The 2019 Steppingstone Gala: Alumni Speakers Help Break Fundraising Record

Thanks to the compelling keynote speech of Chuks Ekwelum ’00 and the brilliant emcee skills of Dalinda Ifill-Pressat ’99, Steppingstone raised nearly $1.6 million to support Scholars in Boston.

This annual fundraiser is critical to Steppingstone’s operations including admissions, college readiness programs, social-emotional advising, and support services like SMASH.

Alumni Giving Back to Steppingstone

2019 was a banner year for Alumni volunteering their time and guidance at Steppingstone. Sofia Teixeira Mistretta ’94, at the time Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Manulife, was the featured speaker at Steppingstone’s April Annual meeting. There, Steppingstone’s Boards of Directors, Ambassadors, and Young Professionals gathered to hear Sofia’s insightful remarks on her work and her journey since her admission to Steppingstone. (Sofia’s journey has since continued with a new role as Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Vertex.) Alumna Angie Isaza-Loaiza ’06 also addressed an intimate crowd of Steppingstone supporters last spring at the Appreciation party in Brookline. She is now in her first year of law school at Northeastern University.

Also in the legal arena, Ropes & Gray hosted a packed career panel for Scholars and Alumni, featuring Steppingstone Board member Joanne Jacquet Araujo ’98 as one of the panelists in her role as Assistant Clerk Magistrate. In August, Max Clermont ’01, co-founder of Data for Black Lives, spoke with Scholars at the Support Services conference. While Felix Liang ’06 was selected as the Steppingstone Commencement keynote speaker, Justin Jiménez ’08 shared his wisdom with Scholars and families at the College Readiness conference in November.

Remember those fantastic volunteers at SMASH? Bridget Kostigen ’04 does, and comes every Saturday to tutor Scholars. Megan Riley ’04 pounded the pavement for Steppingstone last spring when she ran the 2019 Boston Marathon, raising more than $14,000 between her own fundraising and the Board of Young Professional’s (BYP) marathon event.

Steppingstone’s BYP is busy gearing up for the September 2020 Marathon event. Alumni on the BYP include Danielle Bynoe ’04, co-chair Diana Chaves ’05, Felix Liang ’06, and Megan Riley ’04.
**THANK YOU**

In our 2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019), Alumni broke their annual giving record with a total of $8,313! We are deeply grateful for your support of today’s more than 1,500 Scholars. Alumni donors from the year are listed below:

- Anonymous
- Tegan Leonard ’91
- Natasha Velickovic ’91
- Daren Bradshaw ’93
- Carlos DeAndrade ’93
- Eric Andrew ’94
- Omar Doherty ’94
- Reginald Farina ’94
- Rochelle Williams-Belizaire ’94
- Donavan Brown ’95
- Stephond Goler ’95
- Fabian Mora ’95
- Joanne Jaquet Arauo ’98
- Rochelle Ballin Roberts ’98
- Elyse Ayoung ’99
- Dalinda Ill-Presusat ’99
- Darian Reid ’99
- Lamarr Rollins ’99
- Fedna Jaqueto ’00
- Samantha Ray ’00
- Tran Vu ’00
- Max Clermont ’01
- Donald Medor ’01
- Ebele Anidi ’02
- Ashley Diz ’02
- Sherri Love ’02
- Roudna Joseph ’03
- Kyle Layne-Allen ’03
- James Zhang ’03
- Danielle Bynoe ’04
- Dean Ebozue ’04
- Lisa Luo ’04
- Megan Riley ’04
- Diana Zulay Chaves ’05
- Bright Osajie ’05
- Angie Isaza-Loaiza ’06
- Tyrone Li ’06
- Felix Liang ’06
- Megumi Milla ’06
- Melissa Rodriguez ’06
- Javon Ryan ’06
- Carmen Morales ’07
- Rebekah Perez ’07
- Ashley Beckles ’08
- Jessica Taylor ’08
- Derek Dasilva ’09
- Opeoluwa Olukorede ’09
- David Oluwadara ’09

**Alumni Highlights**

**Raven Rankine ’05** co-founded the Students of Color Mentorship Program at Beaver Country Day School, from which she graduated in 2012. Committed to “create and foster a positive experience for Students of Color at Beaver”, the program pairs Beaver high school students with alumni (including Steppingstone Alumni) to serve as resources, allies, and mentors.

**Eloho Akpovi ’04** is in her third year at Brown’s Alpert Medical School where she is in the Primary Care-Population Medicine Program. She connected with Alumna Alicia Genisca ’93 who is a professor there and recently discovered their shared Steppingstone Alumna bond! In addition to being on the faculty, Alicia works at Hasbro Children’s Hospital as a pediatric emergency medicine physician. She shares, “I am continuing to work in the development of global emergency care in Latin America and Africa, and will be competing in the Dancing with the Doctors competition on April 25, 2020. The goal is to raise money for Clinica Esperanza, a local Providence clinic that provides care to the underserved.” Go Alicia!

**At Roxbury Latin School’s Annual Fund kick-off event, Tevin Barros ’07 addressed hundreds of alumni and friends of the school, sharing his perspective on the importance of education. He also gave a shout out to Steppingstone and Roxbury Latin Alumnus Darian Reid ’99.**

**Tevin Barros ’07, spoke at Roxbury Latin School’s Annual Fund kick-off event. Photo: Gretchen Erti**

**Alumni at Steppingstone**

Next time you come visit us at Steppingstone, you may see four familiar faces. We are lucky to have the following Alumni on staff and featured in the photo to the left: (L – R) Archi Lora ’08, D’Jonita Cottrell ’09, Makeda Daniel ’09, Natalie Herbert ’07, as well as current college Scholar Mary Medrano ’11.

**Announcement!**

Free citizenship/immigration legal services are now available to all Steppingstone Alumni! As an expansion of Steppingstone’s current partnership with the law firm Ropes & Gray, legal advice on citizenship and immigration is available confidentially and at no cost to all Steppingstone Alumni. Interested Alumni should contact Jane Ventrone at jventrone@tsf.org.

**HAVE A HIGHLIGHT TO SHARE, INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED, OR JUST WANT TO SAY HI? EMAIL LEE ENGLERT AT LENGLERT@TSF.ORG**