



ANSWER
Scholarship



2016 Annual Report

The information in this report includes full-year 2016, unless otherwise noted.



Dear Friends,

We're excited to share our first annual report from ANSWER Scholarship! Supporters like you have brought us far in our 10 years, including our first full year as an independent nonprofit. We're grateful for your belief in ANSWER's mission of empowering moms with college degrees so that they can build a stronger future for themselves and their children.

In its 2017 report to the community, The [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force](#) said a four-year degree or other post-secondary credential has "become essential in equipping students with the skills and education needed to build successful career paths and to support thriving families." We are proud to help meet that need.

We awarded college scholarships to 14 mothers in Mecklenburg and surrounding counties in 2016. We also saw a surge in fundraising and volunteer support. Volunteers lend their talents as board and committee members, mentors, and speakers.

ANSWER's Mentors for Mom program continues to provide guidance for scholars' success. Monthly meetings have included training for job interviews and how to showcase one's strengths to potential employers. The results: Our graduation rate is an impressive 87%. ANSWER alumni are finding desirable jobs, developing careers, and seeking master's degrees.

Like any organization, we face challenges as well. Mothers are busy; they can be difficult to reach. We hope to raise awareness even further of what we offer and increase our number of highly qualified applicants. Towards that end, we're looking to expand our volunteer network, including social media volunteers to develop content for ANSWER and give us a stronger presence online. Another critical need is volunteers who can help us cultivate relationships with new funders.

We take a long view on some goals. Our mission statement describes our intent to create the desire, expectation and priority of a college education for our scholars' children. While it will take a decade or more to fully assess our success in this area, as some of the children are elementary school, so far the trajectory looks good. Scholars' children tell us how their moms inspire them to work hard in school.

We hope to award 18 to 20 scholarships by the 2018-19 school year. We'd like to increase the size of our scholarships and eventually add paid part-time staff. But for now, I'm happy to celebrate ANSWER's accomplishments. Thank you for standing with ANSWER and investing in us.

Susan Andersen

Susan Andersen
Founder and Executive Director
ANSWER Scholarship

MISSION

Our mission is to help women raising school-age children fulfill their dream of earning a college degree, while creating the desire, expectation, and priority of a college education for their children to follow in their footsteps.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY



There is a direct correlation between education and social and economic mobility. A full-time worker with a bachelor's degree can earn 60 percent more than a full-time worker with a high school diploma.

With more than 14 percent living below the poverty line in Mecklenburg County, the largest group being women, ANSWER Scholarship is committed to helping close the gap between women and social and economic opportunity by providing scholarship funding, mentoring and professional development.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

ANSWER Scholarship recipients share a common goal – to earn a college degree, while positively influencing their children to follow in their footsteps toward an advanced education.

Our scholars come from varying backgrounds but all are mothers raising school-age children, with many working full- and/or part-time jobs, and balancing other life challenges.

A total of 99 scholarships were awarded to 54 mothers since 2006 – increasing year-over-year (includes returning scholars). By 2020, we hope to award more than 20 scholarships annually.

Did you know?

The average scholarship amount per scholar is \$3,500/year.

Some of our scholarship recipient stories are highlighted below, with a complete scholar list available on our website, answerscholarship.org.



A UNC Charlotte senior, **DeCora Cooper** is working toward a bachelor's degree in sociology. Cooper is a single mother of two children, ages 13 and 20. In addition to pursuing a degree, she works three part-time jobs to support her family.



Seeking a degree in occupational therapy at Central Piedmont Community College, **Andrea Kellner** aspires to help children with disabilities reach their full potential. Kellner is a single mother of two children, ages 8 and 5.

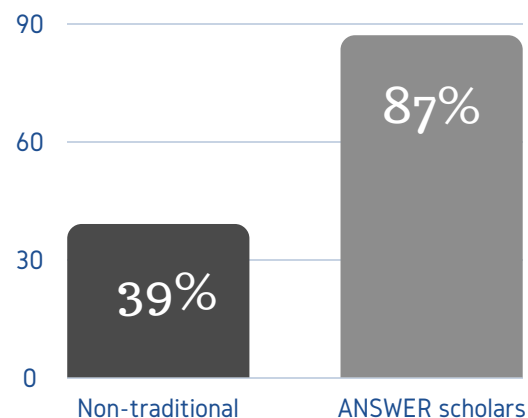


Katie Jensen is enrolled at UNC Charlotte seeking a bachelor's degree in psychology, with a minor in biology. She is married with two daughters. Although Jensen has faced challenges in her life, she plans to pay it forward and teach her children along the way.

GRADUATES

Since 2006, 32 mothers graduated from local colleges and pursued full-time jobs in the fields of their choice, business ownership, or graduate school. Our scholars' high graduation rate demonstrates that ANSWER Scholarship helps advance social and economic mobility for mothers and their children.

In 2017, we anticipate three graduates.



Did you know?

ANSWER Scholarship recipients graduate at a rate two times the national average.

Some of our alumni are highlighted below, with a complete alumni list available on our website, answerscholarship.org.



Teena Allen graduated with a bachelor's degree from Winthrop University in social work. She works full-time with a community services organization and supports process improvement and data quality.



Carrie Walters graduated from UNC Charlotte with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies, public advocacy concentration. She earned a law degree from the Charlotte School of Law and is the founding partner of the Law Office of Carrie Johnson Walters.



Sonya Muhammed graduated from UNC Charlotte with a bachelor's degree and master's degree in social work. She currently works full-time as a mental health therapist. Muhammed also serves on the ANSWER board and is the program coordinator for our Mentors for Mom program.

MENTORS FOR MOM PROGRAM

Mentors for Mom is our signature program. Scholarship recipients are paired with a mentor for support and guidance on balancing family, work and school. In 2016, we welcomed 13 volunteer mentors; in 2015, we had 14 volunteer mentors.

Scholars and mentors meet one-on-one for support, and also attend six Mentors for Mom meetings during the academic year, sharing experiences and uplifting each other in a safe, supportive environment. The meetings include professional development topics from local experts – networking, personal branding/interview skills, resume writing, financial planning, and health and wellness – intended to provide scholars with new skill sets and valuable information for growth.

ANSWER Scholarship board members and volunteers also attend and participate in the meetings.



Like many, our graduates desire certain career paths and would benefit greatly from conversations with others about career choices and breaking into specific fields. Let us know if we can arrange coffee for you and an exceptional mom. An hour of your time might help her in ways you never imagined.



"Beth allows me to be me. We let our relationship flourish on its own."

~ **Chiquela Adams**,
ANSWER Scholarship recipient



"One of the greatest benefits of serving as a mentor is helping someone in a tangible way. Getting to know Chiquela has been rewarding!"

~ **Beth Britt**, *ANSWER Scholarship mentor*

"I'm thankful for being part of Pam's journey to becoming an art teacher. Our mentoring relationship has grown into a friendship. I love to help her in any way I can."

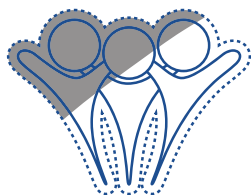
~ **Elizabeth Escobar**,
ANSWER Scholarship mentor



"Liz has become a great friend. She sees ways to help me that I never considered. I've always known she is in my corner, but I am growing even more appreciative of her as she actively seeks to help me."

~ **Pam Brown**, *ANSWER Scholarship recipient*

PARTNERSHIPS



ANSWER Scholarship works with many organizations, including universities and colleges, houses of worship, businesses, and nonprofits to help advance our mission and elevate issues affecting women, children and our community.

Our university partners include UNC Charlotte, Johnson C Smith, Pfeiffer, Montreat, Gardner Webb, Winthrop, Belmont Abbey, Carolinas College of Health Sciences, CPCC and South Piedmont Community College. These colleges cover nine counties, including Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Stanly, Union, Lancaster, and York.

In 2016, we partnered with local nonprofits to help raise scholarship funds and bring more awareness to women's issues, including the North Mecklenburg Woman's Club, Carolina Women's Club, and SHARE Charlotte, to name a few.

Several presentations were also made to various civic organizations and churches in 2016, and scholarship recipients collaborated to share their compelling stories.



FUNDRAISING

ANSWER Scholarship coordinates fundraising campaigns to help raise money for college scholarships for women raising school-age children. Funds are also used to create beneficial professional development programs for our scholars during the academic year.

While we partner with local organizations and campaigns to broaden fundraising opportunities, we also commit to doing the work necessary to engage and coordinate signature fundraising campaigns to help drive our mission. These annual fundraisers include a pancake breakfast hosted by a local restaurant and a bowl-a-thon, with increased donations from 2015 to 2016.

In April 2016, we partnered with Applebee's to host a pancake breakfast for 100 guests, raising \$5,817 in donations; in 2015, we raised \$3,485. In October 2016, we hosted a bowl-a-thon, raising \$6,409 in donations; in 2015, we raised \$3,525.



RECOGNITION



In 2016, ANSWER Scholarship was recognized as a GuideStar Silver Participant. GuideStar enables the public to access information about nonprofit organizations, including data. ANSWER Scholarship qualifies for a Silver rating based on our level of reporting on goals, strategies, and measuring metrics.

2016 ANSWER Scholarship graduates



Pictured left to right:

Kym Davidson

Johnson C. Smith University, bachelor's degree in criminology

Margaret Drummond

UNC-Charlotte, bachelor's degree in English



Teena Allen

Winthrop University, bachelor's degree in social work

Jessica Burney

Pfeiffer University, bachelor's degree in business management



Natosha Stewart

Johnson C. Smith University, bachelor's degree in business administration

Annette McMullen

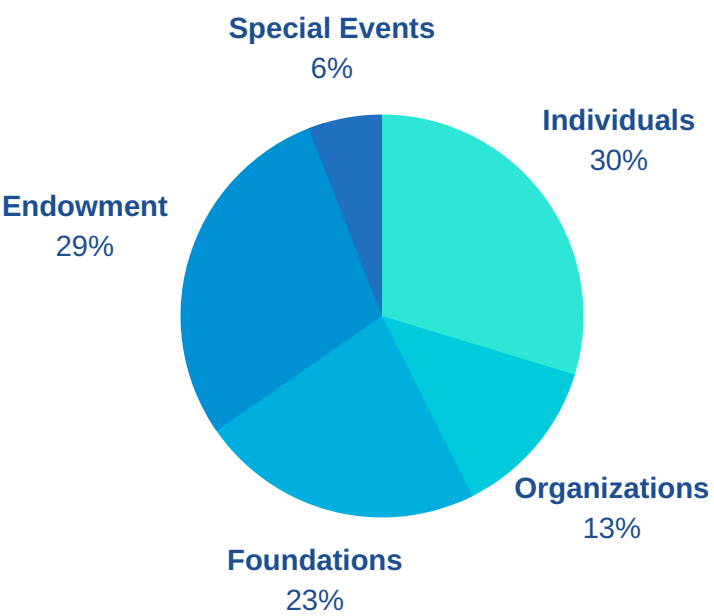
Winthrop University, bachelor's degree in biology

FINANCIALS

In 2016, ANSWER Scholarship totaled \$148,195 in revenue and \$78,938 in expenses, as outlined in the charts below. Through the generosity of individuals, organizations and other fundraising channels, we awarded \$43,189 in scholarships and \$13,448 in funds for the Mentors for Mom professional development programs.

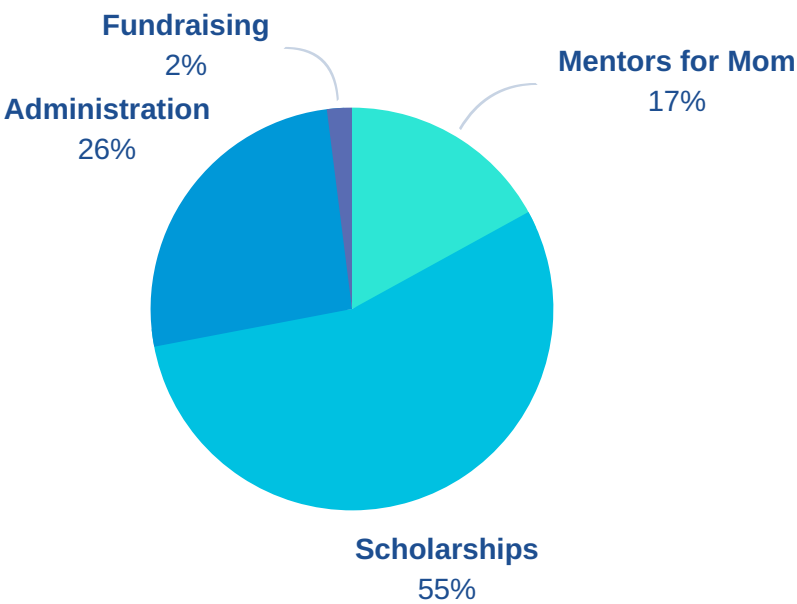
To see the Report 990, please visit our website, answerscholarship.org.

Revenue



Individuals	\$ (43,738)
Organizations	\$ (18,843)
Foundations	\$ (33,500)
Endowment	\$ (43,189)
Special Events	\$ (8,926)
Total	\$ (148,195)

Expenses



Mentors for Mom	\$ 13,448
Scholarships	\$ 43,189
Administration	\$ 20,703
Fundraising	\$ 1,598
Total	\$ 78,938

VOLUNTEER

ANSWER Scholarship is successful because of its volunteers, with 95 percent of our work accomplished through volunteerism. Our volunteers represent diverse backgrounds, sharing a commitment to addressing issues affecting local women and children, including advancing social and economic mobility. In 2016, we had 25 registered volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the organization, including mentoring, professional development programming and facilitation, marketing and communications, and fundraising, to name a few.

Please visit our website, answerscholarship.org to learn more.

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DONATE

To make a donation, please

- Visit answerscholarship.org, and select *Donate* from the homepage, or
- Make check payable to ANSWER Scholarship, Inc., and mail to 6420 Rea Rd, Suite 112, Charlotte, NC 28277

Many thanks to ANSWER Scholarship donors, corporate sponsors, supporters, and volunteers.