

WEBVTT

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00:00:00.659 --> 00:00:09.990

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): And we will go ahead and get started with today's session i'm very excited to have the last mile education fund with us today.

2

00:00:10.260 --> 00:00:21.420

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): They offer a disruptive approach to increasing diversity in tech and engineering fills by addressing critical gaps and financial support with low income underrepresented students within four semesters of.

3

00:00:21.420 --> 00:00:39.240

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): graduation i'm very fortunate to serve on the champion board for the last fall education fun and you get to work closely with Ruth Ruth farmer is the founder and CEO of the last mile education fund she's been advocating for equity and inclusion in technology and engineering since.

4

00:00:40.620 --> 00:00:50.220

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): she's the chief evangelist at CES for all and previously served as the senior policy advisor for tech inclusion at the White House office of science and technology.

5

00:00:50.460 --> 00:01:04.680

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): policy focusing on President obama's call to action for computer science for all Ruth has launched multiple national inclusion programs, including aspirations and computing technology chica.

6

00:01:05.280 --> 00:01:19.860

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): The aspire it outreach program Lego robotics for girl scouts and more she's also served as the 2012 chair of CS ED week was named a White House champion of change for technology inclusion in 2013.

7

00:01:20.220 --> 00:01:24.180

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): received the Anita Borg institute Award for social impact.

8

00:01:25.140 --> 00:01:42.330

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): In 2014 and the UK alumni Award for social impact in 2015 she holds a BA from Lewis and Clark college and an MBA and social entrepreneurship from the University of Oxford she's

passionate about helping low income youth access technology and engineering careers.

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00:01:42.570 --> 00:01:47.400

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): and contributes their perspectives to the world of innovation, so I am very happy.

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00:01:47.640 --> 00:01:49.770

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): And excited to turn it over to reef now.

11

00:01:51.270 --> 00:02:02.040

Ruthe Farmer: hi Thank you Melanie i'm really happy to be here and I will also point out that you might see in the chat two of our team Members make Richard and April Christina curly who.

12

00:02:03.120 --> 00:02:07.200

Ruthe Farmer: will be answering questions and also available, towards the end.

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00:02:07.230 --> 00:02:09.390

Ruthe Farmer: So i'm actually going to share my screen.

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00:02:10.560 --> 00:02:21.960

Ruthe Farmer: and show a little presentation about last my education fund a little bit about our history, so let me get this going fancy thing here so.

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00:02:23.100 --> 00:02:26.760

Ruthe Farmer: The last mile education fund was the result of.

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00:02:27.810 --> 00:02:45.210

Ruthe Farmer: Years of watching students that I had been mentoring, since they were in high school going through this process of becoming a technologist you know, on their way to these really great high paying careers and getting stuck over really trivial things like you know, being able to afford.

17

00:02:46.710 --> 00:02:57.030

Ruthe Farmer: Their rent or having something as simple as not being able to get the supplies they needed like a state of the art computer or the development boards so.

18

00:02:58.380 --> 00:03:14.550

Ruthe Farmer: Having seen this happening over and over my colleagues and I Sara Lee from Mississippi State University at the time now she's at university of southern Mississippi and one of her students Ryan Walker we joined together to launch the last mile education fund in 2019.

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00:03:15.660 --> 00:03:25.230

Ruthe Farmer: So just to give you a few examples Ryan, who is our co founder in was the inspiration for this funded in 2017 she nearly canceled an internship that had.

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00:03:26.640 --> 00:03:38.160

Ruthe Farmer: The potential to change her her trajectory because she couldn't afford getting to the internship like getting a bus ticket from Mississippi to North Carolina getting set up in housing until she got paid.

21

00:03:38.880 --> 00:03:48.060

Ruthe Farmer: And Sarah and I stepped up and took care of those things and I use their air miles to fly her to her internship and today she's a software engineer she actually just got.

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00:03:48.600 --> 00:03:56.490

Ruthe Farmer: promoted to Vice President she's bought a home she's working on her master's degree, and that was about \$2,000 of intervention.

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00:03:57.270 --> 00:04:17.370

Ruthe Farmer: So it's pretty impressive how a relatively small amount of money can have a huge impact on a student i'm trying to fix the light a little bit there um Another example is during the pandemic when the universities, as you all know, we're shutting down dorms and.

24

00:04:18.390 --> 00:04:21.960

Ruthe Farmer: Just a lot of new stress for students.

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00:04:23.070 --> 00:04:30.570

Ruthe Farmer: A student reached out to us named a lady who was in the last stretch of going to georgetown to get her degree in computer science.

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00:04:31.080 --> 00:04:41.580

Ruthe Farmer: And she reached out to get help because she was being evicted from her housing and she said I can't go back to Texas to live in a trailer with five people without Internet.

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00:04:42.270 --> 00:04:51.750

Ruthe Farmer: You know, in the last three weeks of getting her degree, she needed to focus, so we put her in an airbnb and today she's a software engineer at a major social media platform and.

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00:04:52.710 --> 00:05:00.210

Ruthe Farmer: And an activist in her own right for other Hispanic students like herself and another example, and this is just.

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00:05:00.990 --> 00:05:07.140

Ruthe Farmer: Really illustrates the way we see this fund to becoming a self sustaining initiative.

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00:05:07.620 --> 00:05:22.860

Ruthe Farmer: Is j b who she was six months from graduation and had an unexpected car repair and she had two jobs off campus she lived off campus to save money, so that car was critical is a linchpin in her being able to be successful.

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00:05:23.760 --> 00:05:36.330

Ruthe Farmer: And she was in the midst of interviewing for jobs, but at the same time facing homelessness housing insecurity and trying to get her food from a food bank borrowing from friends.

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00:05:36.840 --> 00:05:50.010

Ruthe Farmer: And you know, this is no way for her to launch into her career, so we stepped up, she only asked us for \$3,000 we ended up stepping up with at \$200 put her in paid her rent paid her wi fi.

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00:05:50.520 --> 00:06:00.030

Ruthe Farmer: Paid some graduation fees she graduated in in June, she started her job in August and came back and started reinvesting in the fund in.

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00:06:01.740 --> 00:06:02.070

Ruthe Farmer: In.

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00:06:03.330 --> 00:06:16.380

Ruthe Farmer: October so she's already become a donor and her company is matching her gifts, so we see that there's a long term play here, where we're investing in these young people and they're going to come back and reinvest in the next generation.

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00:06:17.820 --> 00:06:33.360

Ruthe Farmer: we're doing this because all of the work to get aspiring engineers and technologists to the finish line is not being realized if only 11% of the low income students are graduating within six years and.

37

00:06:34.770 --> 00:06:46.890

Ruthe Farmer: that's compared to 58% of the total population that's a really a business success rate now, you would think it would be better if we go up an income core title to the bottom, to income courthouse it's 20%.

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00:06:47.730 --> 00:06:53.130

Ruthe Farmer: So, if you look at half the students in our country are not finishing a degree, within six years.

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00:06:54.690 --> 00:07:03.360

Ruthe Farmer: So the fastest growing and highest paying jobs are in stem So where are the last mile education fund his focus is on technology and engineering disciplines.

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00:07:04.140 --> 00:07:16.380

Ruthe Farmer: This is where the jobs are and we feel that if a student has gotten to their junior senior year in high demand stem degree like technology computer science, engineering data science cetera.

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00:07:16.950 --> 00:07:27.750

Ruthe Farmer: We can't afford for them to fail the industry needs them, we need them, they they can't afford to you know falter when they're so close to such a lucrative high paying job.

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00:07:29.310 --> 00:07:29.790

Ruthe Farmer: and

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00:07:30.990 --> 00:07:42.120

Ruthe Farmer: In fact, students who become engineers and technologists on average make \$47,000 more than the median salary for all jobs so.

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00:07:42.750 --> 00:07:58.890

Ruthe Farmer: The lifetime earning potential and social impact and economic mobility that occurs for these students because of getting this degree is really, really huge and the alternative is they have dead no degree and they and they never achieve that potential.

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00:08:00.390 --> 00:08:09.390

Ruthe Farmer: So the other factors that we're looking at are the fact that financial aid in many ways is pretty broken and.

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00:08:09.870 --> 00:08:17.820

Ruthe Farmer: The wealthiest students are receiving 34% non federal so private aid per year than on average than the highest needs students.

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00:08:18.450 --> 00:08:29.610

Ruthe Farmer: there's a lot of factors that contribute to that they go to higher resource institutions, etc, but just thinking about that from a societal societal perspective that we're investing so little.

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00:08:30.180 --> 00:08:38.730

Ruthe Farmer: of private aid in low income, students and 56% of students with three or more years of college are reporting that they're having food insecurity.

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00:08:39.480 --> 00:08:50.460

Ruthe Farmer: and housing, insecurity and in the case of degrees like computer science and engineering Internet and security and device insecurity, not having connectivity is.

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00:08:51.000 --> 00:09:01.830

Ruthe Farmer: Is a critical failure factor for them, and I think we can all agree that federal financial aid and a part time job, no longer make a college degree possible so.

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00:09:03.870 --> 00:09:07.320

Ruthe Farmer: We think that there's a huge opportunity when it comes to.

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00:09:07.770 --> 00:09:15.270

Ruthe Farmer: Technology and engineering students and currently we are focused on women in technology and engineering because there's a tremendous demand for them in the field.

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00:09:15.630 --> 00:09:30.630

Ruthe Farmer: And because funders are really interested in their in their success and 53% of the 76,000 women who are in a technology or an engineering degree within four semesters of graduation 53% of them live at.

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00:09:31.470 --> 00:09:47.460

Ruthe Farmer: 200% of the poverty line or below that's \$51,000 a year, and we think of all the students there's this 14% slice of that pie, but if we made an investment in their last mile they could graduate they could get out of poverty.

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00:09:49.530 --> 00:09:59.550

Ruthe Farmer: So that's our premise is you know why aren't we investing in this talent there's a lot of money going into getting students into college launching students in the College.

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00:09:59.790 --> 00:10:08.580

Ruthe Farmer: Encouraging students in K 12 to consider stem careers, but we have students who are in college, who are pursuing and persisting and.

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00:10:10.890 --> 00:10:23.670

Ruthe Farmer: really going after a degree in technology and engineering and they're not finishing or they're not finishing at the rate that they could be finishing so if they can just graduate six months earlier that's six months of additional earnings in their lifetime.

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00:10:25.050 --> 00:10:28.470

Ruthe Farmer: So the opportunity to support them is huge.

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00:10:30.240 --> 00:10:41.430

Ruthe Farmer: I talked a little bit about our story, so this is Ryan, in the middle and she's now I think 25 and Sarah who is her professor and i've i've been watching Ryan, since she was in high school.

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00:10:42.090 --> 00:10:50.130

Ruthe Farmer: And throughout the course of her path, there are many times when Sarah had to intervene or I had to intervene, because she just didn't have.

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00:10:50.490 --> 00:11:00.180

Ruthe Farmer: The parental support and financial stability that other students have but she was so driven and she was teaching herself programming languages, she was buying.

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00:11:01.200 --> 00:11:06.870

Ruthe Farmer: Old phones and blackberries online and rehabbing them and reselling them to make money she just really had.

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00:11:08.520 --> 00:11:14.760

Ruthe Farmer: The drive to be a technologist but she just didn't have the stability in her life to get the grades, and the other.

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00:11:15.090 --> 00:11:28.440

Ruthe Farmer: markers of potential that we're going to get her the kinds of scholarships she needed, so we stepped up multiple times, but it was

really this last mile of can she actually get to that internship that is going to change her life.

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00:11:29.970 --> 00:11:30.540

Ruthe Farmer: So.

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00:11:31.650 --> 00:11:42.720

Ruthe Farmer: we're focused on four pillars at last mile primary being abundance we haven't taken abundance you point to who belongs, we take an abundance viewpoint to how much money.

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00:11:43.080 --> 00:11:57.060

Ruthe Farmer: Someone deserves we don't ask about GPA we don't care what your GPA is our goal is for young people who are aspiring and technology to graduate and I like to say CS get degrees, it is.

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00:11:58.740 --> 00:12:08.190

Ruthe Farmer: Not okay that low income students are expected to be some kind of super person outlier to be worthy of a scholarship.

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00:12:09.480 --> 00:12:14.460

Ruthe Farmer: I think they're worthy just because they're there and studying and processing the degree so.

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00:12:15.210 --> 00:12:24.030

Ruthe Farmer: that's how we see abundance and then we also take an abundant viewpoint to the kinds of things they might need money for you might need.

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00:12:24.540 --> 00:12:35.280

Ruthe Farmer: Help pay your mother's phone bill as part of your making it over the finish line and that's okay with us, we are willing to pay for things that typical scholarships won't pay for and.

72

00:12:35.940 --> 00:12:51.450

Ruthe Farmer: We take you know we we get to know each of them individually and our goal is that they finish, and if there are family expenses or medical expenses, whatever it is we're willing to talk with them and learn and fill those gaps that other scholarships fail to.

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00:12:53.340 --> 00:12:54.660

Ruthe Farmer: To address and.

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00:12:55.890 --> 00:12:57.990



Ruthe Farmer: I think it's really important that.

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00:12:59.610 --> 00:13:02.730

Ruthe Farmer: We, we are here to validate them like if a student.

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00:13:03.960 --> 00:13:08.730

Ruthe Farmer: is persisting and on track to get a degree in technology or engineering, they have value.

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00:13:09.840 --> 00:13:20.160

Ruthe Farmer: No matter what their GPA is or how many things they want they have value to us and us and our society and getting them over that finish line is our primary objective.

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00:13:22.110 --> 00:13:34.320

Ruthe Farmer: A little bit more about the numbers so like I said, there are 70 right now, today there's 76,000 low income women studying computer science or engineering better within what we call the last mile but then four semesters of graduation.

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00:13:36.120 --> 00:13:44.490

Ruthe Farmer: And they are living at you know, a family income 51,000 or below that's pretty.

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00:13:45.960 --> 00:13:48.450

Ruthe Farmer: challenging and any kind of.

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00:13:50.370 --> 00:14:01.080

Ruthe Farmer: hiccup any kind of roadblock could upset your financial apple cart, so to speak, you know I feel like there are a lot of these students are walking a tightrope.

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00:14:03.030 --> 00:14:10.770

Ruthe Farmer: And this is not a niche population, one thing I like to talk to our funders about 85% of all students rely on financial aid to finish college.

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00:14:12.900 --> 00:14:19.950

Ruthe Farmer: 56% of students are facing you know basic needs and security we're not talking about a nice population we're talking about most students.

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00:14:20.220 --> 00:14:37.590

Ruthe Farmer: And this is a really lovely Thank you know we got from one of our one of our grantees who she was in the final stretch of her degree in cyber security and we got her advice and some some living support she was a non traditional student and a single mom and.

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00:14:38.670 --> 00:14:53.580

Ruthe Farmer: we've already funded around 500 women to the tune of 603,000 over the last 14 months and we've already had 9090 plus have crossed the finish line to graduation, which is really exciting.

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00:14:55.590 --> 00:15:08.700

Ruthe Farmer: So the last mile is born with this desire to serve so we're looking at students who are in the bottom two income core tiles and close to the graduation.

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00:15:09.180 --> 00:15:22.380

Ruthe Farmer: finish line and why that's so compelling is \$1,000 invested in, say, a high school engagement program in computing might get you a graduate in seven to 10 years.

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00:15:23.100 --> 00:15:30.570

Ruthe Farmer: But \$1,000 invested in the last mile for one of these students get you a graduate in less than two years, so the impact is really immediate.

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00:15:32.790 --> 00:15:33.300

Ruthe Farmer: So.

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00:15:35.460 --> 00:15:44.910

Ruthe Farmer: A couple of other things I want to share, about the last mile education fund, we are taking this abundance viewpoint, and we are agile, we get money to these students typically if it's.

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00:15:45.300 --> 00:15:51.480

Ruthe Farmer: If it's an emergency grant which we typically put it under \$600 so 599 or less.

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00:15:51.900 --> 00:15:59.250

Ruthe Farmer: we're getting them the funds in 48 hours we're responding immediately if a student is in crisis, that's potentially going to mean they have to take.

93

00:15:59.580 --> 00:16:05.970

Ruthe Farmer: A step back from from their education you can't wait for months for them to get a decision from a scholarship board.

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00:16:06.450 --> 00:16:16.560

Ruthe Farmer: So we respond very quickly, and if the students are needing a larger amount of money we are typically getting them a response within seven days.

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00:16:17.550 --> 00:16:36.000

Ruthe Farmer: We are also leveraging the whole ecosystem there's an entire ecosystem out there to support young people in stem there's the society of black engineers, a society of Hispanic engineers American Indian science and engineering society, the Anita Borg Institute and see what.

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00:16:37.050 --> 00:16:46.260

Ruthe Farmer: there's a whole host of organizations that are supporting these student populations in different ways, helping them with things like interviewing helping them with.

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00:16:47.550 --> 00:16:59.910

Ruthe Farmer: career access we don't need to duplicate all of that what we're here to do is get the student out of crisis, by providing the financial support they need in the immediate term, so that they can reset.

98

00:17:00.510 --> 00:17:07.590

Ruthe Farmer: You know, take a step back and then start accessing the resources they need the other thing we found is that low income students.

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00:17:08.400 --> 00:17:21.630

Ruthe Farmer: are less likely to be living, the College experience they they're probably working a lot of hours so maybe they're not joining the clubs and the organizations that are going to tell them what they need to be doing to to launch into their career.

100

00:17:22.980 --> 00:17:37.710

Ruthe Farmer: We had a student to we apply who applied for help, and she had been pursuing her computer science degree for seven years started out at a Community college taking two to three classes, at a time working full time to support herself and her family.

101

00:17:38.550 --> 00:17:49.500

Ruthe Farmer: And she came to us, she was just two classes away and and I said to her, I was like you know you really need to do an internship that's really critical to you, launching into this industry.

102

00:17:49.920 --> 00:17:59.100

Ruthe Farmer: And she said, well, I can't do an internship after work she did not know that internships in technology and engineering pay between five and \$10,000 a month.

103

00:18:00.000 --> 00:18:09.210

Ruthe Farmer: And she was out of the loop because she wasn't able because of her work schedule wasn't really able to fully engage so The other thing that we do is once we get Ahold of them now, we can talk to them.

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00:18:09.510 --> 00:18:16.380

Ruthe Farmer: And let them know what's out there for them and the types of steps they need to take to be successful and then finally.

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00:18:16.890 --> 00:18:23.430

Ruthe Farmer: This is a feedback loop we're learning a lot about the experiences of low income students, the kinds of things that trip them up that maybe.

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00:18:23.760 --> 00:18:32.610

Ruthe Farmer: aren't part of the federal policies or the State policies or university policies and as we're getting that information we're sharing that back with industry.

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00:18:33.300 --> 00:18:39.810

Ruthe Farmer: we're sharing that back with academic institutions and with these organizations that support them in the ecosystem.

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00:18:40.350 --> 00:18:51.720

Ruthe Farmer: And what I mean by sharing that back with industry is one of the things that keeps coming up is students will be going to an interview at a at a company, for example, and.

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00:18:52.290 --> 00:19:05.220

Ruthe Farmer: You know the company is going to put them up in a really fancy hotel according them you can't check into that fancy hotel, without them, putting a \$400 hold on your debit card, if you don't have \$400 in your bank account.

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00:19:06.270 --> 00:19:09.150

Ruthe Farmer: that's a problem you can't check into your hotel or.

111

00:19:09.780 --> 00:19:17.790

Ruthe Farmer: If you do have \$400 in your bank account, they just froze all the money you have and you're in San Francisco or New York or DC for this interview process.

112

00:19:18.090 --> 00:19:25.920

Ruthe Farmer: that's an other ring experience you're already feeling like an outsider like you don't belong in going to interview at this place.

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00:19:26.340 --> 00:19:38.460

Ruthe Farmer: As a low income students, we don't need additional experiences like that, so we talked to industry about ways that they can change their processes to make the process more equitable for low income students or just make it.

114

00:19:39.270 --> 00:19:49.440

Ruthe Farmer: equitable for all students that are in their interview process rather than treating students, as if they already have a six figure income coming into the process.

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00:19:51.990 --> 00:20:01.830

Ruthe Farmer: So we've started to get Thank you notes from graduates, which we love and they're sending us their graduation pictures and we're really, really excited to see.

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00:20:03.750 --> 00:20:10.560

Ruthe Farmer: them coming forward and stepping up and saying we want to pay it forward, we want to be here and volunteer and help you and.

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00:20:12.720 --> 00:20:31.440

Ruthe Farmer: getting them that boost of you know, we need you in this industry you belong here has been the most rewarding part of this because it's extremely validating and just to you know we call it a last mile moment every single person who has.

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00:20:32.940 --> 00:20:38.250

Ruthe Farmer: achieved, regardless of their background had help from someone at some point and.

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00:20:38.520 --> 00:20:51.090

Ruthe Farmer: That is, you know what we call your last mile moment so we're creating last moments for these students getting them over the finish line, and we know that they are going to go on to create those moments for other students in the future and.

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00:20:52.140 --> 00:20:53.250

Ruthe Farmer: With that I will.

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00:20:54.690 --> 00:21:04.110

Ruthe Farmer: close with a photo of another one of our students who is about to graduate and it's it's just so rewarding to.

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00:21:04.770 --> 00:21:10.560

Ruthe Farmer: To be able to be that last dollar because sometimes the last dollar is the most important of dollar of all and.

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00:21:11.190 --> 00:21:29.280

Ruthe Farmer: I know you'll all have questions about how students from your institutions and your communities can can access this fund and April, who is on online and Meg on my staff will be here to answer some questions as well, so that is where i'm going to stop.

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00:21:30.780 --> 00:21:31.770

Ruthe Farmer: and take it back.

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00:21:37.020 --> 00:21:41.820

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): Thank you Ruth and that was great so we do want to open it up for Q amp a.

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00:21:42.420 --> 00:21:55.170

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): Of course, the first question, I had on the list is How can people share this with their students or what are the steps to get in contact with you for students who do need that emergency scholarship and finishing their last mile.

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00:21:56.070 --> 00:21:58.980

Ruthe Farmer: So for the Faculty on the on the call one thing.

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00:22:00.660 --> 00:22:10.590

Ruthe Farmer: faculty we do have a referral form that faculty can use to anonymously refer students to the fun often students have a lot of.

129

00:22:11.070 --> 00:22:21.510

Ruthe Farmer: embarrassment nobody wants to be called out, as you know, I can tell you haven't washed your clothes for a few days, are you living in your car nobody you know, wants to be called out by their professor in that way, but.

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00:22:22.170 --> 00:22:28.920

Ruthe Farmer: We have an anonymous form that you can use to to nominate students another way that you can.

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00:22:29.940 --> 00:22:39.390

Ruthe Farmer: support them is just you know sharing this in your in your institutions newsletter sharing this with the financial aid office and and also.

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00:22:40.470 --> 00:22:49.710

Ruthe Farmer: You know the cares Act and the other stimulus funding created emergency funds at nearly every institution, and I really encourage institutions to.

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00:22:50.880 --> 00:23:00.000

Ruthe Farmer: To do this, like these small dollars can make a huge difference and whether or not a student can can keep going and.

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00:23:01.200 --> 00:23:08.430

Ruthe Farmer: You know the way I talk about it is like, by the time a young person has gotten to this point, a lot of sunk costs have gone in there.

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00:23:09.030 --> 00:23:16.170

Ruthe Farmer: They have a bunch of student loan debt, a lot of tuition money all the outreach money all the support services, all that money.

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00:23:16.650 --> 00:23:26.820

Ruthe Farmer: will be lost if they don't finish so it's really critical that we we make those last mile investments in all students I just happened to be making them in the students that are in technology and engineering.

137

00:23:34.560 --> 00:23:36.450

Ruthe Farmer: So other questions that we have here.

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00:23:38.040 --> 00:23:53.520

Ruthe Farmer: Think Paula had a question um you know we don't mind any location, as long as the student is attending a US institution we fund international students, we fund darkness students, we fund students who.

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00:23:57.210 --> 00:24:04.680

Ruthe Farmer: Are overseas, but if they're attending a US institution because right now, a lot of students are like overseas, even though they're going to school in the US, because of covert.

140

00:24:05.880 --> 00:24:14.340

Ruthe Farmer: As long as they have a US bank account, that we can get the money to it's really challenging and and just the transaction cost for us to send money overseas is really hard.

141

00:24:19.170 --> 00:24:27.930

Ruthe Farmer: Okay, someone asked about Paul asked about I worked in a two year college and have engineering and stem programs, yes, so we are actually just about to launch.

142

00:24:28.920 --> 00:24:36.960

Ruthe Farmer: A fund for students at two year institutions pending final dotted line with one of our funders so.

143

00:24:37.320 --> 00:24:44.820

Ruthe Farmer: That should be coming online in the fall, you know we started this I started this as a side project in January well.

144

00:24:45.270 --> 00:25:06.900

Ruthe Farmer: May of 2019 is when we launched, and then we started giving out money in January of 2020, and this was like a side hustle like five to 9pm and we've raised \$5 million already and we're we're cooking with gas and it resonates with so many people that.

145

00:25:08.130 --> 00:25:13.290

Ruthe Farmer: This is a population that we can't afford to lose so now that we have everybody, I want to introduce.

146

00:25:13.890 --> 00:25:27.120

Ruthe Farmer: April Christina curly who is our partnerships and engagement manager so should your institution want to engage with us in some manner, we do do collaborative funds so if your institution wants to.

147

00:25:27.960 --> 00:25:34.770

Ruthe Farmer: Have help and giving out your emergency funding, we can do that with you and for you, we also do collaborative funds with.

148

00:25:36.120 --> 00:25:45.810

Ruthe Farmer: organizations like women in cyber security is one of our partners, we have 20 partners, and we have funds in partnership with them for specific topics.

149

00:25:46.710 --> 00:25:55.110



Ruthe Farmer: And we are looking forward to our first Regional Fund so should you have a funder that says, I want to fund students in Michigan or I want to fund students.

150

00:25:55.380 --> 00:26:05.070

Ruthe Farmer: They go to this institution or this major we can do that were built as a platform, the other person, I want to introduce this make Richard, who is the actual person who.

151

00:26:05.820 --> 00:26:14.970

Ruthe Farmer: gets the applications reads them gets them assigned to a volunteer it and you know is helping us decide so she has lots of great insights into.

152

00:26:16.230 --> 00:26:18.960

Ruthe Farmer: The kinds of challenges that are just really all over the map.

153

00:26:22.650 --> 00:26:38.940

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): I wanted to ask the three view, what did you see what the shift because of coven of like what students actually needed and we're requesting support with so that hopefully institutions and states can address it, but if not provide the resources needed for that should.

154

00:26:40.890 --> 00:26:46.140

Ruthe Farmer: We actually just published the research paper on our code funding and maybe.

155

00:26:46.170 --> 00:26:48.000

Ruthe Farmer: Maybe you can track it down and.

156

00:26:48.090 --> 00:26:49.050

Ruthe Farmer: pop it in the chat.

157

00:26:50.580 --> 00:27:04.140

Ruthe Farmer: The it was for the respect Conference, and so we analyze the data on about 350 of the grants, we gave last year early on, it was transportation and housing, you know they were a lot of students were.

158

00:27:05.430 --> 00:27:22.020

Ruthe Farmer: pushed out of the dorms really quickly without a lot of notice and you probably know that low income families save up for that trip to and from college every year they don't have the money to

immediately get a student's home, especially I mean it's not cheap to get somebody's home.

159

00:27:24.630 --> 00:27:35.370

Ruthe Farmer: during spring break it's certainly not cheap to get somebody home during spring break during a national panic and one grant that really sticks out for me was a student who.

160

00:27:36.390 --> 00:27:44.550

Ruthe Farmer: She went to Harvard and my initial thought was like Why do I need to find a student at Harvard they have an endowment bigger than most small countries but.

161

00:27:45.450 --> 00:27:54.090

Ruthe Farmer: She had you know, been pushed out of the dorms because of the closures for coven and it was several weeks after that it happened, and she.

162

00:27:54.450 --> 00:28:09.120

Ruthe Farmer: said I need \$400 I need \$130 of gas to get home, I need two nights of hotel and three days of food this kid have been sleeping on somebody's couch trying to do her classes for weeks because she could not drive home from Massachusetts to iowa.

163

00:28:10.620 --> 00:28:17.940

Ruthe Farmer: I mean that level of a barrier and so transportation was the early on thing second to that i'm.

164

00:28:29.010 --> 00:28:30.960

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): Bruce I think you're frozen.

165

00:28:32.010 --> 00:28:33.420

Meg Richard: or she's just really good.

166

00:28:33.720 --> 00:28:34.560

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): she's focused.

167

00:28:36.570 --> 00:28:38.220

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): Later, you go here that.

168

00:28:39.180 --> 00:28:40.110

Ruthe Farmer: was a frozen.

169

00:28:40.410 --> 00:28:44.490

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): frozen for a we heard the first barrier of transportation, but not the second one.

170

00:28:45.090 --> 00:28:55.680

Ruthe Farmer: Okay, so nice Second, the second big issues devices so students, we bought lots of devices for students and we had a number of students who.

171

00:28:56.070 --> 00:29:03.090

Ruthe Farmer: had been relying on the computer lab at their institution for being able to access the Internet and do their schoolwork and.

172

00:29:03.570 --> 00:29:14.520

Ruthe Farmer: You know we're talking about technology and engineering students, you can possibly compete with your peers, without the device that you need so that was the second big one, and then.

173

00:29:16.140 --> 00:29:18.600

Ruthe Farmer: Lots of you know, food insecurity.

174

00:29:20.610 --> 00:29:26.370

Ruthe Farmer: Not being able to pay your phone bill, which you know if you lose your phone though you've lost your Internet now you've lost your.

175

00:29:26.640 --> 00:29:35.670

Ruthe Farmer: You know a lot of these students are using their phone as a primary source of accessing the Internet so we've paid for all kinds of crazy crazy things and.

176

00:29:36.510 --> 00:29:43.320

Ruthe Farmer: You know I remember one student, it was a dental bill that she you know, had hanging on her head and just needed help to cover.

177

00:29:43.860 --> 00:29:53.880

Ruthe Farmer: And the other thing that's been really interesting is the students who are they have a job waiting for them, but they can't get over that last.

178

00:29:54.450 --> 00:30:03.390

Ruthe Farmer: few months so we've been funding the living expenses for students who have jobs waiting for them at places like JP Morgan and HP etc.

179

00:30:04.140 --> 00:30:15.420

Ruthe Farmer: And I would argue with those companies that wouldn't you rather that students are spending those last few months of college focused on the 400 Level Technical classes and skills they need to build.

180

00:30:15.900 --> 00:30:34.680

Ruthe Farmer: not trying to sell their clothes online to pay their rent and so like making this last mile investment in their having to not just survive, but to actually thrive in this technology and engineering is a cognitively heavy discipline, we want them fully focused on it, not.

181

00:30:35.940 --> 00:30:37.110

Ruthe Farmer: hanging on by a thread.

182

00:30:40.380 --> 00:30:41.970

Ruthe Farmer: So make put in the paper.

183

00:30:44.790 --> 00:30:47.190

Ruthe Farmer: Okay, any other question.

184

00:30:50.550 --> 00:31:06.810

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): let's see How can people stay in the loop for all the exciting news that's to come have upcoming projects and partnerships with to your institutions, I know April dropped the email address there, but do you have newsletter other ways to learn news.

185

00:31:08.520 --> 00:31:09.780

Ruthe Farmer: April, you want to take this one.

186

00:31:10.350 --> 00:31:18.720

April Curley: Yes, so we do have a newsletter and if you're interested in being added to the back end of that just send me a note and we'll make sure that you're added.

187

00:31:19.110 --> 00:31:27.420

April Curley: And then we're on social media we love love love to share our grantees stories we love to talk about what we're learning and what we're finding.

188

00:31:28.470 --> 00:31:37.110

April Curley: And we want you to be inspired so follow us on social media and even if you're inspired after this call share your last moment with us.

189

00:31:37.590 --> 00:31:50.340

April Curley: Because we like to collect those moments as well and yeah set up some time with me to have any other questions I did drop my email address in there it's for you to use so send me a note and i'll make sure that you have time with me one calendar.

190

00:31:51.930 --> 00:32:02.910

Ruthe Farmer: And if you go to last mile ed.org there's A newsletter signup link at the bottom and we call our newsletter milepost we have everything is like a.

191

00:32:03.540 --> 00:32:21.360

Ruthe Farmer: Road dirty thing to it, and we have monthly chats with the students called fill your tank so we're engaging with them, you know the grant that they receive from us is really just the beginning of a relationship that we intend to have last for a very long time.

192

00:32:23.790 --> 00:32:25.410

Ruthe Farmer: So I would love it if.

193

00:32:27.000 --> 00:32:35.970

Ruthe Farmer: Meg or April if either of you have a particular grantees story or impact story that you want to share, about the funds.

194

00:32:37.650 --> 00:32:45.600

Meg Richard: I can tell you one thing that actually just came in this morning, so we funded a non binary black person.

195

00:32:46.800 --> 00:33:04.740

Meg Richard: who had come in to our emergency fund requesting \$3,000 which are emergency fund caps out at 599 so we automatically recognize clearly there was a greater need, and so they went through the interview process and I recognize and the rest of our team recognize that there was indeed.

196

00:33:06.270 --> 00:33:20.880

Meg Richard: Need for this person to indeed they needed the \$3,000 well what's interesting is Ruth was just talking about is right, we all know, life happens, many of us on this call, probably have the opportunity to.

197

00:33:22.440 --> 00:33:34.260

Meg Richard: cope with that life they this in this number done non binary student, in particular, has epilepsy and is right now.

198

00:33:35.250 --> 00:33:44.100

Meg Richard: is having to pay out of pocket, for I think he's they said, maybe 15 pills, at a time because insurance won't cover it.

199

00:33:44.490 --> 00:33:48.930

Meg Richard: And that's all they can handle so they just came back and said I need to kind of.

200

00:33:49.170 --> 00:34:02.040

Meg Richard: buy this in one fell swoop, are you able to help again so actually after this call, we will quickly meet, because this is not something that can go on for a long time this individual needs and answer quickly and so that's what we do.

201

00:34:03.150 --> 00:34:12.030

Meg Richard: So I, however, \$3,000 that we did grant this student they were able to just complete their last class.

202

00:34:13.380 --> 00:34:14.550

Meg Richard: And in their.

203

00:34:16.470 --> 00:34:30.540

Meg Richard: tech degree, they have one more class, and I think it's an arts and arts in English class or something like that then they're going to get their degree and so um yeah that was that was within the last 45 minutes so.

204

00:34:33.330 --> 00:34:39.750

April Curley: And i'll just mention I, I think we all feel this way we adore every one of our grantees.

205

00:34:40.380 --> 00:34:51.000

April Curley: But one of my favorites Cree who I feel safe mentioning because she talks about her story very publicly she is a native woman she's a non traditional student.

206

00:34:51.480 --> 00:34:59.370

April Curley: And she is pursuing a degree and recently lost her father to Kobe in the past year and so she's sort of assumed.

207

00:35:00.210 --> 00:35:08.100

April Curley: A lot of the financial responsibility for her family and and for a lot of her family her family within the reservation that she's.

208

00:35:08.730 --> 00:35:19.230

April Curley: On, and so I love her story because she's very motivated to finish and she's very motivated to give back to last mile fund fund.

209

00:35:19.770 --> 00:35:24.300

April Curley: but also to give back to her family and to native groups.

210

00:35:24.840 --> 00:35:33.150

April Curley: So she I know that she's going to be very active and, all things last mile in the near future you're going to know her you're going to know her name you're going to see all the wonderful things that she does.

211

00:35:33.630 --> 00:35:42.600

April Curley: And I just feel really lucky and humbled that we get to support her and that we get to cheer cheer her on and all of the great things that she's going to do in the near future.

212

00:35:43.860 --> 00:35:51.150

Ruthe Farmer: yeah and I would stress that I, you know I can't say strongly enough, we can't afford not to support these students.

213

00:35:51.600 --> 00:36:03.390

Ruthe Farmer: Because the net number of native American women that get a degree in it annually is 44 zero so if we lose pre.

214

00:36:03.840 --> 00:36:09.990

Ruthe Farmer: that's statistically significant to the entire nation's population of technical women who are native American.

215

00:36:10.980 --> 00:36:20.850

Ruthe Farmer: And the same goes for black women for Hispanic women for women generally, and so this is really important, now I do keep saying women, and I know that.

216

00:36:21.810 --> 00:36:31.260

Ruthe Farmer: We I have had a 20 year career in gender equity, which is why I funders like to fund women because that's who i've been working with for 20 years we are.

217

00:36:32.700 --> 00:36:36.150

Ruthe Farmer: I believe all low income students around a representative technology and engineering.

218

00:36:37.320 --> 00:36:43.860

Ruthe Farmer: If they if they weren't you know because typically the way it works in the US is the children of engineers become engineers.

219

00:36:44.610 --> 00:37:03.120

Ruthe Farmer: And those folks are typically athletes, so if we want to change the face of technology and and really have our country and the technologies that we create be created by all the people who use them, we need to do something about this gap, the socio economic gap and access to those careers.

220

00:37:05.700 --> 00:37:17.550

Meg Richard: Ruth I would say something else to real quickly, I know we have to wrap up here, but if you have students, if you are an institution that thinks that some way, shape or form, you could use this.

221

00:37:18.840 --> 00:37:19.470

Meg Richard: Put.

222

00:37:20.760 --> 00:37:30.270

Meg Richard: Come to get into our hands what am I trying to say put yourself put your students in our hands, because we honestly our staff as a group of people who live this day in and day out.

223

00:37:31.020 --> 00:37:39.390

Meg Richard: By by our ethics and our principal at our morals and your students are in good hands, and we will, if we can't serve them now, then we will.

224

00:37:40.170 --> 00:37:51.660

Meg Richard: yeah take the data and and find a way to serve them in the future Ruth is somebody who absolutely takes a need and matches it with funds and then all the sudden poof.

225

00:37:52.950 --> 00:37:55.080

Meg Richard: More and more and more people are being served.

226

00:37:56.160 --> 00:38:01.170

Meg Richard: With they're getting their basic needs met and and yeah I can't say no so.

227

00:38:03.030 --> 00:38:14.280

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): So we'll wrap up, I want to thank the three of you Ruth Meg in April for joining us today and sharing this phenomenal information and opportunities for underrepresented students.



228

00:38:14.760 --> 00:38:23.040

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): In stem again if you all have questions or Ruth April or make please get in touch with them um you also have my contact information.

229

00:38:23.340 --> 00:38:26.910

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): Should you have questions for CCA or how to get in contact with.

230

00:38:27.210 --> 00:38:38.370

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): The last mile education fund I do want to stress that this is so much larger than just financial support the mentorship and the resources in the Community that you're building is much needed.

231

00:38:38.850 --> 00:38:47.550

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): So kudos to you for doing the phenomenal work again, please stay connected with CCA at complete college.org and on social media.

232

00:38:47.850 --> 00:38:51.630

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): And we hope that you can join us for our next CCA live webinar.

233

00:38:51.900 --> 00:39:06.210

Melanie Harris | CCA | She|Her(s): On July 15 at 3pm on smart schedules, this is a continuation of our eight week calendar series that we did last year, so please check out our website for more information on that Thank you all so much for joining us today bye.

234

00:39:06.840 --> 00:39:07.650

Ruthe Farmer: Thank you.