



## FEATURE STORY: PRINT

### HELP MORE PEOPLE LIKE DORA

Dora's story, as Debbie Nguyen remembers it. The Pandemic had a significant impact on everyone. People all over the world are suffering from poverty, diseases and pain. Those effects applied to students as well.

In 2020, Dora was forced to leave Pine Manor College to work and pay for her living expenses and school bills. The utilities and other minor expenses are still costly for students after the Pandemic. It is Dora's dream to study Computer Science, but she feels like she is not paying for what she's studying. From school tuition, expenses, food, car and phone bills compiling up, Dora continues to take a gap semester to survive. In 2020, Pine Manor College and Boston College merged into one school. Dora finally had the opportunity to study Computer Science as a major that Boston College offered, and she is excited to be able to study Computer Science. However, the Pine Manor College Financial Aids paperwork did not go well as it carried through to Boston College. Once again, another roadblock for Dora to continue her dream. Dora continues to apply for other scholarships with Alray and other programs. Although Alray's helped her with tuition, she realized that Boston College does not offer Computer Science courses for night school since Dora still needed to work during the day to pay for herself and her academics. It is roadblock after roadblock for Dora's academic journey.

Finally, Dora advocated for herself and voiced her concerns to Boston College. The institution finally made an exception for her to study her general education and Computer Science major courses. Dora received the dream education that she wanted and continued studying Computer Science at Boston College.

As part of Nguyen's role as Executive Director at Alray, she helped connect many mentor and mentee pairs. Those mentors advocate for those low-income students and are constantly helping students with emotional and social connections. Dora is a hardworking student who dreams of studying Computer Science, but financial and academic reasons are stopping her dream. We need to stand up and help more people like Dora.



## FEATURE STORY: DIGITAL

### HELP MORE PEOPLE LIKE SASHA

Debbie Nguyen is the newly appointed Executive Director of Alray Scholar. She helped connect many mentor and mentee pairs. Those mentors are a cheerleader or advocate for those low-income students. They are constantly helping those students with emotional and social connections. Nguyen shared a heartwarming story with us about a student named Sasha.

Everybody suffered from the horrible COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak. However, some people needed the right resources to help them. Many people suffer from financial hardship and emotional trauma, Like Sasha is an undergraduate student who joined Alray in 2020. Unfortunately, after a year of studying, Sasha was forced to leave Boston University due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. She decided to take time off and help her family with more financial support. A person in their 20s was forced out of school to help out with their family. Finally, she applied to Alray to make a plan to go back to Boston University. Sasha received scholarships from the college and other resources for her hard work and resilience. During her time away from school, Sasha is constantly making sure she is still eligible for those scholarships if she plans to return to the higher education institute because it is her dream to finish school.

Nonetheless, she has to help out with her family. However, she needs to move into on-campus housing during her school year. Luckily, Alray can cover a large amount of her room and board fees on campus for two years. Sasha can stay on campus all year round with Alray's support. Finally, she is in her last semester at Boston University, majoring in Business Administration. The mentor Alray provided has one on one conversations with Sasha. She requires a lot of stress management and making time for herself since the financial burden and pressure prevented Sasha from doing the things she wanted to do. Despite having a scholarship and help from Alray, Sasha continues to work part-time and is trying to finish her education as quickly as possible. Alray's mentorship focuses on stress and emotional support and occasionally helps mentees with resumes and career advice.

As part of Nguyen's role as Executive Director at Alray, she helped connect many mentor and mentee pairs. Those mentors advocate for those low-income students and are constantly helping students with emotional and social connections. Sasha is a hardworking student who went through a tough part of her life and made some scary choices. We need to stand up and help more people like Sasha.



## **A letter to the Editor**

**Dear Editor;**

### **WHY ARE COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS SO EXPENSIVE?**

Why are books so expensive in college? According to Education Data, the post-secondary students' average spending on books is between \$628 to \$1,471 annually. A hard copy book can cost between \$80- \$150, while each new edition will increase its average by 12%. The price is way too much for a student to afford. Low-income students and families may qualify for financial assistance toward tuition, but receive no help to cover the cost of books and classroom materials. As most professors require a textbook for the course and rarely do college libraries keep copies of every book required for students to use, this forces students to fail at the simple task of acquiring a book.

“A study found that 65% of college students nationwide skipped textbook purchases despite concerns of their grades” is from the U.S. Public Interest Research Group's Education Fund. In another article, the source found that, “the average spent on books equates to 72% of the tuition in a two-year college and 26% in a four year university.” The statistics demonstrate that book spending for a college student is difficult to attain.

In contrast, 94% of students were concerned about their grades being affected. The statistics showed that the motivation behind students purchasing textbooks is the fear of jeopardizing their grades while experiencing financial hardship. The education administrators need to change the cost of textbooks or distribute free copies of books to help the student bodies.

The struggles that students face are astronomical, and it is not easy to navigate. For students who need assistance with their books, receiving donations from non-profit organizations is a terrific source of help. The Massachusetts-based non-profit organization, ThreadED, Fashion for a Future's primary purpose and mission is to provide scholarships to Boston area students through the resale of high-quality clothes and accessories. Your purchase or clothing donation will directly benefit the students in need by providing low-income students with scholarship money to use for books, classroom needs, etc. Please donate your clothes and resources now to help low-income students and families with their educational journey.

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