THE LIFELINE FUND: A SHORT HISTORY

The Davis Scholar Lifeline Fund began in 1992 as the brainchild of Bonnie Dretler, DS '95, after she observed the financial struggles of another Davis Scholar who was attending Wellesley on a shoestring.

When Bonnie decided to organize a raffle to raise much-needed funds, she recruited a committee to support her efforts. The tireless efforts of the founding members-Ophelia Dahl, DS '94; Donna DeBoever, DS '93; Bonnie Dretler; Betsy Mathews, DS '95; Margaret Potter, DS '94; Michelle Ramsaran, DS '94; Randi Riley, DS '11; Lisa Smith, DS '93; and Roberta Taylor, DS '99—culminated in a raffle that generated enough money to establish the Lifeline Fund as a vital resource for Davis Scholars.

The College eventually granted Lifeline organizers permission to conduct a raffle on Lake Day, significantly boosting ticket sales. Raffle prizes included bicycles and gift certificates from LL. Bean and local merchants; ultimately, the big prize was $300 in cash. The Davis Scholar community was particularly touched by the enthusiastic support of faculty members.

The Lifeline Fund was endowed in 1996 with a principle balance of $50,000. Until the College understood that the Students' Aid Society would shoulder responsibility for distributing Lifeline monies to Davis Scholars, it was reluctant to accept the fund as part of its structure, and Students' Aid adjusted its own policies to serve Davis Scholars. Before Lifeline, financial relief by the Students' Aid Society was in the form of loans; Lifeline provided grants that did not require repayment. Importantly, Davis Scholars could use the grants for non-academic purposes such as food, dental work, car repair, Christmas gifts for their children, or any other pressing need.

More recent Lifeline fundraising efforts include a Tea With Maud cookbook, designed to conjure up warm memories of tea and cookies enjoyed by Davis Scholars in the kitchen of Maud Chaplin, a faculty angel for our program and its students. Ann Zaltman, DS '02, led that effort and organized testing sessions for all of the recipes. Becca Sher, DS '00, did the photography, and Roberta Taylor was chief fundraiser. Roberta and her team raised enough pre-publication money—nearly $10,000—to pay the printing costs, and proceeds from book sales went directly to the Lifeline Fund. Davis Scholar alumnae generously contributed both recipes and money.

Other major contributors to Lifeline's success include Alice Brown, DS '96; Blair Cruickshank, DS '94; Patsy Heuchling, DS '98; Bonnie Wax, DS '98; and Karen Williams, DS '95. Roberta Taylor was treasurer of the Lifeline Fund for several years after she graduated, and Leslie Vienneau, DS '02, was treasurer while she worked in the CE House office. Today, Lifeline remains a steadfast source of help for all Davis Scholar students.