

# ARCADIA

Winter 2021

MAGAZINE

Why we

# Give:

The Impact of Philanthropy

Helping Students  
Realize Their Dreams

Donors Celebrate  
the Joy of Giving

*A special supplement of Arcadia Magazine*







Dear Arcadia Community,

We know this year has been one of challenges that few of us ever imagined. Fortunately, we were well-prepared to adapt to any situation. Indeed, our plan for the next five years, ARCADIA2025, is rooted in adaptability and innovation.

Despite the challenges facing our world and our nation, I am more optimistic and excited about the future of Arcadia University than I ever have been. This optimism is cemented in the passion of our students, the dedication of our faculty and staff, the engagement of our alumni, and the support of our philanthropic partners.

Our University community has displayed a remarkable collective strength over the past year. It is a strength borne of our values, which have shaped our University community since its founding, and in the embrace of a community grounded by justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. These elements help to define Arcadia University and our community members.

Arcadia University's future is built firmly upon its strong Beaver College legacy. So many of our students have followed in the footsteps of their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings. We also are a university where many students are the first in their family to go to college. This balance of students furthering a legacy and establishing their own helps to define Arcadia.

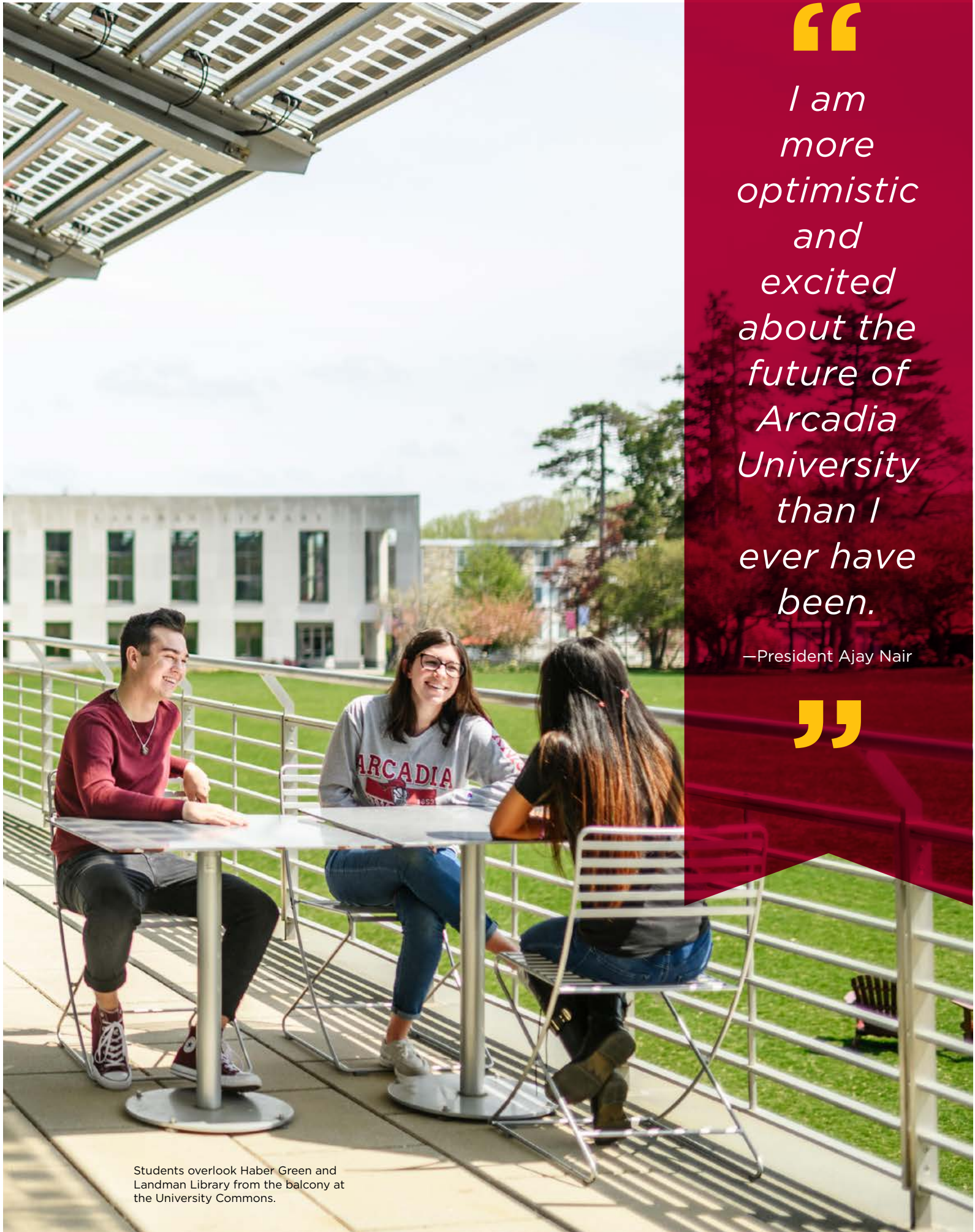
So much of what we do in life goes unnoticed. We sometimes do not get the chance to see the fruits of our labor, or witness where our energy and support leads. When we give to Arcadia University, though, we witness each day how we are making a difference—in the students who succeed in the classroom, in the laboratories, on the athletic fields, on the stage, in the art galleries, at their internships, in the community, and in their professional lives. It is our students who benefit directly from our support.

Each student, faculty member, staff member, alumna, alumnus, trustee, and donor has made their mark on this University. Each one plays a role in how we progress. Yet, the more we do, the further we have to go.

On behalf of the entire Arcadia University community, I thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Ajay Nair, Ph.D.  
President



“  
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—President Ajay Nair

”

Students overlook Haber Green and Landman Library from the balcony at the University Commons.





Dear Alumni, Friends, and Donors,

I find great professional reward in the moments when I have the honor to hear students and alumni share their stories about what Arcadia University and/or its founding institution, Beaver College, means to them. Truly moved by the inspiring stories, I tend to suppress the emotions that well up inside of me, realizing that we are responsible for preserving the cherished memories created during the formative years of our alumni. The weight of that responsibility is not lost on me. These memories often epitomize the deepest sense of appreciation for the education and degrees earned. Over the course of my tenure, I have been honored to support your engagement as volunteers, leaders, and/or philanthropists. For the donors of our institution, who have taken note of our institutional priorities and who have risen to support them, I thank you.

Though my ability to continue to meet more and more alumni in person was upended by the pandemic, donors have leaned in to make a difference. In addition to the stories I have the pleasure to hear, I also get to see the best in people each and every day when they give and even more so during these challenging times, when it is much harder to encourage donors to consider supporting Arcadia. The generosity of Beaver College alumni and Arcadia University donors, alumni, faculty, staff, families, and friends is extraordinary. Alumni who are also donors make dreams of an Arcadia education come true. You are the reason our students are free to experience the wonder of discovery, the adventure of travel and expansion of their perspective through cultural experiences, and the rigors of study. Most importantly, you are why our bright and talented students will experience the joy of crossing the Commencement stage and feeling a lifelong pride that follows an earned degree from Arcadia.

At Arcadia, we dream big so our students can, too. As we focus on student success, we have committed to a concept I call Impact Philanthropy, a radically generous mindset and the reason why we established the Arcadia Financial Aid Initiative. The individuals you will read about embody the principles of Impact Philanthropy and are committed to supporting Arcadia students and ensuring the preservation of a proud Beaver College legacy. With you, we can continue to provide a world-class, transformative education to each and every Arcadia student and provide access and opportunity to those who wish to be part of our student body.

I thank you for your commitment, pride, and support. It means so much.

Sincerely,

**Brigitte A. Bryant**  
Vice President for Development and Alumni Engagement

Right: Vice President Bryant and President Nair at the donor recognition event in 2019.

Far right: Scholarship recipient Jules Turner '20 at the 2019 donor recognition event.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS



*Kevin G. Shollenberger '88 (left) discovered his passion for Psychobiology and research at Arcadia University through faculty mentors who took a personal interest in his successes both inside and outside the classroom. He stresses how these experiences—staples of an Arcadia education—propelled his social mobility and launched his career in higher education.*



Students overlooking Easton Pond.

Shollenberger's educational experience, though, was dependent on one crucial form of support. "This education would not have been possible without the financial aid that was awarded to me," says the vice provost for student health and well-being at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Now, Shollenberger is paying it forward in a way that will help to strengthen his legacy and also shape Arcadia's future. The recently elected Trustee for the University established the Kevin G. Shollenberger '88 Endowed Scholarship for a student with demonstrated financial need in January 2020.

As a student, Shollenberger did not appreciate that his aid was supported by alumni donations. "Once I understood this," he says, "I viewed it as my obligation to give back to the institution that afforded

me many incredible opportunities, so others could also benefit from all that Arcadia has to offer."

Shollenberger joins a growing list of endowed scholarship donors to Arcadia. In 1970, Walter S. Cornell, the father of **Anne Cornell Swalm '55**, established the Mable Kuhn Cornell Endowed Scholarship as part of a bequest in honor of his wife. Since that first one, the number of endowed scholarships had grown slowly until 2019, when the first of a dozen new scholarships were generated in the last fiscal year. Four more are in the works. At this writing, Arcadia has a total of 86 funds earmarked for student financial aid.

"It is what I call Impact Philanthropy, a radically generous mindset, where giving is transformative, focuses on accomplishing a goal, and helps the University advance," says **Brigitte A. Bryant**, vice president for Development and Alumni Engagement. ❖



# Time-honored traditions

Scholarships are a time-honored tradition at colleges and universities. The fund that a donor establishes to exist in perpetuity for an expressed purpose—student financial aid—can make transformational change possible for both students and the university. Endowed scholarships also can build an institution’s competitive strength in recruitment while supporting student retention efforts, fortifying a university’s student body.



Endowed scholarships enable students to learn at their best in and out of the classroom.

Endowed scholarships also bolster an endowment and are points of pride for the donor, for the recipient, and for the University. In many ways, they embody the legacy of the person honored or memorialized through the named scholarship.

At Arcadia, endowed scholarships have the potential to meet an especially crucial need. About one-third of the University’s students are the first in their families to attend college. While about one-third of the student body qualifies for PELL grants for lower-to-no-income families, many middle-income families rely heavily on scholarships. Overall, 99 percent of Arcadia students receive financial aid, the vast majority in the form of a grant or scholarship that helps avoid the debt burden commonly felt after graduation.

Most of that aid is provided through the University’s budget—making the need to build Arcadia’s endowed scholarship portfolio all the more crucial. In 2019, Arcadia awarded about \$49.1 million in financial aid from its budget. Of that amount, privately funded endowed scholarships made up about \$365,000 in annual scholarship distributions. A benchmark goal is to contribute to at least 10 percent of a university’s financial aid expenditure. In other words, Arcadia would be better positioned with closer to \$5 million in annual distributed financial aid from private sources. Bryant estimates that translates to roughly 2,500 new endowed scholarships, each at the minimum gift threshold of \$50,000. A goal of about 330—nearly four times the current number—is more possible to achieve, likely over several years.

With **President Ajay Nair** and his leadership team in place, fundraising outcomes are starting to trend upward. The University last year established the strategic and student-centered **Arcadia Financial Aid Initiative (AFAI)**, which allows donors to double the impact of their giving. To provide the greatest incentive for donors, **AFAI** provides a 1:1 match for gifts of \$50,000 or more when those gifts are designated to establish a new endowed scholarship or supplement an existing one and are directed for students with demonstrated financial need.

“Keeping students at the center of all that we do is our number-one priority,” President Nair says. “We cannot achieve the ambitious goals we have set as a University, and our students cannot achieve the ambitious goals they set, without a robust and competitive scholarship portfolio. Scholarships are a great equalizer—they help students realize their potential and help Arcadia on its path to be a university for the future.”

Chair of the Board of Trustees **Alison Aaron Madsen ’85, Esq.**, with her husband, Howard, took advantage of the AFAI, in part because of the great matching incentive it provided. “Also,” she continues, “the pandemic has presented many challenges to our success, and the Arcadia community must have the resources to respond in a manner that adds to our value. Like many nonprofits, when traditional revenue recedes, it is the loyal support of alumni donors that can lift us up the most.”

Madsen says she hopes the Dan and Gerri Aaron Endowed Scholarship Fund, named in honor of her late parents, changes lives. She looks forward to meeting the first recipient as the fund matures and starts to generate income, a portion of which will support an award. Madsen says she considers the gift an opportunity to “serve the community that served me in a time of searching, discovery, and intellectual growth.”

Fiscal year 2020 saw major gifts and scholarships rise to \$1.73 million—more than six times the previous year’s total; nearly half of that total is scholarships. Since AFAI’s inception, several, including alumni and former trustees, have risen to the challenge, making an early impact of nearly \$1 million on the University’s endowment (*see sidebar on opposite page*).

AFAI participant **Christy Ann Pierce ’71** notes how her time at Beaver provided her what she needed to be a strong teacher for more than three decades. She echoes several other Arcadia donors as being honored to help students achieve their dreams.

“We were students who took many varied opportunities to learn about our professional choices and to experience the real world at the same time,” says Pierce. “Now, I have the chance to help someone else experience their dreams.”

“I see a great deal of unrealized generosity in our community,” Bryant says. “I see a community that really loves its experience and hopes to perpetuate it for today’s students. I see a community that really admires and loves our students.”

## A collective willingness to give

These are unusual times, as a pandemic takes its toll on health, personal finances, and the nation’s economic recovery. Difficult times can sway prospective donors to either “lean back and withhold support or lean in and give to make a difference,” Bryant says.

“People don’t have to ever become donors,” she continues. “It is a personal choice to give. What is so beautiful about the donors who do choose to make gifts to Arcadia is the genesis of their charitable gifts in selflessness and altruism. These gifts emanate from the depths of their hearts, ideally because they really want to make a difference. In that way, I get to see the best in people every day.”

**Kimberly Sterner-Stein ’88** and her husband, VanEric, direct their philanthropic focus on student retention efforts. “Arcadia has had such a significant impact on my life,” she says. “I’m grateful for the University’s commitment to students who need extra and/or unexpected additional financial support to stay. This is a very important issue for my husband and for me.” The couple made a new commitment to an existing endowed scholarship to help grow the size of their fund for maximum effectiveness for students.

Shollenberger describes this year as “extremely difficult ... as we respond to a



Whether learning online or in person, students receive personalized attention, a trademark of an Arcadia education.

global pandemic and as a country and society continue to witness and experience racial violence. Many families, more than ever, have been affected by the economic downturn with soaring unemployment. Many are questioning if they can afford higher education. I worry about the lasting effects this may have on our young people and ultimately our nation. This is why I think it is more important than ever, if you are in a position to give, that you support the education of our youth.”

At Arcadia, Bryant seeks alumni who have a shared vision for the University’s success as well as a feeling of shared responsibility for Arcadia’s outcomes.

“Donors are special people,” she says. “But they need to be found. And when a gift is made, I recognize it as one of life’s most glorious moments. Through their giving, a donor is really saying, ‘I don’t know who will eventually receive this support—but that future student matters so much to me that I’m willing to make provisions for people I may never meet, but that I know I want to help, and I want to provide this support forever.’ That’s the power. It really creates a strong bond between the donor, the students, and the University.”

**Susan Smyth Shenker ’69**, an English major at Beaver College, has consistently given to Arcadia for more than 25 years, earning her place in the University’s LGK Society, named for **Presidents Bette Landman, Edward D. Gates, and Raymond Kistler**. She also serves as co-chair of the Jones Poundstone Society (JPS), which recognizes donors who make an annual gift of \$1,000



Students from all majors benefit from endowed scholarships.

## AFAI Donors\*

- Joan N. Brantz ’65 and George M. Brantz Endowed Scholarship
- Holly Ludwig Pfeifer ’66 Endowed Scholarship
- Margaret Tillman Huskins ’68 Endowed Scholarship
- Madeline “Maddy” Stein ’68 and Isaac Stein Endowed Scholarship
- Susan Smyth Shenker ’69 Endowed Scholarship
- Christy Ann Pierce ’71 Endowed Scholarship
- Susan C. Saxer Endowed Scholarship
- Dan and Gerri Aaron Endowed Scholarship
- Kevin G. Shollenberger ’88 Endowed Scholarship
- Kimberly Sterner-Stein ’88 Endowed Scholarship

\* To date

To learn more about AFAI, how you can establish an endowed scholarship, or how you can make a difference, contact Denis Brosnan, associate vice president of Philanthropic Giving (brosnand@arcadia.edu, 215-517-2497), or visit [arcadia.edu/giving](https://arcadia.edu/giving).



Alison Aaron Madsen ’85, Esq.



Susan Smyth Shenker ’69





“  
Scholarships  
give students  
a chance.

— Luke Thatcher '22



or more to Arcadia’s annual fund, *The Fund for Arcadia*. As a scholarship recipient herself, Shenker says she always wanted to do even more by creating an endowed scholarship that would provide support to Arcadia students in perpetuity.

“In my day they called this ‘giving back,’” she says. “Today, it’s called ‘paying it forward.’ Either way, I thought it would require more money than I could ever afford.” AFAI, however, solved her dilemma. The dollar-for-dollar match will help her build principal, and she can spread out fulfillment of her commitment over five years.

“It’s truly a lasting legacy,” she says. “I detest the fact that so many students graduate from college today with substantial debt. By increasing the number of scholarships, we can help so many students graduate with less debt. Hopefully they too will ‘pay it forward’ and endow scholarships of their own.”

**Susan C. Saxer '71**, retired president of SCS Solutions and former senior vice president of Mellon Bank Corporation, also has a long history of giving to Arcadia and leveraging donations through matching corporate gifts. Soon after graduating with a degree that concentrated in Mathematics, Economics, and Honors Colloquia, she began donating to her alma mater, even though money was tight and she “stretched every dollar to pay rent, buy food, and put gas in my beat-up car.” As her career eventually took off in banking, economics, and finance, Saxer’s donations increased. Several years ago, she established the Susan C. Saxer Scholarship for Mathematics, Economics, and Honors.

“Arcadia’s viability to survive and thrive is integrally linked to our collective willingness and ability to give generously through our annual gifts, endowed scholarship funds, and bequests,” she says. “Previous generations have answered this call. Now, it is our time to do so, too.”

Saxer has met with students awarded her scholarship at Arcadia’s Celebration of Scholarship dinner that recognizes donors and recipients. “I was impressed,” she says. “They were gifted in their course concentrations, expressive and interesting individuals, and very grateful for their total experience at Arcadia. Each made a commitment to me to pay it forward later in their lives when they are able to do so. I am excited for the promising and abundant futures ahead for each of them. And, I am sure that future students will be grateful for the generosity that these recipients will fulfill.”

**Luke Thatcher '22**, a Mathematics major with minors in Economics and History, was the most recent Saxer Scholar to meet Saxer. “She is an amazingly intelligent mathematician and businesswoman, and it was an honor to meet someone so successful and kind,” says the Bloomsburg, Pa., native who wants to be a statistician. “[Susan] shared some career advice while also giving me insights on how she kept advancing in



Susan C. Saxer '71



Joan Nadler Brantz '65

her career. I was grateful for the chance to thank her in person for the opportunity she has given me.”

For Thatcher, the scholarship was the factor that sealed his decision to attend Arcadia. Because of it, the financial burden on his family to pay for college was greatly reduced, he says. The scholarship offer also made clear to him that the University really wanted him as a student.

“It made a huge impact that made me commit almost instantly,” Thatcher says, “and I’m so fortunate that I chose Arcadia because I absolutely love the community I have joined.” The award has motivated Thatcher to do his best in his classes. While he may not be able to start a scholarship of his own quite yet, he says he makes a point of giving back to Arcadia through the Honors Program.

“I think scholarships are important because they give students a chance,” Thatcher says. “Many great sports stories are about underdogs who were given a chance to prove themselves, and I believe that’s what scholarships can do for university students across the world.”

Heroes for someone’s future story

**Madeline “Maddy” Johnson Stein '68**, who established an endowed scholarship with husband Isaac in 2011, says she enjoys reading about the world-changing accomplishments of alumni. “I love that ‘40 Under 40’ [Arcadia Magazine] issue,” she says. “It makes me feel so proud. Now, I understand what the graduates are doing and how they are impacting the world. That’s what motivates me to give. These are real people doing real things.”

Stein’s new commitment through AFAI has bolstered her existing fund’s principal,

thereby generating more financial aid support for students. The gift speaks to President Nair’s strong leadership during tough times, she says, and to Arcadia’s resilience. “My giving is a vote of confidence,” she says, “in the institution, the strength of our current leadership, and in our current and future students.”

**Joan Nadler Brantz '65** was a non-traditional student, married to her husband George and busy raising two children, when she enrolled at Beaver College. Joan wanted to realize her dream of being the first in her family to go to college and earn an undergraduate degree. In 1965 she did just that. Joan received her degree in Sociology from Beaver and pursued a career in social work. She went on to have a successful 18-year career representing clients before the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Last year on UKnighted Tuesday, Joan made a \$55,000 gift to support *The Fund for Arcadia* and to establish the Joan N. Brantz '65 and George M. Brantz Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship will pave the way for future generations of students to make Arcadia their undergraduate home. “Because Beaver gave me the opportunity to live my dream,” Joan notes, “I want to make the same thing possible for students today.”

This year, Joan has used Zoom to participate in online events and stay connected with the University, noting how impressed she has been with the students and faculty who have served as moderators and facilitators of these virtual events. “Our students make me feel proud and optimistic about the future,” Joan says. “They will have their roles to play in making this a better world, and I hope that what I have contributed can help them to live their dreams.” ❖



A Biology student in a lab on campus.



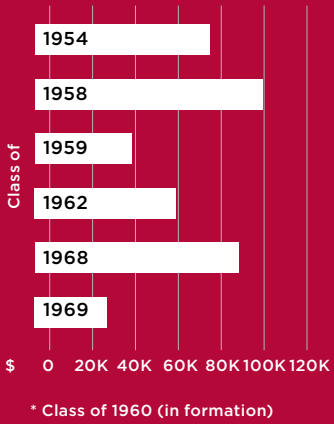
A student busy at work at Easton Pond.



Endowed Class Scholarships

Seven Beaver College classes have established Endowed Class Scholarships at Arcadia University. These scholarships—which span an 18-year period and include longtime supporters who share a deep affinity and connection with their fellow classmates, fellow alumni, and current students—total nearly \$500,000.

For more information on Endowed Class Scholarships, contact Patton Vo, director of Reunion Giving, at [vop@arcadia.edu](mailto:vop@arcadia.edu).





## Donors of Jones Poundstone Society gather to Celebrate! The Joy of Giving

*Loyalty, gratitude, responsibility, scholarship.*

These are just a few of the words our Jones Poundstone Society (JPS) donors shared when asked to provide one word that describes their reason for giving during Arcadia's second annual leadership donor recognition event, *Celebrate! The Joy of Giving* on Thursday, Oct. 22. Hosted by **President Ajay Nair** and **Mrs. Paayal Nair**, the event's virtual platform this year provided the opportunity for JPS donors near and far to join a celebration of their Impact Philanthropy to Arcadia University.

As part of *Celebrate! The Joy of Giving*, the inaugural donors of the Jones Poundstone Society were treated to a special evening of exclusive programming, which included the opportunity to attend a special discussion of their choice. Whether donors joined the discussion with the President's Cabinet about Arcadia2025, attended a panel on the future of global education, took a front-row seat to experience the artistic process from a painter's perspective, discovered strategies behind Arcadia's life-changing **Gateway to Success** program, or took a deeper look at groundbreaking research conducted at Arcadia, each breakout session offered a guided tour of the impact of their collective support within the campus community.

During the event, President Nair, Jones Poundstone Society Co-Chairs **Susan Smyth Shenker '69** and **Lynn Darling Hendershot '66**, and Vice President for Development and Alumni Engagement **Brigette A. Bryant** all spoke with the utmost gratitude and appreciation for the profound generosity of JPS donors. Junior English major and aspiring educator **Daijah Patton '22** captivated and inspired guests with her intellect, passion, and personal story about the transformative educational experience she has had at Arcadia University when addressing those in virtual attendance.

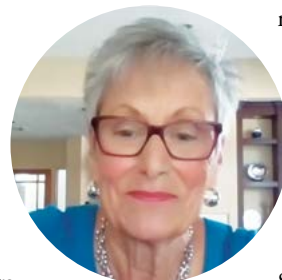
"I tell a lot of students when they come to visit the University and when they're thinking about coming to Arcadia that what they can do here is limitless," Patton said. Like many Arcadia students, Patton has found that within the University's close-knit community there are extraordinary opportunities, which have heightened her curiosity and allowed her to dream big and create her own bright future. Even when the pandemic took away all that was familiar to Patton and her classmates, she refused to permit those challenges to slow her down. Instead, she found



inspiration from the creatively adaptable and compassionate people at Arcadia to accomplish even more.

"It's so encouraging to see people like you giving back to this amazingly innovative community, especially for students like me that are in the middle and working classes," Patton said.

"With this pandemic at the forefront of everything that we usually have to worry about, my gratitude for your support at this moment of time is enormous." For Jones Poundstone Society donors, Patton's words were a clear and palpable reminder of what their annual support really means.



Nearly one year ago to the day in 2019, the first annual *Celebrate! The Joy of Giving* event marked the official launch of Arcadia's Jones Poundstone Society, which as fully intended, shifted the philanthropic landscape at Arcadia University.

"What each of you has done this past year proves to me that there is no challenge that we cannot overcome; that there is nothing that can eclipse the power, generosity, passion, dedication, and talent of this University community," President Nair said.

The 144 inaugural donors played a significant role in helping Arcadia surpass its fundraising goal of \$3 million in 2020—the first time in several years that the University has not only met, but exceeded its annual goal. With a new high watermark of \$565,000 for *The Fund for Arcadia*, our unrestricted fund, JPS donors contributed nearly \$445,000 to the University, with 90 percent immediately supporting the University's strategic priorities, all in support of students.

As Vice President Bryant emphasized, "This is the power of a united, caring community. This is the power of compound giving. This is the power of the Jones Poundstone Society."

Bryant also expressed a confident outlook for the success of the Jones Poundstone Society in 2021. "Momentum begets momentum. We are now in the first half of fiscal year 2021, and I am pleased to report that at this time, we have a total of 21 JPS donors who have already renewed their leadership support. Currently, we have more JPS donors than we had at this same time last year."

Fueled by the vision of the Jones Poundstone Society Co-Chairs, and in recognition of 168 years as an institution, Arcadia is aiming to reach 168 Jones Poundstone Society donors by May 31, 2021. ✧

Center, top:  
Susan Smyth  
Shenker '69

Center, bottom:  
Lynn Darling  
Hendershot '66



For more information  
about Arcadia's  
Jones Poundstone  
Society visit,  
[arcadia.edu/JPSociety](http://arcadia.edu/JPSociety)

## The Fund for Arcadia

Make a **real** and **immediate** difference for Arcadia and our students.

Gifts to *The Fund for Arcadia* provide the University with unrestricted support to respond strategically and deploy resources where they will have the greatest impact to cultivate the University's growth, maximize life-changing opportunities for our students, and bolster that which makes Arcadia special.

From academic programs, faculty scholarship, financial aid, study abroad opportunities, student emergency funding, extracurricular programs, and more, *The Fund for Arcadia* supports every aspect of the student experience and touches every corner of campus, providing resources for that extra measure of excellence that is a hallmark of the Arcadia experience.

Learn more and make your annual gift:  
[arcadia.edu/giving](http://arcadia.edu/giving)



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To Our Donors,

*On behalf of the students, faculty, staff, alumni,  
friends, and families of Arcadia University:*

We Thank You!

