

# The Bonner Program

*Access to Education ♦ Opportunity to Serve*

## Our Common Commitments: The Values that Bonners Explore During their Service

### Community Building

*Establish and sustain a vibrant community of place, personal relationships, and common interests*



### Civic Engagement

*Participate intentionally as a citizen in the democratic process, actively engaging in public policy and direct service*

### Diversity

*Respect the many different dimensions of diversity in our public lives*



### International Perspective

*Develop international understanding that enables students to participate fully in a global society*

### Spiritual Exploration

*Explore personal beliefs while respecting the spiritual practices of others*



### Social Justice

*Advocate for fairness, impartiality, and equality while addressing systemic social and environmental issues*

## Background

The Bonner Foundation is a national philanthropic organization based in Princeton, New Jersey which was founded by Bertram F. Bonner, a land developer, builder, and investor and his wife, Corella Allen Bonner. The Bonner Foundation sponsors programs united around the goals of supporting students, college campuses, and local communities.

Specifically, the Bonner Foundation:

- makes grants to colleges, universities, and other non-profit organizations
- oversees campus-based Bonner Programs which includes both the Bonner Scholars and Bonner Leaders
- serves as a consortium of colleges and universities committed to community service and civic engagement
- champions the development of service-based scholarships at institutions throughout the U.S.

## The Bonner Scholars Program

The Bonner Scholars Program was created with the belief that college students engaged in service have unique gifts and talents that bring energy, creativity, and hope to individuals and communities. It is based also on the belief that colleges and universities can and must be a telling presence in their local communities. In launching and supporting the Bonner Scholars Program, the Foundation has entered and sustained long-term partnerships with participating institutions that have made a commitment to envision new

possibilities for campus-community partnerships. Since 1989, the Foundation has worked with colleges and universities to support students to attend college and to be involved in community service in an intensive, developmental way. In the first few years, 22 schools were identified to participate in this service-based scholarship known as the Bonner Scholars Program. Now at 25 schools, this program supports more than 1,500 students annually to attend college and be involved in community service and social justice issues. Each campus supports a director and a coordinator who oversee the general operations of the Bonner Program, engaging 20-100 Bonner Scholars in a four-year program with rising levels of expectation. Since its inception more than 3,000 students have graduated from the program.

Once a student enrolls in the Bonner Program, she or he commits to a series of expectations, including:

- Arrive for an early orientation designed specifically for new Bonner Scholars;
- Serve an average of ten hours a week at a community service site during the school year;
- Complete at least two full-time summer service internships;
- Engage in a comprehensive placement process for their community service placements. Students move from being a regular volunteer to taking on additional responsibilities, such as volunteer management; participating in service-learning and community-based research; and doing capstone-level community engagement.
- Attend regular reflection, enrichment, and training activities through which the student participates in a developmental model that challenges

and supports each Bonner to develop her or his skills, knowledge, commitments, and responsibilities.

While any student can qualify and receive a Bonner Scholarship, the Bonner Scholars Program awards most of its scholarships to students with a significant amount of documented financial need.

## The Bonner Leaders Program

After receiving numerous requests from other schools to be a part of the Bonner Scholars Program, in 1997 the Foundation launched the Bonner Leaders Program. The pilot effort with six new colleges was supported by a grant from the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The Bonner Leaders Program has the same goals and program expectations as the Bonner Scholars Program. However, its funding comes not from the Bonner Foundation but from other sources. Most students participating in the Bonner Leaders Program receive financial support from a combination of Federal Work-Study stipends, AmeriCorps Education Awards (coordinated by the Bonner Foundation), and in some instances additional institutional financial aid. The results have been overwhelmingly positive as evidenced by the growing number of colleges and universities throughout the country which have partnered with the Bonner Foundation to start a Bonner Leaders Program.

Campuses who are not yet involved with the Bonner Network can learn about and start a Bonner Leader Program. Learn more at [www.bonner.org](http://www.bonner.org).



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## Student Development



The Bonner Program is designed to transform not only the students who are directly supported by the program, but also the campus and community in which they serve and learn. The goals of the program are identified in four areas: students, community, and campus, and higher education.

### For the Student:

- To provide access to a college education for students with high financial need.
- To afford students the opportunity to enhance and use their abilities, talents, and leadership to serve others while in college.
- To create a supportive community of students on campus whose common focus on community service gives them a sense of purpose and meaning.

### For the Community:

- To channel the energies of college students, faculty, and staff to continue to improve and expand upon the quality and nature of services offered to the community.
- To break down the barriers between town and gown leading to improved communication and greater collaboration between the two.

### For the College:

- To help recruit and retain a diverse group of students who might not otherwise be able to attend college.
- To challenge and support the college to create a culture of service where the stated mission of service is translated in such a way that every student, faculty, and staff is encouraged to serve.
- To support a core group of student leaders eager to build and strengthen the organizations on campus that promote a culture of service.

### For Higher Education:

- To serve as a successful model to other colleges and universities which are interested in starting their own community service scholarship program.
- To form a consortium of diverse higher education institutions which share a common commitment to service.
- To provide leadership to a nation searching for ways to value and include young people in meaningful acts of citizenship.

## Community Impact



At this time, there are Bonner Programs involving more than 3,000 students each year in intensive experiences with community service and leadership development. In each program, students are engaging in 270-300 hours of service during the academic year and 270-300 hours of additional work during full-time summer internships with non-profit agencies. Programs partner with hundreds of local, regional and national organizations addressing every type of social need. Our students tutor, build, organize, advocate for, create, write, manage, start new programs, and improve existing services. They are working to address issues like hunger and homelessness; serving as mentors to children and youth; building more sustainable environments; and providing health and wellness support; and more. We work in both small, rural towns and large, urban cities. We work with private and public colleges, small and large, two-year and four-year, in 21 states and 75+ colleges and universities, listed below:

### California

- Notre Dame de Namur University
- Sonoma State University
- St Marys College of California
- University of California-Berkeley

### Florida

- Stetson University

### Georgia

- Berry College
- Morehouse College
- Oxford College of Emory University
- Spelman College
- Young Harris College

### Indiana

- DePauw University
- Earlham College

### Illinois

- University of Illinois - Springfield

### Kansas

- Emporia State University
- Washburn University

### Kentucky

- Berea College
- Centre College
- Lindsey Wilson College
- Union College
- University of Louisville

### Maine

- Bates College

### Massachusetts

- Amherst College

### Minnesota

- College of Saint Benedict
- Augsburg College
- Macalester College

## Campus Impact



### Mississippi

- Jackson State University
- Tougaloo College

### North Carolina

- Davidson College
- Guilford College
- Lees-McRae College
- Mars Hill College
- Pfeiffer University
- Warren Wilson College

### New Jersey

- Burlington County College
- Keane University
- Mercer County Community College
- Middlesex County College
- Montclair State University
- Rider University
- Rutgers University
- The College of New Jersey

### New York

- Siena College

### Ohio

- Oberlin College
- University of Dayton

### Pennsylvania

- Allegheny College
- Dickinson College
- Juniata College
- Ursinus College
- Waynesburg University
- Widener University

### South Carolina

- College of Charleston
- Converse College
- Wofford College

### Tennessee

- Carson-Newman College
- Maryville College
- Rhodes College
- Tusculum College

### Virginia

- Bluefield College
- Emory & Henry College
- Ferrum College
- Lynchburg College
- University of Richmond
- Washington and Lee University

### Wisconsin

- Edgewood College

### West Virginia

- Concord University
- West Virginia Wesleyan College
- Wheeling Jesuit University