

Women *for* OSU

2022 NEWSLETTER



Ann Hargis

PHILANTHROPIST
OF THE YEAR

♦ *WOMEN for OSU COUNCIL* ♦

For Women for OSU, the collective focus and attention is on unity — how together the Council can benefit Oklahoma State and inspire leadership and philanthropy in countless other communities. Today, women view philanthropy not so much as “giving” but as “investing” — investing in change, investing in the future and investing in causes that are personally meaningful. Those who serve on the Women for OSU Council volunteer their time, treasure and talent to propel the impact of the organization forward.

CURRENT MEMBERS

Jennifer Allen	Pam Martin
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Jenny Carter	Jocelyn Meyers
Amy Cline	Jennie Moyes
Pat Cobb	Gail Muncrief
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Kayleen Ferguson	Natalie Ramsey
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Kim Hilbig	Gwen Shaw
Lynn Hilst	Terry Slagle
Jeanene Jenkins Hulsey	Karen Stewart
Claudia Humphreys	Melinda Stinnett
Beth Jackson	Lucina Thompson
Traci Jensen	Sharon Trojan
Sharon Keating	Julie Valentine
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Jami Longacre	Leslie Woolley
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OSU President Kayse Shrum
OSU Foundation President Blaire Atkinson

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Sheryl Benbrook	Amy Mitchell
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Jan Cloyde	Ramona Paul*
Suzie Crowder	Roxanne Pollard
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Cindy Eimen	Grace Provence
Nancy Payne Ellis	Sara Bradshaw Ray
Fran Evans	Helen Newman Roche
Malinda Berry Fischer	Fran Sorenson*
Marybeth Glass	Becky Steen
Anne Greenwood	Raina Rose Tagle
Jennifer Grigsby	Marnie Taylor
Beverly Groom	Julie Teubner
Leah Gungoll	Marilynn Thoma
Ann Halligan	Diane Tuttle
Rhonda Hooper	Cindy Waits
Vicki Howard	Peggy Welch
Phyllis Hudecki	Connie Wiese
Cathey Humphreys	Suzanne Wiese*
Susan Jacques	Esther Winterfeldt
Cathy Jameson	
Amy Jameson	
Judy Johnson	
Martha Johnston	
Dr. Patricia Knaub	
Julie Lambert	
Caroline Linehan	

**Deceased*

Leslie Paris

WOMEN *for* OSU CHAIR

As I begin my term as the new chair of Women for OSU, I'm proud of the accomplishments that have been made, and am excited for the year ahead. I look forward to the opportunity to work with visionary women who share a passion to positively shape the future of the university through philanthropy and engagement.

Women for OSU is celebrating its 15-year anniversary in 2023, acknowledging the significant impact women have made at Oklahoma State through their giving and service to the university. **Extraordinary accomplishments have been made over our first 15 years, including:**

- ◆ 15 annual Symposiums with national speakers sharing valuable knowledge about philanthropic decision-making and leadership
- ◆ 15 women recognized as Philanthropists of the Year, a nomination-driven honor of distinction for women changing the world that surrounds them
- ◆ \$1.5 million secured for the scholarship program and 112 scholarships granted to students that have demonstrated academic and philanthropic excellence — more than 1,000 students have applied for a Women for OSU scholarship.
- ◆ Women for OSU's Partnering to Impact program supported 10 programs/projects with nearly \$100,000 in grants to fulfill an OSU campus need aligned in one of four areas: health and wellness, education, campus beautification, arts and culture. Through private contributions, Women for OSU has secured \$190,000 for this new program.



The future is just as exciting with Dr. Kayse Shrum taking the helm as OSU's first female president. She's also an honorary member of Women for OSU and has participated in several of our annual Symposiums. She is dedicated to making OSU the preeminent land-grant institution in the country, and Women for OSU will certainly be a part of that.

I'm grateful for the women that have paved the way and come before me and am honored and humbled to serve as your new chair. Thank you for being a leader in women's philanthropy and for your partnership and support of Women for OSU!

Sincerely,

Leslie Paris

Women for OSU Chairwoman, 2022-2024

Jayme Ferrell

WOMEN for OSU DIRECTOR

I will never forget attending my very first Women for OSU Symposium in 2014. I was a small speck in a sea of orange-clad women, and the energy and excitement were palpable. I remember being starstruck by keynote speaker Jean Chatzky and being impressed with the beautiful tablescapes and fantastic food. The event was nothing short of perfect. But what really left an impression on me were the incredible women across the room who were — and continue to be — passionate about making Oklahoma State a better place.

There's something magical about being in the presence of OSU's (mostly) female philanthropists, and you simply cannot leave the Symposium without feeling inspired. That year we celebrated Nancy Payne Ellis as the Philanthropist of the Year and awarded five scholarships. The power of women in philanthropy is profound, and I am grateful that you and many others choose to invest in OSU!

As an Oklahoma State alumna and someone who has dedicated my entire career to philanthropy (with almost 10 years of my career at the OSU Foundation), I am passionate about Women for OSU. I am thrilled to continue the program's remarkable momentum to support our land-grant mission, and I am incredibly honored and humbled to serve you as this organization's third director.



This coming year, Women for OSU will celebrate its 15th anniversary while purposefully building our future. I couldn't be more excited to work with all the fabulous women that are Women for OSU. The Council, Women for OSU Partners and all of OSU's female supporters continue to teach me, motivate me, and make me grateful to be part of the OSU Family.

We hope you enjoy this installment of the Women for OSU newsletter, which illustrates just a small glimpse of the tremendous impact we've had in our first 15 years.

Go Pokes!

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Jayme Ferrell". The script is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of "Jayme" and "Ferrell" being capitalized and prominent.

Jayme Ferrell

Director of Women for OSU



2022 Symposium Recap

Returning to Gallagher-Iba Arena for the first time since 2019, the 2022 Women for OSU Symposium drew a crowd of more than 500 Cowboy faithful — along with a large virtual audience — to celebrate philanthropy and scholarship at Oklahoma State University.

Women for OSU is comprised of a diverse group of women who share a passion for inspiring leadership and financial support to OSU. On April 28, the Symposium brought the Cowboy community together as it recognized former **First Cowgirl Ann Hargis as the 2022 Philanthropist of the Year**. Also among the honorees were 15 outstanding student scholarship recipients. Former scholarship recipient **Julia Benbrook** emceed the event and **Lauren Bush Lauren** served as the keynote speaker. She is the creator and CEO of FEED — a global, socially-conscious clothing brand committed to feeding the children of the world — and granddaughter of former President George H.W. Bush and daughter-in-law to fashion icon Ralph Lauren.

“We were grateful to have the OSU family together again in Gallagher-Iba,” said Jayme Ferrell, director of Women for OSU at the OSU Foundation. “We were thrilled to host a large crowd, as well as a virtual audience that celebrated the remarkable work of so many at OSU. Thank you to our sponsors who made the Symposium possible. Without the support of these committed donors, we would not have the opportunity to share these inspiring philanthropic messages.”

Women for OSU also recognized its second group of **Partnering to Impact grant recipients** at the event. The program aims to support unbudgeted projects across

campus that benefit health and wellness, education, campus beautification or arts and culture. The inaugural 2021 class featured four recipients, but thanks to the growing number of Partners — those who give a minimum of \$1,000 annually to the Partnering to Impact Fund or \$500 annually for those younger than 35 — this year they awarded grants to six winners. You can read more about this program on page 14.

As keynote speaker, Lauren shared her passion to end child hunger, which coalesced after her first trip abroad serving as an ambassador for the World Food Programme — the food-assistance branch of the United Nations. The experience changed her life.

“Hunger is so often this faceless, abstract, overwhelming issue,” she said. “I’ve been able to meet so many people and so many families abroad and here in the U.S. who struggle to make ends meet. I think that’s been part of my wanting to start FEED.”

Recognizing OSU’s initiatives to tackle food insecurity, Lauren encouraged collaboration to end world hunger. “I am so grateful to be with you and to be able to share my story and my journey, and also to be really inspired by you and what you’re doing,” she said to the audience.

After the inspiring address, Lauren sat down with emcee Julia Benbrook for a question-answer session where she shared stories about her work, life and childhood.



In 2023, Women for OSU will celebrate 15 years of unity, leadership and philanthropy.

Since its inception, Women for OSU has served as a diverse group of women who share a passion for inspiring leadership and financial support to Oklahoma State University. Its size, scope and impact have grown tremendously since its establishment in 2008.

On April 23, 2009, the first-ever Women for OSU Symposium was held at the Wes Watkins Center with an attendance of 250 people. One student, Sarah Cary, was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. As of today, Women for OSU has named 112 scholars who have received \$468,483 in scholarships. Last spring, the Symposium hosted more than 500 people in Gallagher-Iba Arena in addition to a large virtual audience.

Women for OSU's growth has impacted many within the Cowboy family. OSU alumnus and current OSU graduate student, Jonathan Foster, was named a Women for OSU scholar at the 2020 Symposium. As a recipient, he felt honored to be recognized for his nonprofit work. Foster has

been active in the Alzheimer's Association for seven years. It was his father's early on-set Alzheimer's diagnosis when he was in fifth grade that sparked this passion. Although he grew up doing mission work with the desire to serve others, after his father's diagnosis, Foster experienced the true generosity of family, friends and strangers. He felt that same support from Women for OSU.

"The financial impact allowed me the time to really pursue my passions outside of school," he said. "I think it has set me up well for success in what I want to do, but even more than the financial side of it, it's that people are supporting you and believing in what you're doing. College can be hard and remembering people are investing in you and your future is really impactful and helps you get through the hard times."

One of Foster's goals is to experience a full-circle moment and support future students through scholarships.

"Being on the receiving end of a scholarship makes you realize just how much it can change someone's life. One of my main goals is to be able to reach that point to where

I am able to help future students," he said. "I have been fortunate to receive this help and I know there are others who are struggling and don't receive the kind of help I have."

The engine behind Women for OSU's success is the Council and its collective focus to unify and inspire women to invest in causes that are personally meaningful to them. These volunteers are committed to moving OSU forward through their time, talent and treasure. The current Council's lifetime giving to OSU is more than \$89 million.

Council member Pam Martin believes Women for OSU's empowering philanthropic message attracts women in the Cowboy community to be part of something special.

"The growth in programs, giving level and participation point to a real opportunity for Women for OSU to grow," Martin said. "With the new ideas and women that are getting involved, there are no limits to what it can achieve. I hope we can always be a fresh and creative organization that can serve an example to other universities."

As the Women for OSU Council, Symposiums and scholarship funds have increased since 2008, so has their impact across OSU. Through the generosity of a \$50,000 seed gift from former Women for OSU Council member Becky Steen in 2021, the group introduced Partnering to Impact, a donor-funded grant program that strengthens engagement between OSU and the Partners.

In its first year, the Partnering to Impact program awarded grants to four campus recipients, and it awarded six more in 2022. From the creation of Pete's Pantry in the Student Union, a student-focused initiative created to address food insecurity across campus, to the financial support of Opportunity Orange Scholars, an inclusive postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities, Partnering to Impact has had a rippling impact across OSU. In its first two years, the program received 64 grant proposals.

"Partnering to Impact is a great example of how the Council seized an opportunity to assist in establishing new programs and supporting existing initiatives on the OSU campuses in meaningful ways," said Jayme Ferrell, director of Women for OSU at the Oklahoma State University Foundation. "Their keen sense of OSU's needs and the ability to identify potential growth speak to the success of the group."



Peggy Helmerich, 2019 Philanthropist of the Year



Jean Chatzky, 2014 Keynote Speaker

Martin believes it was the Council's ingenuity and collaboration that brought Partnering to Impact to fruition.

"There are so many women with creative ideas, which is how Partnering to Impact came about," Martin said. "I feel this really gave the group another level of service and enrichment opportunities for our university, students and staff. Women for OSU is a unique group that can offer opportunities for women who love OSU and want to help elevate our university to the highest possible level of excellence."

Membership to the Women for OSU Partners is given to those who donate a minimum of \$1,000 annually to the Partnering to Impact Fund. For those 35 and younger, the minimum annual contribution is \$500. Since the creation of the program, there have been 255 Partners who have

given more than \$190,000. As the number of Partners increases, the program will be able to support more new and existing initiatives in health and wellness, education, campus beautification, or arts and culture at OSU.

At the annual Symposium, Women for OSU has honored several remarkable women with its Philanthropist of the Year award. This is a nomination-driven honor of distinction for women changing the world and their communities. It began in 2009 and has recognized fourteen honorees: Marilyn Thoma, Lola Lehman, Linda Shackelford, Martha Burger, Sue Taylor, Nancy Payne Ellis, Billie McKnight, Malinda Berry Fischer, Linda Cline, Anne Greenwood, Peggy Helmerich, Helen Hodges, Cathey Humphreys and Ann Hargis.

Since 2009, the Cowboy family has been drawn to the Symposiums by the impressive keynote speakers that include Former First Lady Laura Bush, actresses Marlee Matlin, Holly Robinson Peete and Marg Helgenberger, journalists Joan Lunden, Lisa Ling and Jean Chatzky, Olympic legend Jackie Joyner-Kersey, philanthropists Nancy G. Brinker, Jennifer Buffett and Lauren Bush Lauren, social psychologist Amy Cuddy, educator Dr. Tererai Trent and motivational speaker Leigh Anne Tuohy. The 2023 Symposium keynote speaker is Elizabeth Smart, an abduction survivor, author, activist and communicator for hope after tragedy.

"Women for OSU continues to make a tremendous impact on the OSU community," said Blaire Atkinson, president of Oklahoma State University Foundation. "Through the Council's commitment and the generosity of donors, Women for OSU changes the lives of more OSU students, staff and faculty with each passing year."

Lucina Thompson, Women for OSU Chair-elect and Engagement Team Chair, has been inspired by the impact the program has had on others and its bright future.

"Working with women who have accomplished much in the world and are passionate about encouraging others to invest in OSU is life-giving," she said. "I believe we are gaining tremendous momentum and the best days and greatest impact lies before us."

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WOMEN FOR OSU, VISIT:

OSUgiving.com/Women

**Support Women for OSU initiatives
by scanning this QR code.**



2017 Women for OSU Scholarship Recipients. This was the first time 10 students were recognized in a single year.



Laura Bush, 2016 Keynote Speaker

Through the Years

- ♦ **2008** - **Forty founding members** establish the Women for Oklahoma State University Leadership and Philanthropy Council. The group resurrected a similar organization that existed from 1995 through 2004.
- ♦ **2009** - Women for OSU hosts **250 people** at its inaugural Symposium at the Wes Watkins Center. The group awarded a single scholarship to Sarah Carey and recognized Marilyn Thoma as its first Philanthropist of the Year.
- ♦ **2010** - Council members establish the **Women for OSU Endowed Scholarship Fund** with the goal to raise \$250,000 over the next five years as part of the Pickens Legacy Match.
- ♦ **2011** - As gifts to the scholarship fund continue to grow, Women for OSU awards four scholarships. The annual Symposium is a hit with an outstanding keynote address from acclaimed journalist **Lisa Ling**.
- ♦ **2012** - In less than two years, Women for OSU met its five-year **\$250,000 fundraising goal** for its endowed scholarship fund. With ongoing momentum, the group continued to raise money for the Women for OSU Endowed Scholarship Fund.
- ♦ **2013** - With an influx of scholarship gifts, Women for OSU recognizes **five students** for their philanthropic efforts. Chris Stockton is the first male student to receive a Women for OSU scholarship.
- ♦ **2014** - Women for OSU rebrands its logo. At the 2014 Symposium, the Council honored **Ramona Paul**, one of Women for OSU's founders who had recently passed away. Many of her family members attended the event where her husband, Homer Paul, also announced an endowed professorship in Ramona's honor.
- ♦ **2015** - Women for OSU hosted the annual Symposium at **Gallagher-Iba Arena** for the first time, transforming Eddie Sutton Court. Total Women for OSU scholarships awarded since 2008 surpass \$100,000 to 29 students.
- ♦ **2016** - Attendance at the Symposium breaks 500 guests for the first time, welcoming former **First Lady Laura Bush** as the event's keynote speaker.
- ♦ **2017** - The Women for OSU scholarships continue to grow more competitive; **10 scholars** were selected from a pool of 122 applicants. This was the first time 10 students were recognized in a single year. The Women for OSU Partners Program also launches.
- ♦ **2018** - Women for OSU celebrates its **10th annual Symposium** with a sold-out crowd in Gallagher-Iba Arena. At the event, Women for OSU chair Amy Mitchell announces that the Women for OSU Scholarship Endowment has reached **\$1 million**.
- ♦ **2019** - Total Women for OSU scholarships awarded since the group's inception surpasses \$300,000 to 71 remarkable students. These students are paying it forward with gifts of more than \$27,000 to OSU.
- ♦ **2020** - The COVID-19 pandemic forces the annual Symposium to go virtual, with thousands tuning in to watch the livestream. With a goal to increase the program's impact, Women for OSU launches its **Partnering to Impact** program.
- ♦ **2021** - Women for OSU awards four grants to its inaugural cohort of Partnering to Impact grant recipients during a hybrid virtual and in-person crowd at The McKnight Center. The Women for OSU Council also honors Former First Cowgirl Ann Hargis with a gift to establish the **Ann Hargis Pete's Pet Posse Endowed Fund** in recognition of her service to OSU.
- ♦ **2022** - For the first time since 2019, Women for OSU returned to a full-capacity in-person event. The Partnering to Impact program continues to grow in its second year, awarding six grants to outstanding campus programs.
- ♦ **2023** - The 2023 Women for OSU annual Symposium is scheduled for **Thursday, April 27**.



Ann Hargis

2022 PHILANTHROPIST of the YEAR

Oklahoma State University students have always energized Ann Hargis. She immersed herself in their stories and worked tirelessly to improve their lives. They motivated her every day of her 13-year tenure as OSU's First Cowgirl.

"We had no idea the gift we'd been given all those years ago when she enthusiastically came on board as First Cowgirl," Diane Tuttle said.

Serving alongside president Burns Hargis from 2008-2021, Ann fully embraced her role at OSU, where students were always at the heart of her service.

Although she wasn't a paid employee, her workdays often started before sunrise, and she continued making a difference into the evenings and weekends.

"In all situations, she exemplifies how a person should live their life," Tuttle said. "She is the epitome of an energetic, caring and generous person."

Wellness has always been a central part of her life, and Ann was driven to make that passion an emphasis on

campus. She played an instrumental role in creating the America's Healthiest Campus initiative and turned OSU into a leader in university wellness.

In 2013, Ann made perhaps the most important impact of her tenure, launching Pete's Pet Posse. The program has grown to become the largest university pet therapy program in the country and has reached over 300,000 people.

Ann was awarded an honorary doctorate at OSU in 2019 for her work in the area of wellness and improving the lives of others.

"Ann's generosity and passion for helping others has left a long-lasting imprint on our university," OSU President Dr. Kayse Shrum said. "We share a love of dogs, and Ann took that love and turned it into a gift for the campus with Pete's Pet Posse. I am so grateful for her dedication to making an impact on the lives of our students."

Ann also served on the Friends of the Library, Friends of Music and the Women for OSU Council. She and Burns established an endowed professorship and made the OSU leadership scholarship possible.

Her love for the arts has left a lasting impact as well. The Hargises have made considerable contributions to The McKnight Center for the Performing Arts, the Doel Reed Center for the Arts and the OSU Museum of Art.

Her impact isn't just felt on campus, though, as she is an active and engaged member of the Stillwater community and the state of Oklahoma.

Before becoming First Cowgirl, Ann made significant financial and personal contributions to a diverse collection of philanthropic organizations in Oklahoma City, ranging from humanitarian efforts, to the arts and more. In 2012, she was appointed by the governor to the Oklahoma Arts Council.

In Stillwater, Ann served on the Stillwater Public Education Foundation and was a board member for Payne County Youth Services.

Even after her husband's retirement, Ann's orange passion continues to impact the lives of many.

With the establishment of the Hargis Leadership Institute, Ann and Burns will help mold students into strong leaders who will change Oklahoma for years to come.

"Ann leaves things better than she found them," said Kendria Cost, Director of the Ann Hargis OSU Center for Pet Therapy. "That is evident as you look across campus where she has left so much of her heart and soul."

"Ann leaves things better than she found them. That is evident as you look across campus where she has left so much of her heart and soul."



TO WATCH A VIDEO ABOUT ANN, VISIT:

[OSUgiving.com/Women/Philanthropist](https://osugiving.com/Women/Philanthropist)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE 2023 SYMPOSIUM!



◆ FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER ◆

Elizabeth Smart

Abduction survivor, author, activist and communicator for hope after tragedy.

April 27, 2023

GALLAGHER-IBA ARENA

On June 5, 2002, a 14 year-old Elizabeth Smart was abducted from her home in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the middle of the night. After nine grueling months of abuse, on March 12, 2003, the police found Smart and she was reunited with her family.

With courage and strength, Smart testified before her captor in court, which led to a conviction. Through this traumatic experience, Elizabeth has become an advocate for change related to child abduction and sexual violence as well as the importance of recovery and healing.

The Founder of the Elizabeth Smart Foundation, Smart has promoted The National AMBER Alert, The Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act and other safety legislation in an effort to prevent abductions. She chronicled her experiences in The New York Times best-selling book, *My Story*. Smart's most recent book, *Where*

There's Hope, is a powerful and inspiring collection of interviews about overcoming trauma and finding peace with the past and embracing the future.

Smart's abduction and recovery continue to motivate parents, law enforcement and leaders worldwide to focus on children's safety. She emphasizes vigilance by everyday people and that hope always exists to find every missing child.

Smart attended Brigham Young University where she studied music as a harp performance major. She married her husband, Matthew, in 2012, and they have two children. Smart's story is a daily demonstration that there really is life after tragedy.

Q&A *with* ELIZABETH SMART

How has philanthropy shaped your life and the work you do?

Let's begin by saying that I wouldn't be able to do the work I do without the generosity of others. From the day I was kidnapped so many stepped forward and donated resources, time and manpower — I don't know if I would be here today otherwise. My Foundation and all the work we do in the field of anti-sexual exploitation, prevention, healing and advocacy wouldn't be possible without the philanthropic efforts of others.

Please share with the Oklahoma State University community the Elizabeth Smart Foundation's mission, and its impact on prevention and advocacy to end sexual assault victimization.

The Elizabeth Smart Foundation mission is "To bring hope and end the victimization of sexual assault through prevention, healing, and advocacy." Having been a victim of sexual assault, I understand the depths of darkness and pain it can drown victims. I never want another person to find themselves in that hell. These crimes should never happen — no one deserves that kind of pain.

Smart Defense is a trauma informed self-defense class that the Foundation started. It is led by our director who is not only a survivor of sexual abuse herself, but three-time World Master Champion in Jiu Jitsu. We have combined Jiu Jitsu, Krav Maga and Muay Thai to give our students the best chance to protect themselves and get away to safety. Smart Defense teaches you to utilize your voice, place your safety above other peoples' comfort and to be your own advocate.

The Smart Talks program is an opportunity to continue the conversations that so often begin and then die along the way. We discuss different topics within the world of survivorship, sexual abuse, human trafficking and healing. We are all taught what to do when you catch on fire — stop, drop and roll. But how many of us are taught what to do when you are raped? Considering that at least one in four females are sexually assaulted at some point in their lives, why is there not more focus on this kind of safety? Smart Talks helps to find these kinds of answers and reminds us that one conversation is not enough — they need to be continual and ongoing.

What would you say to a sexual assault survivor who hasn't yet begun their path toward recovery and hope restoration?

First and foremost, I would want them to know it's not their fault, no matter the situation it is NOT their fault. Secondly, I want them to know that no one else can take away from their value. And finally, I want them to know it is easy to feel defined by different things in life, especially if you have experienced something highly traumatic, but ultimately you define who you are. I'm not sure it's ever easy, but you define who you are through your choices and actions. **DON'T EVER GIVE UP!** Life is worth living and happiness is real.

How can philanthropic efforts foster hope and healing?

No one enters the field of survivorship, or therapy or victim rehabilitation with the intention to get rich. Each survivor is an individual and unique and has different needs. Philanthropic efforts make all the difference in the world. The estimated lifetime cost of rape per victim is \$122,461. Every person deserves to find happiness in life. I truly do believe happiness is a core element of this life and it is important to not just find those moments but also make time for those moments. However, drowning in the darkness of the aftermath of rape, it can often feel like an impossible hole to climb out of especially when you can't afford even the bare minimum. Having a community surround you to make sure you receive all the attention, care and support can mean all the difference in the world. More than anything else, I believe it was because of my community and support network that I have become who I am.

PARTNERING to IMPACT

The Women for OSU Partnering to Impact program had a successful second year, awarding grants to six projects on campus. Each year, the donor-funded program gives grants to initiatives on campus with a focus in one of four areas: Health and Wellness, Arts and Culture, Education and Campus Beautification. This year's recipients are already working to make a difference at OSU.

2022 PARTNERING TO IMPACT GRANT RECIPIENTS

*Break the Chain:
Stopping Sex Trafficking with Big Data*

Fridays Are for Careers

LeadHERship Spears

Opportunity Orange Scholars

*Partnering to Impact the Success
of Students with Disabilities*

*Supporting Local School Participation
in NAISEF on the OSU Campus*

**TO WATCH A VIDEO RECAPING THE
2022 GRANT RECIPIENTS, VISIT:**

OSUgiving.com/Women/P2I



OPPORTUNITY ORANGE SCHOLARS

Many young adults with intellectual disability don't have the option to go to college in Oklahoma. Opportunity Orange Scholars is looking to do its part to improve access to higher education.

On August 15, the first five Opportunity Orange Scholars moved into their dorms at OSU, marking a huge milestone for the program.

"The day the first cohort of students arrived on campus was incredibly gratifying," said Dr. Kami Gallus, associate director of research with the Institute for Developmental Disabilities. "We're tremendously thankful for all of our campus and external partners who helped make it possible."

Opportunity Orange Scholars works to enhance the lives of students with intellectual disability by promoting lifelong, inclusive learning and advancing knowledge necessary for competitive employment and a healthy lifestyle. It's open to young adults aged 18-26 with an intellectual disability who do not meet OSU's degree-seeking admission criteria.

Students in the program will earn a two-year certificate in Career and Community Studies while getting the opportunity to live, learn, work and play on the Stillwater campus.

The program hopes to improve and expand educational opportunities at OSU, not only for college-age individuals with intellectual disabilities, but for all students on the Stillwater campus.

"Universities benefit when they include diverse learners," Gallus said. "We're excited to see the impact OOS students have on OSU, and how OSU can help prepare them for

lifelong careers in the community of their choosing.” Opportunity Orange Scholars was a recipient of a Women for OSU Partnering to Impact grant. The funds allowed the program to hire a graduate assistant, who is currently working to gather baseline data so they can track student learning outcomes.

Depending on demand and capacity, there is also consideration to roll out an advanced certificate option during the third year of the program. This certificate will be made available to select students who successfully complete the initial certificate and demonstrate development in the ability to live independently and sustain employment.

“Opportunity Orange Scholars is just getting started,” Dr. Gallus said. “We’re looking forward to seeing the impact of the program grow as we admit additional, and potentially larger, cohorts over the next several years.”

LEADHERSHIP SPEARS

A year full of exciting opportunities is coming into focus for LeadHERship Spears.

The program kicked off the fall semester with an open house event on September 9 that featured guest speaker Dr. Beth Livingston and an early look at its plans for the upcoming school year.

Program Directors Dr. Lex Washington and Sarah Teague have lined up eight events across the fall and spring semesters that include guest speakers, networking opportunities and other hands-on experiences.

“We are really going to take students out of their comfort zones, out of the classroom and into the cities,” Washington said. “Our goal was to really think about how we can go beyond what they learn in class.”

LeadHERship Spears is a year-long development program for women in the Spears School of Business. Those who participate in the program will learn leadership skills and benefit from hands-on business experiences, comprehensive mentorship and personal development. They’ll also get to network with current professionals as well as a cohort of aspiring future female leaders.

The Women for OSU Partnering to Impact grant will allow the program to take on 10 students this year, each of which had to submit an application for their consideration.

“I really think that we’re filling a gap that’s needed in Spears, and I can tell the women that are applying see that, too,” Teague said. “We designed this to be really intentional about the students that we want. We want to make sure that it’s a diverse group, not only academically, but also ethnically.”

The fall semester will focus on “digging” — doing self-discovery work that helps students find their leadership identity and what they want from organizations and their future career progression.

In the spring, the focus will shift to “bridging” work, or relationship building. Students will get to meet lawmakers and observe a session at the Oklahoma State Legislature, attend the International Women’s Forum in Tulsa and do a few other workshops in the Stillwater community.

“No matter what your background is, there’s so much information that you need to be a fully functioning adult, let alone a leader, that you just don’t get in the classroom,” Washington said. “We want to add to the students’ depth of knowledge so they can excel in a variety of places.”



Partnering to Impact would not be possible without the support of our Women for OSU Partners. To learn how you can become a Partner and be a part of the selection process for next year's grant recipients, contact:

Jayne Ferrell | jferrell@OSUgiving.com | 405.714.8977



Mackenzie Hester

STORIES of GRATITUDE

Growing up in the small town of Washington, Oklahoma, I knew that Oklahoma State University-College of Medicine in Tahlequah would be the perfect fit for me. As a member of the inaugural class, I have had unique opportunities to see the partnership with the Cherokee Nation, learning about tribal healthcare and volunteering in the COVID-19 Vaccine Pod. As a Choctaw citizen, it has been invaluable to developing my Native identity while receiving my medical degree. I've done this by participating in cultural activities, research opportunities and receiving mentorship from Native physicians and faculty.

The family atmosphere at OSU-COM in Tahlequah is one of the many reasons I chose OSU, and it has been a blessing to experience it firsthand. I am fortunate to learn from inspiring physicians, faculty and staff. Everyday they pour into the students and support us on this difficult and rewarding journey. OSU has truly provided me with a positive environment to grow and learn both personally and academically.

Being a Women for OSU scholar has only furthered this growth and my passion for helping others. It is an honor to be chosen to represent my campus and the amazing students at OSU. After receiving this gift and feeling the impact it has on my life and education, I hope to one day give back in the same way.

To all the donors and supporters of this scholarship, thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is through your generosity that students, like me, can pursue our dreams and passions. Your philanthropic spirit is infectious, and I'm so thankful to experience it.

Thank you and Go Pokes!

Mackenzie Hester
Women for OSU Scholar, 2022





2022 WOMEN for OSU SCHOLARS

Women for OSU honored 15 students for their outstanding service and leadership to their communities and Oklahoma State University. Each student has dedicated countless hours to improving the lives of others. We are excited to see the difference they will make in their communities! There is no doubt these students will change the world with their philanthropic hearts. Congratulations to our 2022 Women for OSU Student Scholars:

Jaci Deitrick ♦ Newcastle, Oklahoma
Agribusiness and Psychology - Honors

Paul Delgado ♦ Edmond, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Morgan Garrett ♦ Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Tess Haddock ♦ Stillwater, Oklahoma
Agricultural Economics with a Minor in Social Justice

S. Mackenzie Hester ♦ Washington, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Brooke Hightower ♦ Cushing, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Haley Howard ♦ Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Makinley Kennedy ♦ Lawton, Oklahoma
Strategic Communication

Tina Newton ♦ Perry, Oklahoma
Higher Education Leadership and Administration

Chloe Scheitzach ♦ Edmond, Oklahoma
Physiology: Pre-Med

Alma Rios Wilson ♦ Buffalo, Oklahoma
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Mary Erdmann ♦ Tulsa, Oklahoma
Microbiology and Molecular Genetics: Pre-Med
Sandra K. Trennepohl Endowed Scholarship

Kayla Morrison ♦ Ponca City, Oklahoma
Horticulture
Wirt June Newman Scholarship

Denise Neal ♦ Belize City, Belize
Language Literacy and Culture
Ike and Marybeth Glass Women for OSU Endowed Scholarship

Savanna Smith ♦ Trophy Club, Texas
Veterinary Medicine
Sheryl Benbook Women for OSU Endowed Scholarship

TO READ MORE ABOUT THE 2022
WOMEN FOR OSU SCHOLARS, VISIT:
OSUgiving.com/Women/Scholars

Dana Bessinger

PARTNER PROFILE

To Women for OSU Partner Dana Bessinger, the phrase 'loyal and true' is something to be taken seriously.

The Cordell, Oklahoma, native's OSU roots run deep. Her grandparents and parents all went to OSU. So did her sisters, her brother-in-law, her nieces and nephews. Name a relative, and they probably have an OSU degree.

"My family really, truly does bleed orange," Dana said. "In high school, when I took the ACT or SAT, I had to write down my top three colleges so they could send them my scores. But I never wanted to put anything but OSU. I knew where I was going, and I wasn't going anywhere else."

Although OSU was always her plan, Dana had some work to do to get there. Her dad died when she was young, so her mother was responsible for raising three kids on her own. Dana and her two sisters needed scholarships to make their way to Stillwater.

"My mom pushed me really hard," Dana said. "She was always saying, 'You can go to OSU, but you have to get scholarships.'"

Dana ended up on the President's Leadership Council and was awarded several scholarships. In 1979, she arrived at OSU and began working toward a degree in horticulture.

But her plans quickly changed when she met her eventual husband, Barry. The couple got married before Dana completed her studies, and they moved to Goodwell, Oklahoma, for Barry's job with Oklahoma AgCredit.



Bessinger and her husband, Barry, at the New Frontiers Agricultural Hall groundbreaking ceremony in 2021.

Dana transferred to Panhandle State University, but they didn't have a horticulture program, so her career took a turn. In 1985, she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and began a successful 21-year teaching career.

She loved teaching, but after her youngest son started college, Dana felt she was ready for a change. Her OSU roots were calling her back to Stillwater.

Dana returned to her beloved alma mater, and in 2010 she earned her master's in Agriculture with a concentration in Agricultural Education. Meanwhile, she secured a job with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

"We had an office on campus here at OSU and I worked really closely with the Ag college," Dana said. "I had a great career marketing the agricultural industry to educators all over the state."

"I was also fortunate enough to be a southern representative on the National Agriculture in the classroom committee, which allowed me to travel and meet educators from across the nation."

When Dana and Barry retired, they always knew they would move back to Stillwater. She loves how so much is always going on at OSU, including one of her favorite university events, the Women for OSU Symposium.

"I was so sad when they had to do the Symposium virtually because that day is so wonderful and upbeat and orange," Bessinger said. "It's an awesome event. There's just so much energy. It's my favorite thing."

Dana has been involved with Women for OSU almost from the beginning.

And as a Partner, she gets to play a special role with the program. Partners have not only helped the Women for OSU Scholarship Endowment grow to over \$1 million, but they also get to be a part of the selection process for the Partnering to Impact grants, which are handed out each year to OSU projects.

More importantly, Partners change the lives of young adults and help shape the next generation of leaders. Because of her own scholarship experience, she understands how meaningful the Women for OSU awards can be to students. She loves being able to help do something for people who may not expect it.

"Even if you don't have multi-millions of dollars to give, whatever you can is important," Bessinger said. "It makes you feel like you're part of something bigger. I truly do believe that more women would be involved if they could realize that."

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING
A WOMEN FOR OSU PARTNER, CONTACT:**

Jayne Ferrell | jferrell@OSUgiving.com | 405.714.8977

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