One of my favorite activities is hiking in the Blue Ridge mountains in Shenandoah National Park, and on trails near the Blue Ridge Parkway. I am only able to enjoy those hikes because someone came before me and blazed and cleared these trails. With map in hand, I know I will have a great day following the path to overlooks and great vistas. I can read a map because I was taught as a teenager what the symbols meant and what challenges to anticipate.

Similarly, GRASP advisors show the way for high school students to navigate the financial aid world in applying to colleges and two-year technical certifications. Some students may create their own path to a new future, and we are here to help.

From the tidal area of the Northern Neck, to the Piedmont and Alleghany Highlands, GRASP advisors are working in 87 high schools across 39 school divisions in Virginia helping students find their college and career path and determine how to finance it. Many of the students we work with will be first generation college students and need extra help in finding their way. Our advisors are typically retired educators and professionals who bring decades of life experience in helping students complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), look for scholarships, interpret the college financial aid award letter, and serve as mentors during the college application process.

Last year we worked with close to 8,000 students and awarded more than $300,000 in scholarships for four and two-year college programs. When Covid-19 struck we finished off the school year advising via video chat and texting. The pandemic has affected many families who are facing difficult decisions in the year to come while their children consider their options. GRASP is here to help unlock financial aid, scholarships, and federally subsidized loans. We provide hope and create a pathway to a student’s post-secondary education and career dreams.

Todd Martin
President & CEO

GRASP Main Office Staff

Todd Martin, President and Chief Executive Officer
Bettsy Heggie, Chief Operating Officer
Anne Michie, Chief Compliance & Program Officer
Patricia Gordon, Chief Financial Officer
Paula Buckley, Director of Outreach & Public Affairs

Patti Feyerabend, Assistant Director of Advising
Lisa Herbert, Middle School Coordinator
Jessica Horswell, Program Manager
Brenda Jackson, Advising Associate
Millie Manley, Donor Relations & Human Resources
Colin Puckett, Information Specialist

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** Emeritus
"This program has helped me more than words can explain. My gratitude to you all goes beyond this scholarship. Thank you for the time and dedication you put into getting each of your students ready for life after college."

Angela-Marie, J R Tucker High
majoring in biochemistry

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"A very big goal of mine is to try and mitigate my college debt so I am not paying for it until my golden years... I will definitely look back on my college experience and know that GRASP donors and staff helped me to become truly successful...I will forever be grateful."

Jacob, Rappahannock High
majoring in business
Thanks to your support, GRASP students have hope and plans for their futures.

The 2019-20 school year brought new challenges to GRASP operations as the world faced a pandemic, and schools completed the year virtually. GRASP responded to the COVID-19 changes by pivoting to virtual advising that included video meetings, phone assistance and email correspondence. We also began our texting program earlier than the regularly scheduled summer months, inviting all students who had worked with GRASP advisors during the academic year to participate. We had an increase of more than six times the average number of students participate in the program this year. Students participating in the texting program also received topical video clips regarding information that was provided at GRASP Summer Boot Camps in previous years. Additionally, the GRASP regional scholarship luncheons had to be canceled, so recognition yard signs were created and delivered to students to celebrate their achievements. GRASP continued to serve students without missing a beat, providing hope for students and families that educational goals are still achievable.

2019-20 Program Highlights

In-School Advising
- GRASP services touched 87 high schools in 39 Virginia school divisions.
- Your gift helped us assist 7,968 individual high school students in accessing financial aid for post-secondary education.
- We mentored 1,846 of these students through SOAR Virginia, helping them obtain $585,000 in scholarships funded by Virginia 529.
- More than two thirds came from low income and/or first-generation households.

College Success Program
- With your help, we supported 138 college students on their paths to degree completion through email programs, financial aid advising, and problem-solving support.
- Thanks to you, we awarded $116,100 in College Success Scholarships to 79 students.

Financial Aid & Scholarships
- For every dollar invested in GRASP, our advisors helped students secure an estimated $114 in financial aid.
- Your generosity allowed us to award $106,000 in Last Dollar Scholarships to 105 graduating seniors.
- We were also able to award $94,000 in Community College Pathway Scholarships.

Middle School Program
- Expanded the early awareness pilot program to include three middle schools.
- More than 2,900 seventh and eighth grade students explored career options, including skilled trades, and the requisite post-secondary degrees or credentials.
- An Altria Success360 grant funded this program in partnership with Henrico County Public Schools.
Our Financial Year

Revenue

- Government: $500,000 (34%)
- Individual: $298,396 (20%)
- Fees & Other: $240,792 (16%)
- Corporation/Foundation: $433,100 (30%)

Expenses

- Program Services: $1,211,674 (82%)
- Management: $241,770 (17%)
- Fundraising: $17,975 (1%)

The GRASP Footprint

- Central Virginia
- Northern Neck
- Valley
- Southside
- Western
Generous thanks to the following donors!
Recognizing all gifts received from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020*

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OUR MISSION
Helping all students and their families, with a focus on financially disadvantaged households, by:

- Giving inspiration and hope that their goals are attainable;
- Assisting them with the financial aid process and awarding scholarships; and
- Supporting them in the attainment of their post-secondary goals at the lowest possible cost.

GRASP’s goal is to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity for continuing education after high school, regardless of financial or social circumstances.

Help us continue to provide free services. Make a gift at grasp4va.org/givenow