



## CAROLINE'S STORY

# Pay It Forward

Remember that movie *Pay It Forward*? A social studies teacher (Kevin Spacey) gives his class an assignment to change the world for the better. Twelve-year-old Trevor McKinney (Haley Joel Osment) comes up with the perfect plan, *pay it forward*. It's basically a good deed network. When someone does a favor for you, you do a favor for three other people. Something big. Something they can't do for themselves. Well, Caroline Neville was too young to catch this 2000 box office blockbuster, but somehow the 18-year-old came up with her own way to make a difference in people's lives. Including ours.

We caught up with Caroline this summer--which wasn't difficult because she interned at the Foundation. We actually met her months earlier when she applied for and received a

scholarship from our partnering organization, the Cape Cod Association. We ran into her again when she won one of our scholarships: the Philip "PJ" Jones Memorial Scholarship. It's awarded annually to graduating seniors from Barnstable High School who are pursuing studies in a medically-related field. Right now, Caroline is at Boston College doing just that. Her goal is to become a clinical psychologist.

But, let's backtrack a bit. Caroline grew up on Cape. She was raised by a single mother, and her family's finances weren't always stable. But, somewhat intuitively, she's always taken her cues from the *Silver Linings Playbook* (a 2012 movie she *has* seen). Nothing is all bad. Find the good in what you have. She says, "living her life from two very different economic places within the same community" helped her grow as a person.

For Caroline, the "good" comes from helping others. "People helped me and my family when we were struggling, and I want to do the same."

Soccer opened the door. Her coach took the entire team to Dominica for ten days to run a soccer camp for underprivileged children. "These kids don't really have anything," she says. "This is like their Christmas." They brought uniforms, shoes, athletic equipment—and fresh drinking water. They came away with a better perspective on how the other half live.

When she was in eighth grade, Caroline started volunteering with the Cape Cod Challenger Club. She liked working with special needs kids: playing sports, going on field trips, doing arts and crafts projects. Some of the kids were her age, even went to her high school. They'd talk daily. "In school," she said, "I realized there's not much difference between us. Everyone has their own story, their own difficulties."

Caroline was also part of the Barnstable Youth Commission, a group of high school students who work to help their peers navigate through life issues. With a Substance Abuse Prevention Forum and a Youth Job Fair under her belt, Caroline put her energy into a dating abuse project she's hoping BHS will implement someday.

This summer, Caroline dove into Foundation work. She compiled data on scholarship recipients and put together a proposal for increasing awareness of the program in the schools and community. To increase her

knowledge of local nonprofits, she also accompanied our Program Officer Dara Gannon on site visits to our Strategic Focus Grant recipients. Grants from The Clifford Fund and James Holland Davis Fund made this internship possible.

Although we kept Caroline busy, she did manage to check off a few things on her Cape Cod bucket list before she took off for her freshman year at BC. She went to Marconi Beach, spent her very first day in Provincetown and waited in a "really long line" for blue Cookie Monster ice cream at the Polar Cave in Mashpee.

Now she's taking on Boston. New classes. New friends. New volunteer opportunities. But, she knows she'll always have a connection to the Cape. We're counting it. She'll be back to intern with us next summer.