

# La Vida Scholars

**FOUNDED:** 2007

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$1,672,149

**CONTACT:** Peter Barros, *Executive Director*

📞 781.586.0193

✉️ pbarros@lavidascholars.org

🌐 [www.lavidascholars.org](http://www.lavidascholars.org)



La Vida Scholars (LVS) equips low-income, high-achieving students in Lynn and Chelsea with access to resources and opportunities to enter top colleges and graduate with minimal to no debt.

La Vida's family-oriented approach sets them apart from other college-access programs. Eighty-three percent of La Vida Scholars come from immigrant families unfamiliar with American higher education, and eighty-eight percent are the first in their families to attend college.

LVS guides families through the college selection process, ensuring the best fit for the family and the student. Families attend monthly workshops and can contribute to a matched college savings account.

Scholars receive academic support, individualized student advising, and help with college and scholarship applications. LVS also coordinates visits to college campuses and provides exposure to different career paths.

Since its founding, more than 400 students have completed the LVS college access program. La Vida Scholars have been awarded \$25.8 million in institutional grants and scholarships.

## Two-Year Goals

- Serve 360 Scholars per year in Lynn and Chelsea by June 2027.
- Increase partnerships with families to foster stronger engagement and more personalized support
- Deepen engagement with alumni to promote greater opportunities to advance college and career goals
- Enrich summer program options, adding a summer academy for rising 10th graders.

## Investment Opportunity

LVS launched its first-ever strategic plan on July 1, 2024. This three-year plan commits to doubling the number of students served in Lynn and Chelsea by 2027. In order to expand its college access services, LVS will need to raise an additional \$1.9 million over the next 3 years. In anticipation of the organization's growth, LVS is planning to move its headquarters to a larger office space to accommodate more students and families.

## Ways to Invest

- \$120,000 to Sponsor 90 Scholars (1 year)
- \$50,000 Family Engagement Services
- \$30,000 College Savings Matches
- \$10,000 Summer Enrichment Opportunities

## In Kind

- Volunteer to help students practice for college interviews
- Introduce a high school senior to your Alma Mater
- Host LVS at your company to expose Scholars to your industry

## La Vida Scholars' Model



**INSPIRE:** The majority of Scholars will be the first in their family to go to college. LVS inspires students to start working toward college by taking them on college campus tours during holidays and school vacation weeks. These visits allow Scholars to imagine what it would be like to live and learn on a college campus.

For many LVS participants, this is the first time they have ever visited a college campus. In fact, many parents of La Vida Scholars have never been to an American college. LVS is honored to walk families through their first experience with higher education in the U.S. LVS helps offset the cost of college road trips so families can explore college campuses together.

**Family involvement** in a child's education is essential to the Scholar's long-term success. Often cultural barriers, not a lack of engagement, prevent first generation families from being involved in their child's education. LVS works on breaking down these barriers by providing monthly bilingual family workshops. The voices of past participant families guide the content and conversations of these workshops.

**ACCESS:** Originally a two-year program, LVS expanded its programming to 10th grade students and in 2025 expanded again to include 9th grade students. Getting more first-generation students into college means starting the college exploration process sooner. LVS exposes students from the 9th grade to different career paths so that they can be more informed when considering both college and future career aspirations.



**SUCCEED:** All Scholars are offered one-on-one advising, college application assistance, scholarship assistance, community service opportunities, a five-week Summer Academy with stipends, and a laptop for college upon graduation. Additionally, all families have the potential to earn college savings for their students by participating in monthly workshops. LVS will match all dollars saved for college up to \$2,000.

**THRIVE:** La Vida Scholars are thriving both in college and after they graduate. Many alumni come back to speak and share their experiences with college, internships and and career paths. LVS alumni are working in a wide range of fields including marketing, health care, and engineering. Often LVS alums return home after graduating from college and go to work for organizations like the Federal Reserve Bank, Microsoft, and Mass General Hospital. When Scholars thrive there is a ripple effect that impacts their families and the larger community.

*“The most important thing that La Vida Scholars did was give me the belief and tools I needed to get my daughters into college.”*

— Leno Salazar, parent of Beatrice LVS '11 (Salem State University) & Leah LVS '23 (Wellesley College)

## Leadership & Governance

Peter Barros, a proud son of Dominican immigrants, was born and raised in Boston, MA. Before accepting the role of LVS Executive Director in 2019, Peter worked for 18 years in both NYC and Boston. He built an expertise in both college access and youth program development. Since Peter took the reins, La Vida has tripled the number of students it serves and the organization’s operating budget. The LVS team is comprised of an amazing staff of twelve.

La Vida's dedicated board of eleven directors is led by its Founder, Bob Hildreth. Following a career in finance in Latin America, Bob Hildreth entered the nonprofit world to focus on issues of immigration and education. He joined with Boston University to improve the education of immigrant children in Chelsea where he helped build the John Silber Early Learning Center. Coming from a family of educators and a stint as a high school teacher, Bob built three organizations with complementary missions to get low-income students to college, one of which is La Vida Scholars.

## Financial Stability

LVS is honored to receive financial support from corporations, foundations and individuals that enables us to provide individualized college access programs for students and their families at no cost. As per our strategic plan, LVS seeks to increase and diversify revenue to support programmatic growth and attract multi-year funding.

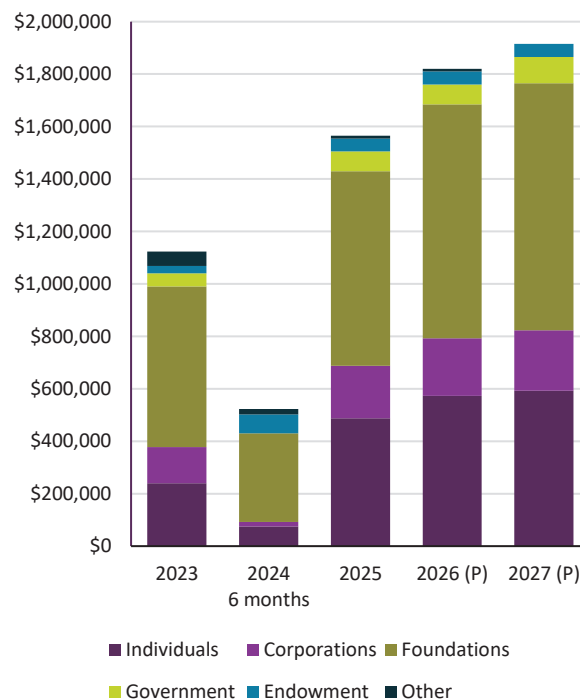
### KEY INVESTORS

- Acadian Asset Management
- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Cradle to Career - a TPI Initiative
- Cummings Foundation
- Eastern Bank
- L G Balfour Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Wellington Management Foundation

### KEY PARTNERS

- Chelsea Public Schools
- Hildreth Institute
- La Colaborativa
- Lynn Public Schools

## Revenue by Source





# Success Story

CAPRICE, VILLANOVA '23

Caprice joined La Vida Scholars as a sophomore at Lynn Classical High School in 2017. Having immigrated from the Dominican Republic at age 10, she was inspired to pursue medicine after witnessing the health challenges faced by her sibling and aunt. With LVS support and guidance, Caprice was accepted to Villanova University where she majored in Nursing and graduated in four years.

During the pandemic, Caprice gave a virtual campus tour to over 20 La Vida Scholars who were not able to take part in campus visits. Now a Registered Nurse in Lynn, Caprice regularly returns to La Vida to mentor current students. Her influence has spread to her family—both younger brothers became La Vida Scholars, one is attending Boston University and the other is a college bound senior at Lynn Classical High School.

# Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures La Vida Scholars tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2025	FY 2026 (P)	FY 2027 (P)
Program Performance			
Scholars served	260	305	360
Students enrolling in college	65	75	90
College Campus Visits	11	14	14
Total Alumni	406	471	536
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of staff members	12	14	15
Number of Board members	11	14	18
Total Revenue	\$1,672,149	\$1,828,500	\$1,985,000

# Social Impact

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics consistently shows that higher education correlates with increased earning potential. Individuals with a bachelor's degree earn substantially more than those with only a high school diploma. Research by the Pell Institute indicates that first-generation college students are more likely to promote educational aspirations among their siblings and children. Their educational attainment can lead to a generational shift in attitudes toward education.

Below is the summary of the key indicators that LVS is committed to tracking in the coming years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2027
Percentage of Scholars who attend college	98%	100%
Percentage of Scholars attending college debt-free	64%	70%
Total Number of college graduates	151	258
Cumulative college savings dollars matched	\$44,760	\$120,000