

The Charles Ellis Trust for Girls

Our Mission

The Ellis Trust for Girls helps young women of limited financial means, living in single-parent homes, enhance their high school experience and prepare for post-secondary success. We foster academic and personal growth by offering meaningful and high-impact opportunities for young women.

Each year we award grants to eligible young women, residing in Philadelphia, to support their education and life goals by providing:

- Tuition assistance for students attending independent and parochial high schools.
- Funds for education-related expenses and academic and personal development programs for students attending public and charter high schools.

We change lives by providing funds to enhance girls' high school experience and encourage their life pursuits.

History

Who Was Charles Ellis?

Born in 1835 in Philadelphia to Quaker parents, Charles E. Ellis grew up to be a trolley franchise operator, and made his fortune through a horse-drawn trolley company in the Philadelphia area. When he died in 1909, he left the bulk of his sizeable estate to found a school for fatherless girls. His name may not be a familiar one to many, but the impact that his endowment has had on the lives of high school girls in Philadelphia is immeasurable.

In 1918, the school that bore his name opened in Newtown Square, Pa. Complying with the wishes of Mr. Ellis, a firm believer in regular exercise and a well-rounded education, the school – as it developed and expanded – began to offer sports programs, art and horticulture classes, music lessons, and outings to cultural events. By the time it closed in 1977 – due to declining enrollment – nearly 1,400 girls had graduated – most of whom went on to have fulfilling careers.

The Charles E. Ellis Trust

Several years after the school closed, trustees of the Charles E. Ellis Trust established a new mission: to provide grants to girls from single-parent families who were enrolled in high schools in Philadelphia and were in need of aid to complete their high school education. The Trust's intent was to award grants that would help girls reach their full potential.

In 1995, the Ellis Trust Advisory Committee and its Trust advisor, PNC Bank, selected White-Williams Scholars to oversee application review and granting of available funds to qualified applicants. White-Williams Scholars merged with Philadelphia Futures in July 2011 in a partnership that capitalizes on their shared mission to provide resources to underserved students. Philadelphia Futures now administers the Ellis Trust.

Today, more than 100 years after his death, Charles Ellis' trust fund continues to foster young women's academic and personal growth, and remains dedicated to making a difference in the lives of high school girls in Philadelphia. Each year, more than one million dollars in grants is awarded to eligible applicants. The grants help fund education-related expenses and academic and personal enrichment programs for girls attending public and charter schools, and help cover tuition costs for girls attending independent and parochial schools.

Eligibility Criteria

According to the wishes of Mr. Ellis, the monies received from this fund are to be used to help young women of limited financial means, living in single-parent homes, enhance their high school experience and prepare for post-secondary success.

To be eligible for an Ellis Trust grant, applicants must meet all of the criteria listed below:

- Reside in Philadelphia.
- Live in a household where one or both parents are absent or mentally or physically disabled. Married guardians (aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings) must still meet the income guidelines.
- Be enrolled in grades nine through twelve (including the summer before 9th grade but not the summer after 12th grade).
- Generally have grades of "C" or better in major school subjects
- Continue to make academic progress toward timely graduation.

In addition, families of applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Meet the income eligibility requirements for reduced-priced lunch under the National School Lunch Program.
- Must prove the applicant's dependency status. (The applicant's name must appear on tax returns or DPA documents.)
- May not own property other than their primary home.

If you can dream it, we can help you achieve it!