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The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust Makes \$1M Gift to Steppingstone Scholars In Support of Its Mission and Comprehensive Programming

March 10, 2021 (PHILADELPHIA, PA) – [Steppingstone Scholars](#) (Steppingstone) today announced that [The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust](#) (Hamilton Family Trust) has made a \$1 million commitment in support of its strategic priorities. This generous gift will strengthen and further expand Steppingstone initiatives within its three core program areas ([Academy](#), [Pathways](#) and [Ventures](#)), all of which create pathways to college and the workforce for underserved students in Philadelphia.

Specifically, this funding will support:

Academy: Increasing the Percentage of Scholars Attending “High and Most Selective Colleges and Universities”

Spanning more than two decades, this signature program of Steppingstone places high-achieving students in high-performing schools (independent and magnet) and supports them through summer and weekend academic programs, internships, tutoring and advising. With more than 500 alumni of this program, the future of The Academy is now focused on increasing the number of Scholars attending the elite colleges that invest heavily in financial aid and offer access to leadership in society. Currently, only 29% of Scholars are attending “Highly and Most Selective College and Universities.” Through this financial support from the Hamilton Family Trust, Steppingstone will be able to enhance its programming and focus on building stronger partnerships so that by 2025 40% of Scholars will attend these colleges and universities.

Pathways: Creating Greater College Access and Equity

In supporting Pathways, the Hamilton Family Trust helps to provide an unprecedented set of supports for Philadelphia public school students, improving how the schools and colleges they attend serve them. Notably, this gift will allow Steppingstone to hire additional school-based College Access and Equity Coordinators who work directly with students to provide in and out of school enrichment and advising. In addition, this gift will allow Steppingstone to expand its Dual Enrollment Program. Dual Enrollment courses allow students in junior or senior year of high school to take college-level courses for credit, thereby lowering costs and time to earn a college degree. This past fall, Steppingstone launched the [Cecil B. Moore Scholars Program](#) with [Temple University](#), which will serve 50 students from North Philadelphia during the spring semester of their senior year of high school. 20 of these students will receive full based tuition scholarships. In addition, Steppingstone has enhanced its Dual Enrollment Program portfolio of formalized partnerships to also include [Community College of Philadelphia](#), [La Salle University](#), [University of the Sciences](#) and [Cheyney University](#).

Ventures: Inveniam

Inveniam, a first-of-its-kind STEM Equity and Innovation Lab, launched in October 2020 in partnership with the [University of Pennsylvania's School of Engineering and Applied Science](#) (Penn Engineering). *Inveniam* provides STEM-based pre-college preparatory programming and opportunities to K-12 students in the School District of Philadelphia. Seed funding from the Hamilton Family Trust allows Steppingstone to implement immediate priorities for *Inveniam* and plan for scaling impact. Two early 2021 initiatives include the development of a full-year AP Computer Science online course, taught by Penn Engineering professors, that will begin in the fall for 3,000 high school students and the launch of the *Inveniam* Internship and Placement Program which will provide venture-capital/wealth management internships for 10 students this coming summer.

“The generosity of the Hamilton Family Charitable Trust is transformational for our organization,” said Dr. Sean E. Vereen, President of Steppingstone Scholars. “We are not only deeply grateful to the Trust for its wonderful generosity but excited by the transformational impact this investment will have on our work. It accelerates our efforts to create access to educational and workforce opportunities for talented, underserved students in Philadelphia. There is much work to be done to combat the systemic racial and socioeconomic inequality that has plagued our city for decades, and a gift like this affirms all that we have done thus far and empowers us to keep moving Steppingstone forward for our Scholars.”

Hamilton Family Charitable Trust’s Board Chair Matt Hamilton said “We have been continually impressed over the years with Steppingstone’s ability to form meaningful partnerships with local institutions (such as the creation of *Inveniam* with Penn Engineering), expand its reach and impact, and steadfast commitment to creating pathways to college and the workforce for underserved students. When Steppingstone was founded in 1999, they served 8 students. Today they serve 2,500 students annually and are growing rapidly. We are so pleased to support their growth and positive impact on Philadelphia’s underserved youth.”

For more information regarding Steppingstone Scholars, please visit: <https://www.steppingstonescholars.org/>.

For more information regarding The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust, please visit: <https://www.hfctrust.org/>

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About Steppingstone Scholars

Steppingstone Scholars is an educational social mobility organization. For low income students in the City of Philadelphia there are no clear pathways made specifically for them to go to college and enter the workforce. Since 1999, Steppingstone has been working to address this systemic problem by creating not just one pathway, but many. Serving students ages 10 – 24, Steppingstone offers three (3) solutions-oriented approaches: *Academy*, which provides transformative, rigorous learning opportunities to high-achieving educationally underserved students to access and succeed at highly resourced schools; *Pathways*, which leverages custom resources inside public K-12 schools (neighborhood, charter, and citywide) to create pathways to college and the workforce for educationally underserved students and; *Ventures*, which creates broad enrichment programs that innovate the ways in which schools, nonprofits, and communities can more equitably serve engaged citizens ready to enter college and a changing workforce. This systemic multi-faceted approach helps students identify, create, and confidently walk their pathways through institutions of higher education and work, well-prepared to begin breaking the cycles of disinvestment and socioeconomic inequality that has existed in Philadelphia for generations.