

# 2024 Foundation Scholarship Dinner



White Lotus Dragon and Lion Dance Team visit a table during their performance.

Clark College students, staff, and supporters gathered with the Clark College Foundation on November 6 at the Hilton in downtown Vancouver for a dinner event to celebrate the intersection between students, scholarships, and the community. The Clark College Foundation Annual Event: A Scholarship Story focused on the impacts of scholarships, not just in a student's life, but how they ripple throughout the entire community.

Clark College mascot, Oswald, greeted guests and posed for photos. The evening ended with a rousing performance by White Lotus Dragon and Lion Dance Team.

The Foundation awarded more than \$1.6 million in scholarships to Clark students during the 2023-2024 academic year, contributing to the over \$9 million in financial aid grants and loans distributed to the students. Since the Foundation's inception in 1973, it has supported Clark College with more than \$85 million, including scholarships and grants for education and essential needs.

Cheree Nygard, chair of Clark College Foundation board of directors said, "Every scholarship represents an investment in the future, helping students who might not otherwise pursue their dreams. Whether it's a single parent balancing work and school, a first-generation student blazing new trails, or someone retraining for a new career, scholarships make these stories of success possible. Education is the foundation of a thriving community, and at Clark, we are shaping the future of Southwest Washington, one student at a time."

Nygaard continued, "I'm passionate about this work because I've seen firsthand how it changes lives. When we support education, we're not just helping individuals – we're empowering families, building stronger neighborhoods, and creating a ripple effect of positive change that touches us all."

Clark College President Dr. Karin Edwards said, "It is truly a privilege to be here tonight, as we come together to celebrate the transformative impact of scholarships on our students and our community. Scholarships are more than just financial aid—they represent hope, opportunity, and belief in the future. They give students the chance to pursue their dreams, and they remind us that when we unite in support of education, we can achieve incredible things. This sense of unity, this collective commitment to making a difference, is what sets



Clark College apart.”

## A Scholarship Story



First-generation college student and scholarship recipient Malina Siharath, *pictured above*, spoke from the podium about how receiving three scholarships from the Foundation is making her second year at Clark much less stressful than her first year.

She said, “In my first year of college, I paid all expenses out of pocket or with personal loans. Because of the Darby/Smith Scholarship, Fordham Scholarship, and the Clark Alumni Scholarship, I will graduate from Clark College with only that first year of debt.” She added, “When the community helps students through scholarships, they truly change students’ lives on their academic journeys.”

Siharath is pursuing a communications degree, with a goal of working in public relations and social media. She already is putting her skills to work as director of public relations of

Clark's Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

Clark College Foundation CEO Calen Ouellette, said, "What an incredible evening this has been! We've heard powerful stories of how scholarships transform lives—creating opportunities, igniting dreams, and opening doors that might otherwise stay closed. But the best part? This story doesn't end tonight. In fact, it's just beginning, and you're all part of it." He added, "If you've been inspired by the stories and would like to continue being a part of this ongoing narrative, I invite you to support Clark College scholarships. Every dollar you give helps write the next chapter in a student's life."

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