



MERITUS CONNECTIONS

Spring is Scholarship Awards Season!



Each spring Meritus welcomes its newest cohort of college-bound scholarship recipients. The application process - which was moved to an online platform this year - is open to all graduating seniors who achieve a GPA of 3.0-3.7 and plan on attending a four year college or university in the fall.

Close to 300 students submitted applications for this year's scholarship awards. And now the difficult process of selection is underway. After a team of community volunteers has reviewed the applications, Meritus has selected approximately one hundred students for interviews. Fifty will receive scholarships.

Mark Your Calendars!

We look forward to congratulating our 2010 scholarship recipients at our annual Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 18, 2010, from 6-8pm in the Cowell Theater at Fort Mason. Please join us at this celebratory event, which marks the end of a rigorous scholarship selection process for San Francisco public high school seniors.

Special guest, Superintendent of San Francisco Public Schools, Carlos Garcia, will join us. Kate Kelly, Feature Reporter for KPIX 5 and Meritus scholarship donor, has again graciously accepted our invitation to act as emcee. High energy fills this event as families, friends, donors, mentors and community members join together to toast these amazing students who will soon be off to college. [RSVP here!](#)

Call to Action!

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Mentor Connections!

To learn more about Meritus Mentoring, please join us for Mentor Connections night on Thursday, April 15, from 6-8pm in the Pacific Room

Meritus is Now Recruiting 2010 Mentors

Meritus is actively recruiting Mentors for our new cohort of 2010 Scholars. This is a rewarding activity for anyone who is interested in working with college-bound youth in our community.



at the [Thoreau Center](#)
(1014 Torney Avenue).

Call Meritus at
415.400.8650 or email
Danielle Pizzi at
danielle@meritusfund.org.

To learn more about the Meritus Mentor Program, please join us for a [Mentor Connections reception on Thursday, April 15, from 6-8pm](#), at our new location in the Thoreau Center (see sidebar). Learn more about how our program works and how you can become a part of it. Bring a friend, co-worker or family member! To register, please click [HERE](#).

In the interim, please visit our website for more details (www.meritusfund.org/volunteer).

Scholar Connections



Ilihsa Graham
(2009) and
Mentor David
Singer volunteer
at SF Food Bank

Community building activities are a cornerstone of the Meritus mission. By reaching out to current scholars we provide insights into college and careers that will inspire students to focus on graduation. Our alumni are also part of the Meritus family and have rich experiences that make them a tremendous asset to current scholars and to one another. In the end, our scholars know that they are not alone in reaching their goals.

The winter is always an opportune time to catch up with our scholars, both current and alumni. In the recent months, we were able to make some new connections:

- Meritus staff and board hosted a holiday party (along with white elephant extravaganza!) for current students.
- Scholars converged on the Academy of Science for a docent tour. Thanks to Blair Shane of the Academy, who donated admission tickets, and to Meritus donor, Al Breslauer, who organized the in-house exploration.
- Mentors and scholars joined in a day of community service at the San Francisco Food Bank, where they had an exceptional time sorting through over 22,000 pounds of oranges!

Meritus alumni continue the spirit of giving back to the community last October as they spearheaded the creation of the Meritus Alumni Circle. Their goals are to identify opportunities for engagement with one another, with new scholars, and with the entire Meritus community. This group has started the year on a great note with the following activities:



Erik Frausto (2002) & Diana Louie (1996) at the Alumni Celebration

- The first Alumni Circle Celebration, at Perry's Restaurant during January, bringing together twenty former scholars of the 1996-2005 classes with Meritus staff and board to catch up and plan for future activities.
- Alumni joining the 2010 scholar selection process as interviewers to provide their perspective in identifying new award recipients.
- Meritus alumni entering the mentor pool. Who better to help with the issues of college than someone who has most recently experienced college and understands first hand the challenges facing our youth?
- Alumni connecting on the Meritus Facebook and LinkedIn sites to share resources, network, and explore opportunities.

If you can provide community service activities, are willing to become a professional career contact, or have a summer job to offer, please be sure to let us know at 415.400.8650.

Scholars giving back: Patricia Fuentes



Meritus scholars are unique. They face challenging circumstances and are most often the first in their families to attend college. Yet, they persevere. As we continue to encourage our scholars to come full circle in the community, many do so. Consider 2008 scholar, Patricia Fuentes, sophomore at UC Santa Cruz. Here is what she shared:

"I am taking *Step to College*, which is a class that takes students out to Pescadero, a little town out in the middle of nowhere, to teach either elementary school, middle school or high school. This year I was paired up with a high school girl who was about to drop out and give up. I was in her class when the teacher was screaming at them, telling them that it would be impossible for them to go to college; that it was going to be too hard for them and they might as well give up now. I told the girl that that wasn't true. I told her the way I got to college and let her know that all she has to do is believe in herself. So I brought her along with me one day to my school so she could see how much help there is if you just look for it. It really inspired her. I call her everyday to make sure she does her homework. Her mother has spoken to me and has thanked me for helping her out. I know Laura can make it to college;

she is a really smart with a lot of potential."

On the Move!

Meritus College Fund has a new, larger location. On March 1st, we pulled up stakes and moved from one end of the Presidio to the other. As Meritus expands to work with over 200 scholarship recipients, we need room to grow. We thank former donor, Jim Hornthal, for housing us in our first "official" office for the last five years.

We are now located in the Presidio's Thoreau Center, which is the home to numerous non-profits. If you are in the neighborhood, please come visit us. We can be reached at:

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