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Sept. 29, 2014

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PRITZKER FOUNDATION STEPS IN TO GIVE STUDENTS THE AMERICAN DREAM

Unique partnership will send 70 undocumented Chicago seniors to college

CHICAGO – Current seniors in the [Noble Network of Charter Schools](#) have another reason to believe that hard work will lead to success. Thanks to an estimated \$3 million commitment from the Pritzker Foundation and [The Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation](#), all of Noble’s undocumented seniors will have the financial support needed to attend and remain in college after graduating high school through the newly announced Pritzker Access Scholarship.

For over 15 years, Noble has built a legacy of preparing some of Chicago’s most underserved students for success in college and life. During this time, many undocumented students who have graduated Noble eligible to earn a four-year degree were unable to pursue college simply for financial reasons tied to not having a Social Security number. This year, 70 of these hard-working students will receive up to \$12,000 annually for four years to ensure they have the opportunity to become citizens who will better future generations.

“As a principal, you tell students that if you work hard, your dreams will become a reality,” said [Golder College Prep](#) Principal Rosa Alanis, who has been supporting undocumented students and their families for a number of years. “That’s not true for undocumented students, many of whom have been in this country nearly their entire lives. It shatters their dreams. Those are the conversations that break my heart. With this investment from the Pritzker family, our students will be inspired to continue their hard work during their senior year and beyond.”

The Pritzker Access Scholarship will be available to Noble seniors graduating in 2015 who have qualified for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (a temporary federal relief from deportation) and are accepted to a four-year college. The scholarship will supplant federal and state financial aid such as Pell and MAP grants that are typically available to low-income students, but not to undocumented students. In collaboration with financial aid directly from colleges, the Pritzker Access Scholarship will help close the financial gap often keeping these hard-working students from entering and finishing college in pursuit of the American Dream.

“For our students, this is a game changer,” said Noble Superintendent and CEO Michael Milkie. “For the first time, all undocumented Noble seniors can plan their future knowing that they will have sufficient financial support to access a college of their dreams.”

An estimated 5 percent to 10 percent of undocumented students attend college, according to the College Board. While legally allowed to attend college, undocumented students are not eligible for financial aid opportunities that come from state and federal sources.

“Money should never be a barrier between a hard-working student and the opportunity to pursue a college degree,” said Bryan Traubert for the Pritzker Foundation. “A college degree will open so many doors for these students. They will be given the chance to better their own lives and, will also positively impact their families and communities. We are excited to see what our students will achieve now that money isn’t an obstacle.”

For Francisco Huerta, a 2010 graduate of Noble and now a History teacher at [Noble’s Hansberry College Prep](#), this kind of support would have been invaluable.

“I was lucky. I was able to pull together the funds needed for college through private scholarships and financial aid,” said Huerta. “Not all of my classmates were as fortunate. This support would have been invaluable for many of my classmates. Now, as a teacher, I’m excited to tell students that their hard work will pay off.”

About Noble

Noble (www.noblenetwork.org) is Chicago’s largest and highest performing network of public high schools. In 2013, Noble campuses were nine of the top 10 open enrollment public high schools in Chicago and more than 90 percent of graduates matriculated to college this year. Noble is a non-selective network serving more than 10,000 students throughout Chicago at 16 campuses. Noble campuses are located in some of Chicago’s highest need communities and serve a student population that is 89 percent low-income and 98 percent minority. As a public non-selective high school, there are no testing requirements for enrollment at any of Noble’s campuses. Noble has a waitlist of over 6,000 families and plans to continue expansion to meet this demand.

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