



# CLASS OF 2025

100%

COLLEGE  
MATRICULATION

A+

3.6  
Average  
GPA



17.4M  
In Scholarships  
& Grants



18%  
Accepted into top  
50 U.S. Universities

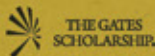
31%

Received full  
tuition funding

1



1



1



1



2



LINK  
Unlimited  
Scholars

# To Our LINK Community

As we reflect on this past year, we are filled with both pride and gratitude... pride in what our Scholars accomplished and gratitude for our supporters who continue to believe in what is possible when talented and ambitious young people are given access to opportunity. Your partnership makes our work possible. Thank you!

Honestly, 2025 was a year of transition, resilience, and important decisions that strengthened both our Scholars and our organization. Here are **five defining moments that shaped our year**:

- *Reached More Scholars Than Ever Before!* – We served nearly 350 Scholars, the most in our history, expanding access while strengthening the support Scholars need for success.
- *Extraordinary Scholar Outcomes* – The Class of 2025 earned nearly 500 college acceptances, secured \$17.4 million in scholarships and grants, and 100% matriculated to college!
- *Strengthened LINK for the Future* – The sale of our longtime building, transition to a new office, and disciplined financial stewardship positioned us for greater long-term stability.
- *Evolved to Meet the Moment* – Changing engagement dynamics and a shifting funding landscape required thoughtful adaptation. We strengthened accountability, refined programming, and launched a new Mentor model designed to deepen engagement while building sustainable support aligned with the transformational role Mentors play in Scholars' journeys.
- *Honoring 60 Years of Impact* – We began planning for our 60th anniversary. We look forward to celebrating six decades of impact and invite you to BOLO for our 60th Anniversary Celebratory activities throughout 2026, which will culminate with a grand event in November 2026.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we are not only helping young people achieve their college dreams, we are expanding economic mobility, strengthening leadership pipelines, and building a stronger future for our city and beyond.

With gratitude,



**Dr. Toinette Gunn**  
President & CEO



**Ken Johnson**  
Board Chair



## Back to Our Roots *at 60*

### **A Return to Our Mentor-Sponsor Model**

For about 50 years, LINK's 4-year Sponsor-Mentor model was the cornerstone of our success, pairing Scholars with committed adult mentors who also invested financially in their journey to and through college. About ten years ago, we transitioned to a non-sponsor model to broaden volunteer access and strengthened corporate giving to sustain our work. However, post-COVID shifts in volunteer capacity and a changing philanthropic landscape made long-term commitments less sustainable.

Now as we enter our 60th year, we've returned to the model that our legacy was founded upon. Our reimagined one-year College & Career Mentor-Sponsor model honors tradition, reflects adaptation, and provides focused and high-impact support during senior year. Some early highlights include:

- **100% of our 52 senior Scholars were matched with a College & Career Mentor-Sponsor.**
- **55% of new matches were based on shared college and/or career interests.**
- **To date, nearly 90% of Mentors are actively engaged with their Scholars.**
- **55% of Mentors have participated in at least one college counseling session with their Scholar.**
- **71% of returning Mentors increased their financial investment this year.**

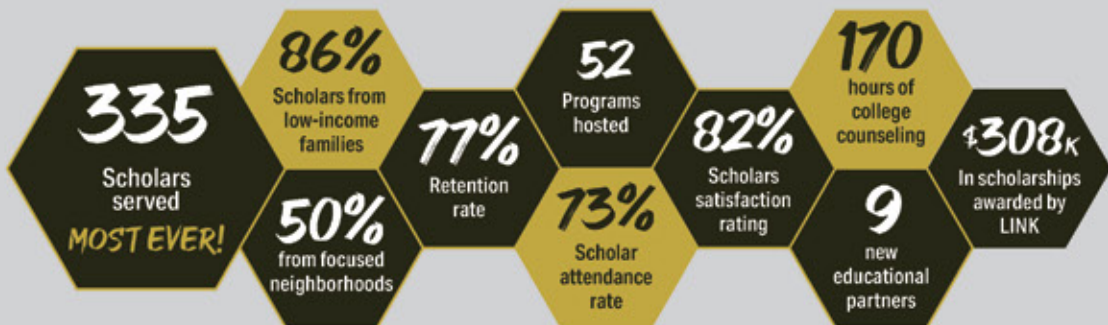
This evolution reinforces a core belief that has defined LINK for six decades: mentorship is powerful, but paired with financial investment, it's transformational. By ensuring every senior has both guidance and sponsorship, we remove barriers, expand opportunities, and boost social capital, all while strengthening the path to college completion and economic stability.



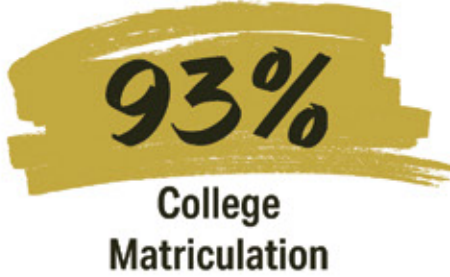
**SCAN**

TO START YOUR  
MENTORSHIP JOURNEY

# Programming: Year in *Review*

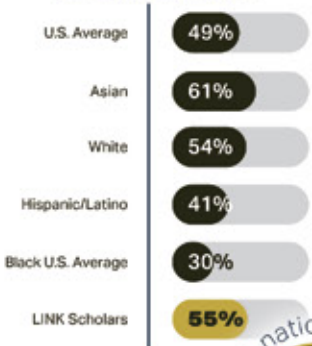


## The LINK Scholar *To + Through* Journey



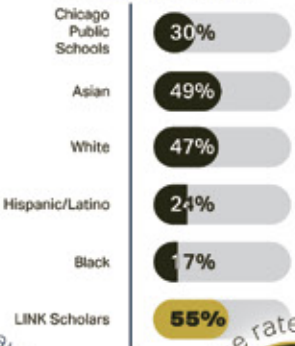
# OUTPACING THEIR PEERS!

### U.S. 4-Year College Graduation Rates



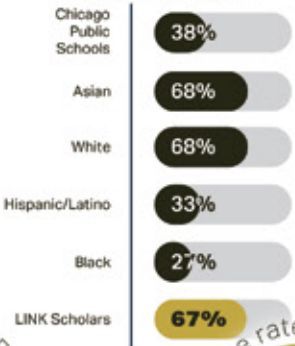
• the national average •  
**NEARLY 2X**  
• for Black Students •

### CPS 4-Year College Graduation Rates



• the rate for Black •  
**MORE THAN 3X**  
• Students in Chicago •

### CPS 6-Year College Graduation Rates



• the rate for Black •  
**NEARLY 2.5X**  
• Students in Chicago •

# Investing in the *Next Generation* of Leaders



For the Opus Foundation, the decision to support LINK Unlimited Scholars was rooted in both mission alignment and meaningful engagement.

What makes LINK stand out is its long-standing partnership between Scholars and Mentors, relationships built around a shared goal: ensuring students succeed in high school and graduate from college with minimal out-of-pocket costs. But LINK recognizes that academic success alone is not enough. Through mentorship, leadership development, career exposure, and expanded professional networks, Scholars gain access to opportunities that can change the trajectory of their futures in tangible, lasting ways.

For the Opus Foundation, partnering with organizations that combine strong outcomes with a clear vision for growth is essential. The partnership was sparked in 2023 when **Brett Tomfohrde, Director of Real Estate Development at Opus**, introduced the Foundation to LINK after serving as a Mentor. Opus associates are key to the work of the Opus Foundation and this grant was inspired by Brett's long-term volunteerism with LINK.

*"It is a privilege to support LINK, an organization that champions students, expands their horizons, and equips them to become the next generation of leaders."*

## Ways to Get *Involved* | Scan for more info

### BECOME A MENTOR



Support a LINK senior through the college journey; guiding, encouraging, and opening doors to opportunity.

### JOIN OUR BOARD



Help expand access to college and career pathways for talented LINK Scholars.

### BECOME A LINK AMBASSADOR



Activate your network! Host, share, and support opportunities for LINK Scholars.

### MAKE A DONATION



Invest in college completion, leadership & career readiness, and long-term economic mobility.

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Thank you to the many donors whose generosity fueled our work this year. Because of you, FY25 was a record year for us! Gifts of all sizes made it possible for us to serve nearly 350 Scholars, the most in our history. Because of you, our talented and ambitious Scholars continue to have opportunities, resources, and support to move them closer to college completion and long-term economic mobility. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you! **Scan the QR code to see a full list of our FY25 donors.**

## Financial Overview



- Individuals: **19.2%**
- Foundations: **18.4%**
- Corporate: **10.3%**
- Special Events: **5.3%**
- Government: **.4%**
- Other: **46.4%**



- Program Services: **67%**
- Administration: **18%**
- Advancement: **15%**



*Save the Date*

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026

**TWIN ORCHARD COUNTRY CLUB**  
**22353 OLD HENRY RD**  
**LONG GROVE, IL 60047**