

## Steinhardt Alumnus Creates New Model for Helping Women, Young Adults At-Risk

By Timothy Farrell

Several years ago, Rob and Nancy Schulman began tutoring an academically gifted foster child who lived in a residential treatment facility. The couple saw that the young man had the talent and the desire to succeed, but they feared he could not successfully manage the difficult transition to college without any familial or emotional support.

Rob Schulman, a 1968 graduate of the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and a former Wall Street CEO, recognized in the young man “the spark of self-rescue,” the drive and the ability to succeed despite substantial odds. With his wife Nancy, who drew from her years as a New York State-licensed psychologist, Rob went a step further and began mentoring the young man, helping him transition from the foster care system to college life.

The young man benefited from the Schulmans’ intensive mentoring. He earned a B.A. in political science from SUNY Binghamton and a master’s in education from Bank Street College of Education, and now works as a New York City public schoolteacher.

Energized by their mentoring experience, the Schulmans decided to create a model that would pair foster children who were preparing for college with an adult mentor. Partnering with foster agencies in New York City and Westchester County such as Good Shepherd Services, The Children’s Village, and Abbott House, the couple selects students who have been accepted to college but whose lack of a familial support system make them extremely vulnerable.

The Schulmans knew they could have a positive impact. Since 2004, they have run a non-profit organization, Of Home, Family, and Future (OHFF), which provides financial support to survivors of domestic violence and their families. The organization offers grants for housing, job training, childcare, and counseling to families selected through partnership agencies that help domestic violence survivors, such as Safe Space and Sanctuary for Families.

Both programs are aimed at at-risk individuals during times of transition, when they are particularly vulnerable. For survivors of domestic violence, economic independence and self-sufficiency are critical for them to break free from their past abusive relationships. For foster children preparing for

college, an emotional and financial support system is necessary to help them transition to the challenges of college life.

OHFF provides support for foster children facing the expense of college. Although a low-income student will receive tuition support from federal or state grants, there are other financial obstacles, such as money for textbooks, computers, clothes, and incidentals. OHFF mentors disperse grant money for necessities and work closely with the students to develop a workable budget.

The couple hopes that by intervening at such a critical period in a young person's life, they can have a significant and lasting impact.

"We're not just changing one life," Rob says. "We're hoping to bring about change that will echo through the generations."

For more information on Of Home, Family, and Future, and to learn more about how to become a mentor, visit [their Web site](#), or call 212-228-8299.



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