



Sending *hope* your way

SPRING 2018

**NEVER
GIVE
UP**

BECAUSE OF
YOU, THIS MOM
HAS CHANGED HER
FAMILY'S FUTURE





Nicole Lynn Lewis
Founder & CEO

new beginnings

Thank you for helping young families start anew

“Looking at our own lives, the biggest steps came with change and learning. The most important things often require us to stretch ourselves.”

To change the world, we have to be willing to try new things – to stretch ourselves in different ways.

A healthy organization must take a step back on a regular basis to ask this fundamental question: “What kind of impact do we want to have over the next three to five years?” From July 2017 to January 2018, that’s exactly what Generation Hope did. The result is a new strategic plan that I know will have a major impact on teen parents *and* their children.

This is a new adventure. Not only will we focus on improving our college completion efforts for young parents, but we’ll also start a new program, Next Generation Academy, to help their children get ready for kindergarten.

Now, when a Scholar comes to us asking for parenting support because she does not have a positive parenting relationship to look to, we can help. Now, when

a Scholar is looking for ongoing career prep and connection to real opportunities, we’ll have someone on staff to work with him. Now, when a Scholar is looking for a place to study where her child is welcome, we’ll be able to walk them into our new office space where they can print an essay, play dress up, and just be.

Looking at our own lives, the biggest steps came with change and learning. The most important things often require us to stretch ourselves. And in the end, it’s worth it.

Thank you for making it possible for us to ask the tough questions, dream big, and serve those who far too often fall through the cracks. Your support gives teen parents and their children the opportunity to start anew.

PEP RALLY UNDER THE STARS Gala

EMCEE
JAMES MACGREGOR
Market President and Publisher of the *Washington Business Journal*

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018
6:30 PM — 11:00 PM | THE WASHINGTON HILTON
www.supportgenerationhope.org/gala

TICKETS
ON SALE
NOW!

THE HONORABLE JEFFREY SLAVIN

WHY I GIVE

in my own words

ABOUT JEFFREY

The Honorable Jeffrey Slavin has been the mayor of Somerset, an incorporated town tucked between Bethesda and Chevy Chase in Montgomery County, Md., since 2008. He has been supporting Generation Hope since 2013.

You've been a Generation Hope supporter for quite a few years. How did you first become involved?

I'm very active in the community, and I probably heard a presentation that the founder and CEO, Nicole Lynn Lewis, gave.

And what about Generation Hope made an impression on you?

I became an active philanthropist about a decade ago, and at that time I re-oriented our family foundation toward groups that empower people. Education has always been a high priority. It was also important to me that Generation Hope was working in Montgomery County and that many of the Scholars were people of color.

Is the leadership of an organization important to you?

Yes. I always look at the strength of the leadership. Nicole is a visionary, dynamic leader who runs an organization with state-of-the-art techniques in non-profit management.

It's always a challenge for a non-profit to find volunteer leadership. Nicole has done a great job in that area as well – now she just has to keep it up!

It's clear to me that Nicole and the board of directors understand the value of the investment they are making in each Scholar as well as the impact on our community. Generation Hope benefits the community because most of the Scholars remain in the area.

Have you had opportunities to meet some of our Scholars?

Yes, my sister and I are very hands on with our charitable giving, so I've met Scholars and attended a number of events. The Scholars have overcome so many challenges, and there is such a high rate of

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success. I think that's because Generation Hope doesn't use the same formula for everyone. They see each Scholar as an individual and try to meet their needs.

Generation Hope clearly understands the importance of maintaining relationships with their Scholars. I think that's why so many who have graduated and have launched their careers want to give back.

Since you recognize the value of mentors, have you had mentors who have influenced your life?

Yes, I've been very careful to select my own mentors, people with expertise in different areas. It's like having a private tutor. You should always pick someone who will be honest with you.

Are you involved beyond your financial support?

Yes, I've been involved in events, I've recruited people, and I've introduced Nicole to new people who may be able to help.

What do you think the future holds for Generation Hope?

I think it could become a model for the nation and that there could be Generation Hopes all around the country. It would be particularly great to have this program in areas where the economy is not as strong. I would hope it's replicated where it's most needed, to help overcome the stigma of teen pregnancy.

Written by PAT CORNELL

NEVER GIVE UP

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Ambar and her daughter, Gabriella

Ambar Campos' grandmother always says: "When life knocks you down seven times, you have to get up eight times."

Ambar remembers those words when things get rough, and they have served as inspiration.

"My grandma is so excited for my graduation ceremony," says Ambar, who is graduating from George Mason University in just a few weeks with a Bachelor's degree in health administration and health systems management.

Ambar still remembers the essay she wrote when she applied to George Mason. "I put my heart and soul into it. I shared my story. I don't give up. I told them, if

I got into Mason, I wouldn't give up either."

BORN AND RAISED IN ALEXANDRIA, VA., AMBAR WAS A FRESHMAN AT WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL AND WAS JUST 14 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE LEARNED SHE WAS PREGNANT. She was 15 when her daughter Gabriella was born, and at the beginning of the next school year she transferred to Bryant Alternative School for teen parents. It was there that Ambar learned about Generation Hope from one of its board members who was also the founder of the teen parenting program at Bryant.

Eager to start college, Ambar took extra classes and graduated early. With the support of Generation Hope and her mentor, Kim Litherland, Ambar started at Northern Virginia Community College at 16. After earning an Associate's degree, she was accepted into

George Mason.

“SHE HAS HUNG IN THERE AND HAS DONE REALLY, REALLY WELL IN SCHOOL,” says Kim. “And she hasn’t been discouraged by all of the distractions going on around her.”

As Ambar’s mentor, Kim has watched Ambar blossom from a shy, 15-year-old, teen mom, into the confident and resourceful 22-year-old she is today. According to Ambar, Kim has played a vital role in that growth.

“Kim has definitely shaped me into the person I am today,” says Ambar. “I was shy at first. I didn’t know how to begin a relationship with someone I didn’t know. Over time, we have built such a great and beautiful relationship. She is definitely my biggest fan, and college wouldn’t have been possible without her. I will always be extremely grateful for her.”

Kim and Generation Hope have been there for Ambar in ways her parents, who migrated to the U.S. from El Salvador, could not be. Her father only recently became a U.S. citizen and her mother is currently working toward citizenship. Ambar and Gabriella live with her parents and two younger siblings. Her parents take care of 7-year-old Gabriella on those late evenings when Ambar attends classes after work.

“My family is very supportive,” Ambar explains, “but I don’t think they understand the stress and dedication it takes to complete college. Generation Hope does. I am the first person in my family to attend college. Generation Hope has been great in guiding me and fulfilling my needs when it comes to school.”

Thanks to the added support from Generation Hope, Ambar never gave up, even when she struggled academically. **“THERE WERE A COUPLE SEMESTERS WHERE I WAS TAKING FIVE CLASSES AND TRYING TO KEEP A JOB,”** she recalls. “I was on [academic] probation a couple times, but they never gave up on me.”

Ambar is extremely proud of her personal growth, and her journey with Generation Hope, which has also grown since her early days as a Scholar. She is the last one from the second class of Generation Hope Scholars to graduate. One of Ambar’s most memorable

moments with Generation Hope was “my first gala,” she says. “The program was still fairly new, and I felt so great to be a part of something bigger than me. It’s great to see how much they’ve grown.”

What’s next for Ambar? “Find a job!” she says. She will be completing an internship at Virginia Hospital Center this semester, and she is looking to start working in healthcare full time. “In three to five years, I’d like to be a manager of a department within a healthcare system or private practice. I also see myself

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in a home with just my daughter and I, and a dog.”

A Master’s degree is also in Ambar’s future plans, but “that’s a ways off,” she says. For now, Ambar’s eagerly anticipating having her Bachelor’s degree in hand.

“I’m framing it, and I’m going to look at it a long time,” she smiles.

Written by **VICTORIA VICKERS**





It has been almost a year since Shawn Stokes began mentoring her Scholar Naomi Graham-Stanford, and she has received more than she could have ever imagined.

When Shawn Stokes met Nicole Lynn Lewis during their time in Leadership Montgomery last year and learned about the mission of Generation Hope, she immediately wanted to get involved.

First, as a seasoned human resources professional, she put her skills to use facilitating an interview-preparation and resume-writing workshop during a Career Clinic for Scholars. Then, she joined one of the organization's committees focused on internal systems. When Nicole asked her to become a Generation Hope Sponsor (i.e. mentor), she enthusiastically agreed.

"IT HAD BEEN A WHILE SINCE I VOLUNTEERED OR PARTICIPATED IN A COMMUNITY-BASED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. I knew I wanted to give back, but I wasn't sure how I wanted to volunteer," Shawn says.

"Shawn has so many of the qualities that we look for in mentors," says Nicole. "She is energetic, funny, loving, and really wants to meet people wherever they are."

Shawn met her Scholar Naomi Graham-Stanford who attends Montgomery College last summer at Generation Hope's initial training for new Scholars and Sponsors. Naomi is raising her daughter, Carmen, and wants to become an event planner.

Meeting Naomi for the first time "didn't feel like work," says

MENTOR STORY

It's about the future



Shawn with her Scholar Naomi and Naomi's daughter Carmen

Shawn. **“WE INSTANTLY CLICKED. IT WAS NEVER AWKWARD. IT WAS JUST LIKE ‘I’M SO HAPPY TO MEET YOU! I’M GLAD WE’RE CONNECTING!’”**

The initial training is designed to help Sponsors and Scholars create a healthy, meaningful, and lasting mentoring relationship. Sponsors and Scholars begin the day attending separate workshops. Sponsors explore best practices for mentoring relationships and Scholars learn about Generation Hope and the multi-layer support that is provided through the Scholar Program. The best part of the day is when Sponsors and Scholars meet each other for the first time during lunch. Excitement and nervousness are mixed with anticipation to meet the person that they will be sharing their time, dreams, and personal experiences with for years to come.

“Generation Hope does the orientation in such a way that it gives Sponsors a pretty good framework to follow,” says Shawn. “So Naomi and I jumped right into what her schedule was like for that semester and where she wanted to be in two years regarding graduation.”

After their initial meeting, Shawn and Naomi’s relationship continued to grow. When Shawn visited Naomi and Carmen at their home, Naomi prepared a vision board activity.

“It was a nice exercise where she laid everything out on the dining room table. I was cutting different pictures, words, and inspirations out of the magazines. As I was cutting them, she was like, ‘Oh my gosh! This is exactly what I want! You know me so well!’ We hadn’t known each other that long -- maybe a couple of months. Because of my interactions with her and knowing where she wanted to be, I was able to make that connection.”

Things are not always easy though. Generation Hope Scholars can often deal with very challenging circumstances as they work toward their degrees.

“I SEE THE RELIEF OR THE RELEASE OF PRESSURE SHE HAS BECAUSE SHE HAS SOMEONE TO TALK TO,” Shawn says. “She has someone to listen to her and not necessarily tell her ‘this is what you should do’ or ‘I don’t know why you’re making that decision.’ I try not to do that and just try to get her to think about the decisions she is making.”

Shawn has also found herself learning from Naomi.



“She has had some ebbs and flows in the time that I’ve been working with her, but she is always able to pull through and persevere,” says Shawn. “I think it’s important to celebrate those things! Life happens the way that it happens. You learn from it, and you grow from it. I want her to know that I’m proud of her.”

Generation Hope is in the process of recruiting mentors who will be matched with our incoming class of Scholars. Shawn wants those who are thinking about becoming a Sponsor to know that **“IT’S NOT EASY, BUT IT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING THINGS REGARDING GIVING BACK.”**

In the midst of navigating life, Shawn and Naomi often find time to just have fun. When asked what Shawn loves most about Naomi she says, “The way she laughs. Her laugh is infectious.”

If you are interested in becoming a Generation Hope Sponsor, please go to www.supportgenerationhope.org/sponsor-application. Applications are due June 1st.

Written by NATALIE ARTHUR

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Here are some ways that you can help with our new strategic direction. We'd love to have you involved!

- **Mentor a teen parent in college** (Go to: www.supportgenerationhope.org/sponsor-application — Applications are due June 1st)
- **Support the early educational development of a child of a teen parent. This is a great opportunity for a family or a group to give back!** (Go to: www.supportgenerationhope.org/next-generation-academy — Applications are due July 11th)
- **Play and learn with our Scholars' little ones as a Childcare Volunteer at one of our upcoming events** (Go to: www.supportgenerationhope.org/volunteer)
- **Purchase a ticket, table, or sponsorship for our upcoming "Pep Rally Under the Stars" Gala on June 1st** (Go to: www.supportgenerationhope.org/gala)
- **Sign up to provide a dinner for one of our Parent Connect Meetings for Scholars and children participating in Next Generation Academy** (Email: Michelle@supportgenerationhope.org)
- **Organize a drive at your organization or company to collect much-needed items for our Scholars and their children** (Email: Michelle@supportgenerationhope.org)

2017 Annual Report



Because of your amazing support, Generation Hope was able to grow our impact in 2017. Be sure to check out our 2017 Annual Report online at www.supportgenerationhope.org/annual-report/ to find out more.

STAY CONNECTED



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