregnant with twins. Her children are now thriving toddlers.

Barber says she knows her husband would be proud and excited that she was granted a scholarship.

"Kind gestures like this are what make it possible for me to pursue my degree and help others in the future," she says.

Dominique Hunter

Dominique Hunter planned to attend the University of Saskatchewan. Unforeseen circumstances forced her to find another option and she landed at Mesa Community College as a scholarship recipient.

Hunter plans to finish her associate's degree and transfer to Arizona State University to study therapeutic recreation and American Indian studies. She wants to help Native American families through counseling and other therapeutic methods.

"My goals are already being achieved through my education at MCC as I'm able to participate in and co-ordinate community events such as social and human rights-themed art shows that directly help Native American people right here in Maricopa County," she explains.



● Dominique Hunter ●



● Autumn Barber ●

Mario Marquez

While still in high school, Marquez's parents were deported back to Mexico. He decided to return to the U.S. on his own to pursue his education. He enrolled in the Maricopa Community College's Achieving a College Education program. That allowed him to earn more than 20 college credits as a high school student. Today, Marquez attends Paradise Valley Community College and is preparing to graduate and transfer to a local university. He is also working as an intern on a political campaign.



● Mario Marquez ●

Emma DiMarco

After her uncle returned home from Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, DiMarco wanted to help other service veterans through military psychology.

"Having come from a military family, I've always wanted to help other military personnel before they are discharged," she says. "That way, they'd be well upon release. I wouldn't be able to pursue that goal, and to eventually transfer to a local university, without the assistance of the foundation."



● Emma DiMarco ●

An award from the foundation allowed her to pursue her educational goals.

Joseph Jenneford

Jenneford found a new home in the Valley when his family was displaced by Hurricane Katrina. He says he enrolled at Glendale Community College and the school assured him that an inability to pay would not be an obstacle for him by providing general scholarships while he enrolled in the nursing program.

"For me and my parents, Hurricane Katrina ended up being a blessing in disguise," he explains. "After the hurricane my parents split up under the stress of losing our home. My mom came to Arizona to stay with relatives and see if we could possibly start a new life here. She encouraged me to come live with her, and eventually she and my dad reconciled."



● Joseph Jenneford ●

Zoraida Aniceto