

UCLA Women & Philanthropy

Celebrating and inspiring women throughout the UCLA community as major donors, leaders and decision-makers

The Parent & Family Giving Program Benefits More Than Students

As early as preschool, when children are just embarking on their education, another journey begins for parents—volunteering and donating to their children’s schools. As the college years hit, many parents seek to continue this level of commitment, but aren’t always sure how.

UCLA Parent & Family Giving is ready to help families support the university in personally meaningful ways. “We see parents as stakeholders in their student’s UCLA journey and experience,” says Vanessa Arredondo, director of Parent & Family Giving. “Philanthropy and giving back help parents form a relationship with UCLA separate from their child.”

For many, Bruin Day marks the beginning of a relationship that can continue well past a student’s graduation date, creating a long-lasting legacy between the family and UCLA. The benefits parents bring to UCLA through the program each year are impressive. In academic year 2022–23, over 2,800 current parents contributed nearly \$3 million to the university, the majority of which was directed toward undergraduate student support.

One way parents honor students is by donating toward the focus of their studies. “These gifts often support the classroom experience by being directed to a specific



New Women & Philanthropy member Jackie Stevens and her daughter, Claire.

academic department,” Arredondo relates. “Not only does this benefit the student’s experience, but that of their peers.”

When Qiming Huang’s son started at UCLA last fall, the new Women & Philanthropy member had a distinct direction for giving—the Samueli School of Engineering. “As a parent and someone with a background in Computer Science, I understand the pivotal role that state-of-the-art classroom equipment and cutting-edge lab facilities play in shaping the next generation of engineers and innovators,” she stresses. “It brings me immense joy to contribute to the department’s mission to provide the best possible environment for education and groundbreaking research.”

Others have celebrated family ties through funding student clubs or athletics. Another new Women & Philanthropy member, Jackie Stevens, Parent ’26, affirms, “When we heard about the many ways we can help UCLA students, we decided to lend our support to UCLA Athletics and the basic needs center. There is no greater gift than the satisfaction that comes from helping someone else. Bruins helping Bruins!” The importance of support programs, such as career and mental health services, is also bolstered through Parent & Family Giving donors.

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Educational Equity: The UCLA Affordability Initiative

In April, the university introduced its new UCLA Affordability Initiative with a 2030 target of providing avenues for debt-free education.

Kicking off this effort, Peter Merlone ’79 gifted \$15 million toward undergraduate scholarships for California students. As the initiative moves forward, it’s shining a light on the annual total cost of attendance for California residents at UCLA: \$38,517, including tuition, housing, food, books, supplies, health insurance,

transportation, and personal expenses. Fundraising is underway for establishing scholarships that can provide equity while alleviating financial stress, especially that which results from student loans.

For new Women & Philanthropy member Kristen Mancini, the UCLA Affordability Initiative is in keeping with a personal goal. Mancini’s first introduction to UCLA came via her son. As a Bruin parent, Mancini has an objective. “I’ve been supporting my own alma mater since I graduated,” she says. “I want to instill in my



children the same need to give back to their schools. By supporting UCLA now, the hope is my son will do the same once he graduates and begins his career.”

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President's Message

Every fall, there's a certain excitement in the air as the school year is afoot. A perceptible shift in energy occurs as the campus starts to awaken in preparation for the return of students and faculty. Before we know it, Bruin families arrive to help their students settle in for the quarter.

For many donors, UCLA's new Affordability Initiative is something about which they're passionate. This giving opportunity enables students who have the opportunity to attend UCLA, but not the means, a way to begin their college odyssey without the stress that accompanies student loans.

No matter how one does so, opening the door for a student significantly impacts their lives. Amelia Sherman, the manager of Communications & Programming for UCLA Health's Sound Body Sound Mind (SBSM), shares how, as a teenager, having someone invest in her well-being gave her wings. Now, she's helping others give to SMSM to benefit LA-based students through a physical education program encompassing state-of-the-art workout equipment, specialized teacher training, nutrition classes, and tools to achieve a mind/body balance. We also celebrate SBSM's 25th anniversary, which was founded by Women & Philanthropy member Cindy Simon.

Expect to come away from this newsletter inspired and with an appreciation for the beneficial programs UCLA is offering, as well as the generous donors who are backing their success. Definitely, more reasons to cheer.

— Coretta Harris, '83, President, Women & Philanthropy

Excitement escalates over Bruin Family Weekend, a special time when families learn about their students' daily lives and join them at a football game to cheer on the team. Filled with this enthusiasm, many supporters and parents at this time of year think about ways to extend their philanthropy.

Our cover story focuses on UCLA Parent & Family Giving, a way for families to stay involved in their children's school lives as they enter higher education. Designed to follow new Bruins from the moment they step on campus and beyond into their years as alumni, the program offers up ways to give to the university that speak directly to one's heart. Just such donors are new Women & Philanthropy members Qiming Huang, Kristen Mancini, and Jacqueline (Jackie) Stevens, who share why this way of giving is important to them.

The Parent & Family ...

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Donors receive benefits through their involvement, too. Beyond staying in the loop with what's happening at the university, there are opportunities to form relationships with other Bruin families. Such bonds encourage families to continue their philanthropic relationship long after their students have graduated. "As a parent of a Bruin who graduated in 2017, I love supporting different UCLA programs, as well as volunteering on campus, reviewing applications for scholarships, and extending my previous participation on Parents' Council to now Parents' Council Emeriti," shares Women & Philanthropy Board Member Randi Greenberg. "Though my child may have graduated, I feel like I never left school!"

"UCLA continues to offer top-tier college education to aspiring young minds," Qiming Huang says. "Supporting UCLA isn't just an investment in their futures; it's an investment in the collective future of our nation."

Educational Equity ...

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Watching her son thrive at UCLA bolsters Mancini's mission. "My son has had the most incredible start to his college career, which is a testament to the University," she says. "I want nothing more than to afford this same opportunity to another student who may not have the financial means to attend such an outstanding school."

Due to wage disparities, young women and people of color tend to deal with student debt longer than others. Mancini has been combatting this issue as the current vice president and incoming president for her Chappaqua, New York, community's high school. "I've seen the need for scholarships to bridge the gap between what families can afford, financial aid from a college or university, and the price they're required to pay."

Now, through their giving to a UCLA undergraduate scholarship, the Mancini family is accomplishing similar goals for Bruins through the UCLA Affordability Initiative. "It's incredibly rewarding to support students looking to further their education."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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UCLA Health’s Sound Body Sound Mind (SBSM) Brings Fun to Fitness

While attending Verdugo Hills High School in 2010, Amelia Sherman developed a passion for fitness during workouts in the school’s SBSM fitness center.

“I fell in love with exercise and earned a degree in kinesiology to learn about exercise science,” she shares. Years later, Sherman became the Manager of Communications & Programming for UCLA Health Sound Body Sound Mind and learned she’d been a beneficiary of the organization. “A donor made a commitment to students in Los Angeles, and one of those students was me.”

Women & Philanthropy member Cindy Simon is one of SBSM’s founders. “When our family first donated a fitness center to our local school in 1998, I didn’t imagine it would grow into the program UCLA Health Sound Body Sound Mind is today,” she discloses.

SBSM provides physical education (PE) departments with state-of-the-art fitness centers, exercise and nutrition curriculums, and professional development training for teachers across six districts in over 150 middle schools and high schools. As SBSM enters its 25th year, they are celebrating significant benchmarks, including serving one million local students. “Throughout Los Angeles, over a million students have walked through the doors of their school’s fitness center, learned healthy habits, and experienced a positive impact on their well-being,” remarks Simon. “It brings me great pride to have had such an impact on the lives of so many.”

Data reporting shows SBSM facilitates student self-confidence, increases participation in healthy behaviors, and encourages greater enjoyment of fitness. A message SBSM seeks to convey: PE should be fun versus a punishment. “PE can be an isolating place and challenging



SBSM students at Kennedy High School

experience for some students,” Sherman says. “One of SBSM’s goals is to change that mindset by creating a fun, inclusive learning environment.” SBSM addresses nutrition and mental health, as well. “We focus on nutrition fundamentals and debunking myths surrounding diet culture, including pointing out red flags found on social media, a big issue for our population,” Sherman relays. Mindfulness also comes into play. “There’s a need for different tools for students to deal with their mental health,” Sherman says. SBSM provides these through their Mindfulness Education Curriculum, which was developed in collaboration with the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center.

Currently, SBSM is concentrating on existing school program enhancement through equipment repairs and retraining of teachers. Sherman affirms, “Our professional development trainings are growing and evolving to meet the needs of the teachers.” SBSM’s impact has been vast and, for Sherman, personal. “Coming into adulthood knowing that someone invested in me demonstrates the lasting impact of philanthropy,” she reflects. “Now, I’m helping to ensure other LA students have equitable resources and similar opportunities.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Did You Know ...

As UCLA Health’s Sound Body Sound Mind (SBSM) program celebrates its 25th year, here are some things to know about how this cutting-edge program has influenced the lives of one million LA students.

- Per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 83.5% of adolescents do not get enough aerobic and muscle strengthening activity per week.
- Going strong since 1998, SBSM provides state-of-the-art fitness centers, multiple curriculum, and professional development training for teachers in over 150 middle and high schools across six school districts. Of those schools, 76% are within the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the nation.
- The SBSM program helps transform the lives of nearly 200,000 students annually.
- 77% of the students at SBSM-supported schools qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, an indicator of high economic need.
- SBSM is 100% philanthropically funded. Since its launch, the program has invested over \$7 million in Los Angeles schools.

Development/Women & Philanthropy

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We are on the cusp of potentially incredible transformations with the expansion and exponential progress of Artificial Intelligence (AI)—will the impact be positive, negative, or a bit of both?

Faculty experts from across campus will share their thoughts about benefits and challenges of AI for individuals, communities, and the world at-large.

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Terrible About to Happen:
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