

# BY FOR THE STUDENTS, THE STUDENTS

## Student Foundation awards 42 scholarships in five years.

Nobody is more aware of the costs associated with tuition, fees and college-living expenses than students.

That is why the Oklahoma State University Student Foundation, a group with a passion for philanthropy, has raised funds to endow a need-based scholarship that has benefited 42 students.

The organization's mission is to bridge the gap between donors and students by building, cultivating and sustaining relationships within the OSU community and to educate other students about the importance of charitable giving.

Representing the university's scholars and leaders, Student Foundation members are passionate about fundraising because for many philanthropy is personal.

"Taking a leadership role through student organizations gives me numerous

opportunities to participate in events that make a difference in others' lives," Student Foundation President Haylee Roy says. "I have been so inspired to give back to OSU and leave a legacy that will impact others and help them find success."

In 2007, a group of student leaders formed philanthropic committees focused on donor relations, stewardship, campus promotions and fundraising. Members benefit from some form of financial assistance, whether it's as direct as a scholarship or as indirect as the renovation of the Student Union. They have a first-hand appreciation for the impact of giving back.

One of the organization's first acts was creating the Cowboy Spirit Scholarship Fund, with the goal of endowing it through student support. To build awareness and begin fundraising, members sold

Student Foundation shirts and arranged a white-out day on campus, which they called Cowboy Spirit.

"I had never been a part of a brand-new organization like StuFu," 2008 Student Foundation President Caroline Diedrich says. "Getting other students involved and learning our goal was definitely challenging, but we had awesome support from everyone."

After this first version of Cowboy Spirit, the group switched to an annual benefit concert that has attracted artists such as Keith Anderson, Stoney LaRue and Bo Phillips.

At Cowboy Spirit 2012 on Feb. 25, more than 850 attendees led to a record-breaking \$36,700 boost to the scholarship fund.

Members support the annual event by collaborating with the community and soliciting donations from family, friends and local businesses. They also utilize campus signs and announcements. It's an easy sell.

"Cowboy Spirit is the easiest and most fun way to give back to Oklahoma State," says Roy, a foreign language senior. "Not only do you get to see some great bands



Members of the Student Foundation 2011-12 freshman class during a service trip to McAlester, Okla., where they decorated a room for a therapeutic foster care facility. Front row, from left, are Kendra Rash, Mallory Ross and Katie Marney. Back row, from left, are Jacob Weatherford, Allie Roy, Harry Schroeder and Stephen Ogle.



Student Foundation President Caroline Diedrich and OSU Foundation President Kirk Jewell sign the endowment agreement in 2008 for the Cowboy Spirit Scholarship Fund.



Keith Anderson performs during the 2010 Cowboy Spirit concert, which supports a student scholarship fund.

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— Student Foundation President Haylee Roy

play at The Tumbleweed, but you also have the satisfaction of knowing your \$10 goes straight to supporting OSU students."

Matt Morgan, an OSU Foundation employee who serves as co-adviser for the Student Foundation, says members often list the Thank-A-Thon as another of their favorite events.

The annual Thank-A-Thon is a team-building event that connects members with alumni across the country each semester. The evening is spent calling donors with a simple message: "Thank you."

"I think a lot of them were surprised in a lot of cases because they typically get calls from people asking for money, when we were doing the complete opposite," says Diedrich, a 2009 industrial engineering and management graduate. "Getting a chance to talk to people who are so passionate about the university was a lot of fun and very rewarding."

Many members say the Thank-A-Thon is their favorite part of StuFu because it allows them to express appreciation for the gifts that help fund their educations.

"I remember making a thank-you call to a woman who not only greatly appreciated the thoughtful gesture, but also wanted to learn more about me and hear what's new at Oklahoma State," Roy says. "I remember feeling the bridge that connects the donors and the university. She still had such pride in her alma mater, and it inspired me to continue to give after I leave OSU."

Although members gain familiarity with fundraising, stewardship and

networking, they also benefit from the leadership experience and relationships made through being involved in a philanthropic organization.

"A lot of the reason I give back today is because of the leadership skills the Student Foundation gave me and their ability to break the stereotype that you need to be older to give back," Diedrich says. "You can give what you can as a graduate or even when you're a student." 

BRITTANIE DOUGLAS



The 2011-12 class of the OSU Student Foundation.