

## Annual Report - 2018

### A Message from RJLF Founder Jo Leonard and Executive Director Caitlin Deppeler



Over the past five years the R.J. Leonard Foundation has experienced tremendous growth. This has allowed us to help our Fellows achieve dreams they once thought impossible. We have been deeply humbled by their successes and by the incredible support we have received from our community. That support is the key to our success. Our Mentors, board members, staff, and volunteers dedicate their time and their energy to our Fellows. In doing this, they have often found that they receive as much as they give. As Jim, one of our Mentors, put it, “You don’t walk in there trying to get something out of it, you walk in there trying to help the Fellow, but what you find is that it is just a great ride for everyone!” Jim has watched as his Fellow grew into a kind, hard-working, ambitious young man. They have forged a bond that will last a lifetime, as Jim continues to work with him as a confidante and supporter. That is the beauty of our work; it’s not just a fleeting check-in or a short-term relationship.

Our Fellowships are customized for each recipient based on what they need to accomplish their educational goals and enter into a career that will offer them self-sufficiency. This year we witnessed Emily earn her BN and obtain a full-time job as a nurse while she continues working toward her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Joseph thoughtfully switched careers to work as mentor in the social work field because he wants to help young people while, he continues his education and pursues a master’s in social work. We are supporting Caroline and Theresa as they work toward their business and criminal justice degrees.

Our programs continue to evolve in order to meet the needs of our Fellows. This year we implemented our Working Wheels program. The goal of Working Wheels is to ensure that each Fellow has access to safe and reliable vehicles that can get them to and from work and class.

Every donation we receive provides essential support and helps create new opportunities for our Fellows. We are deeply grateful to everyone whose support allows us to do the work we love, serving the youth of Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

– Jo & Caitlin

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## Our Staff

Caitlin Duppeler – Executive Director

Kathleen Kasper – Senior Director

Sam Kraus – Director of Development

Peter Sicher – Associate Manager of Campaigns

Jo Leonard – Founder and Chief Visionary Officer

## Our Board

Jo Leonard (Jo Leonard & Company) – Founder

Miles Hanley (SAP America)

Jeff Chirico (6ABC News & Weichert Realty)

Abbey Applebaum (Psychologist, Private Practice)

Karen McNamara (LaSalle University) – Board Advisor

John Ortolfo (Wells Fargo Advisors)

Jim Brennan (ARRIS)

Eileen Rebele (Beacon Consulting Group LLC)

Sameer Samol (Blue Ocean Global Wealth)

Julie Holcombe (Synergy Pharmaceuticals, Inc.) – Board Advisor

## Community Partners

A number of organizations generously gave their services and resources in 2017-2018, allowing us to maximize the resources we provide to our Fellows.

Doylestown Tech

**d t o w n   t e c h**

Ophthalmology Physicians & Surgeons, PC

**Ophthalmology**  
Physicians & Surgeons, PC

Jo Leonard & Co.

  
**JO LEONARD & CO.**  
CAREER AND EDUCATION COACHING

Upper Gwynedd Service Center

  
**UPPER GWYNEDD**  
SERVICE CENTER

Impact Thrift

  
**impact!**  
Thrift Stores

Motor Car Makeovers

  
**MOTORCAR**  
MAKEOVERS

Discount Auto

  
**DISCOUNT AUTO**  
SALES • SATISFACTION • SERVICE

One Simple Wish

  
**One Simple Wish™**

Valley Youth House

  
**VALLEY**  
**YOUTH**  
**HOUSE**  
Building foundations, shaping futures.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County

  
**Big Brothers**  
**Big Sisters.**  
OF BUCKS COUNTY

Chambers Bistro & Bar

  
**Chambers**  
**19**  
BISTRO & BAR

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### **Testimonies from RJLF Mentors**

“I was first inspired to be an RJLF Mentor upon meeting a few of your success stories at your annual event. At that time, I felt that given my life experiences, I had something to offer a candidate in the way of lessons learned and reaching success through hard work and tenacity. I knew it would be rewarding to me personally, but I had no idea how much it would mean. The Fellow I met through RJLF has taught me as much about life that resiliency of the human spirit as I have ever experienced in my 60 years. There are times when the student truly becomes the teacher.” – **Tom McCormick**

“Being a Mentor has allowed me to meet and work with an amazing young woman who is balancing career and motherhood, among so many other daily obligations and obstacles. Being welcomed into her life has enriched my own.” – **Karen McClure**

“Working with a mentee reminds me of a time when I was starting out in my adult life and navigating every aspect of adult life seemed to be a challenge with rules unknown to me. Being a Mentor gives me the opportunity to encourage a mentee, and also boost someone up the learning curve to allow them to be as successful as possible.” – **Barb Ortolf**

“Being a Mentor for the R.J. Leonard Foundation has been a most rewarding experience! The drive and determination that our Fellows exhibit to reach their goals is so inspiring and motivating. I feel that whatever I can do to help them facilitate their goals is time well spent. It contributes both to their futures and ours as a community.” – **Coleen Coleman**

“I became an RJLF Mentor to do what I could to help a young woman who had aged out of the foster care system fulfill her dream to get a college degree and secure a job that would support her and her young son. I have found such joy in knowing that I, with the support of RJLF, can help make her life a little better by being there to guide her and help her maximize her potential despite the obstacles that she has faced along the way.” – **Lisa Breithmayer**

### **RJLF Fellow Accomplishments**

**Britany** was placed in foster care as a young teen when her mother became too ill to care for her and her sibling. A single mother, Britany is incredibly bright and hard-working. She continues to balance pursuing her goals and her work. When she came to us, her “dream” was to go to Villanova. With support from RJLF, she obtained her associate degree at a community college and went on to complete several classes toward a bachelor’s degree in marketing at Villanova. She is currently working as a project coordinator with a healthcare communications company. RJLF has provided Britany with a Mentor, education scholarships to assist with tuition and books, college and career counseling, and professional attire for work.

Throughout **Joseph’s** childhood and adolescence, he was placed in a variety of foster care residential programs. As an adolescent, he worked manual labor jobs and attempted to pursue higher education without support. Although he did not lack motivation, he was unable to return for a second semester after struggling through the first. After being connected with his RJLF Mentor, Joseph secured full-time work with a medical billing company while he took classes part

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time at a community college. This experience helped him realize what he had to offer and get the support he needed. Joseph is now mentoring young people at a nonprofit and building skills for a future in social work. Although he “didn’t think he was school material,” Joseph has found himself enjoying his studies. He is working towards his master’s in social work. He is deeply appreciative of the support he has received and is determined to give back. RJLF has provided Joseph with a Mentor, transportation scholarships, and a professional wardrobe.

**Caroline** is a single mother, determined to make a better life for herself and her son. She has healed from the early trauma she experienced in foster care by sharing rather than being ashamed of her experienced and ensuring the life her son leads will be different. Her goal is to obtain a bachelor’s in business administration. She is currently working in the admissions department at her community college and enjoying helping students. She is only a few classes away from her associate degree. RJLF has provided Caroline a Mentor, shadowing opportunities, transportation and education scholarships, clothing for her son, and household items through community partner One Small Wish.

**Anthony’s** life took a drastic turn as a young teen when his father tragically died and his mother subsequently struggled with depression and addiction. He is currently the foster son of an RJLF supporter. He is a bright young man and a gifted athlete. He has worked hard with his Mentor to achieve his goals and has been accepted with a scholarship into a 4-year university where he will pursue his bachelor’s. RJLF has provided Anthony with a Mentor, education scholarships, and college and career counseling.

At the age of 15, **Theresa** lost her mother and was placed in foster care. She is an incredibly hard worker, balancing an “overflowing plate.” With support from RJLF, she graduated with her associate degree and is now pursuing a bachelor’s in criminal justice at Wester Chester University. In addition to her classes, Theresa works multiple jobs and is a single parent. RJLF has provided Theresa with a Mentor, career and financial counseling, clothing for her child, household items through community partner One Simple Wish, and transportation and education scholarships.

**Emily** is a 30-year-old single parent who experienced homelessness throughout her childhood and adolescence, leading to her experiences in the child welfare system. She is hard working and determined never to be homeless again. We are proud to report that Emily recently completed the nursing program at MCCC and started a new job as an RN. She plans to continue taking classes online next semester as she balances full time work with pursuing her BSN. RJLF has provided Emily with a Mentor, college, career, and financial counseling, professional attire, and transportation and education scholarships.

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### RJLF 2018 Events

**Awareness** – An awareness event was hosted in the summer by Chambers Bistro in Doylestown, PA. Local celebrities volunteered their time as bartenders, and Chambers generously donated 20% of the proceeds to RJLF. In addition to spreading awareness for the need to support young adults aging out of foster care in our community, we were happy to raise over \$2000.



**Fundraising** – On October 19, 2018, we held our 5<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser at Cedarbrook Country Club. Our Heart for Change event was wonderfully successful in raising awareness and over \$55,000. Approximately 100 people attended an evening of food, cocktails, live and silent auctions, music, and inspiring presentations. Guest speakers included Fellow Chris Nobles who shared his moving story and the impact RJLF has had on his life. We will hold our 6<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser at the same location on Friday, October 18, 2019.

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### Statement of Activity (Income & Expense) 2014 – 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Revenue</b>					
Support from the public	14,264	70,037	51,692	29,712	74,228
Community fundraisers	–	–	46,975	71,809	64,706
Grants from organizations	3,000	6,000	1,000	–	1,000
Interest and dividends	40	50	442	478	373
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$17,304</b>	<b>\$76,087</b>	<b>\$100,109</b>	<b>\$102,000</b>	<b>\$140,308</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Awards and grants to Fellows	2,512	5,569	39,570	67,702	68,826
Contract services for Fellows	8,596	18,441	23,582	16,895	57,440
Program management	3,725	9,626	10,699	4,049	6,261
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$14,834</b>	<b>\$33,635</b>	<b>\$73,851</b>	<b>\$88,646</b>	<b>\$132,527</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,471</b>	<b>\$42,451</b>	<b>\$26,258</b>	<b>\$13,353</b>	<b>\$7,781</b>