

## Rising Star - Lizeth Castro

As the message of giving back spreads and students become increasingly aware of the role and tradition of private contributions at their alma mater, recent graduates are more often becoming donors themselves. More than 21% of the May 2012 graduating class made a gift before graduation through the Cougar Grad Challenge! And some grads are waiting to get their feet on the ground, making a first contribution to UH just after graduation through an anniversary gift.

Liz Castro graduated from the University of Houston in 2009 with her degree in Broadcast Journalism. While waiting to see what her job search would bring, she remained connected to the school she called home for so many years.

"I was actively involved with my sorority and its alumni events. I also came back for athletic events and to attend shows at the Moores School of Music," says Castro.

With a passion for giving back, Castro was involved in philanthropy efforts early on, but it has been only recently that she realized how important the fundraising needs of a university really are.

"I did a lot of fundraising for the Children's Miracle Network because it was the philanthropy focus of my sorority. And, I donated to causes of my own interest here and there, but it never really occurred to me that the university is supported by individual giving, too, until after I graduated," says Castro.

As she began receiving appeals for support, it didn't take her long to respond to the call. The spring after her fall graduation, Castro donated via a sorority sister who was involved in fundraising through Frontier Fiesta. Through that gift experience, Castro's awareness about philanthropy at UH grew—and so did her giving efforts. Since then, Liz has been giving to the Fund for UH, the Jack J. Valenti School of Communication and Cougar Pride.

"I realized that if it were not for the support of alumni who gave when I was a student, I wouldn't have had all of the resources I was accustomed to on campus. I am a UH

alumna now. It's time for me to help UH students, too. I want to set an example," she says.

Castro continues to make a difference in many people's lives through her philanthropy. Working to spread the word regarding the importance of giving back as UH alumni, how it helps UH students and programs to grow, and how increasing the number of alumni who participate in giving each year is critical for the university's Tier One journey has brought renewed joy to Castro's life and sparked her career. Above all, her pride and support for UH grows, and it shows. The University of Houston, in turn, is proud to recognize her among UH Rising Stars.



Rising Stars are recent graduates that choose to give back to UH by making a gift within the first 5 years following graduation. These alumni are the foundation of UH's future and we thank them for their commitment to making a difference in the lives of all Coogs and the greater Houston community. Visit [www.uh.edu/risingstars](http://www.uh.edu/risingstars) for more information.

## Our Tier One Cougar Community

Created by individual contributions to UH, the Cougar Community Tier One endowment is now fully funded at \$100,000 because of our generous donors. Through gifts of \$5 to \$2,500, more than \$54,000 has been raised for the endowment. That amount was then matched to bring the endowment to over \$100,000! The Cougar Community Tier One Scholarship is such a great example of how each gift does make a larger impact—often bigger than any of us truly understand.

Currently, more than 80 students are supported through Tier One scholarships, which cover all tuition and fees for up to four years of undergraduate study. These scholarships also provide stipends for research and study-abroad programs.

Visit [www.uh.edu/tieronescholars](http://www.uh.edu/tieronescholars) to meet the Tier One scholars and see what they've been up to this summer by clicking on the "Summer Blogs" tab. Meet Zenhessi, Lauren, and Alexander, just to name a few. They've been traveling, exploring government, researching, and creating art... experiences made possible because of a shared commitment to their future.



# The Chain Reaction of Generosity

The University of Houston is more highly regarded than ever for its Tier One education and its dedication to innovative research. But, the accolades are not always about the obvious. Sometimes it's the fundamental character of our institution that makes an impression on people—its sense of community, its students and faculty. It is *their* talent, potential and dynamic drive that create the excitement and promise for our future.

While not alumni of the University of Houston, David and Laura Nolen have been so inspired by UH's community, growth and mission that they stepped forward to take action

when one of the university's most generous matching opportunities in history went public. Since then, they have become much more than a part of the growing family of loyal UH benefactors.

David and Laura Nolen, both successful attorneys, moved to Houston five years ago. Having settled in a home within walking distance of the UH campus, they observed, first hand, the university's evolution into the Tier One institution it is today.

"It's like night and day. The energy has been so amped up. From the buildings going up, to the level of activity coming from the campus, to

the simple feel of it all. It has evolved into such an exciting campus life," says David Nolen.

David and Laura, each fervent advocates of higher education, believed their college days were behind them. But both, along with daughter Ruthie, were once again swept up into the university lifestyle. Family activities quickly became a series of on-campus visits, including swimming, lunch and dinner outings, attending events, taking walks on the grounds; even Ruthie's seventh birthday party found its perfect accommodation at the UH Campus Recreation and Wellness Center. And, their love for college football was beyond satiated.

Their garage apartment, which now houses David's expanding family law practice, housed students for the first few years. Most notably, it was home to Case Keenum '10, former Houston Cougars star quarterback and currently signed to the NFL's Houston Texans' practice team.

"It was great having Case there. He's a really great guy. Ruthie crashed a few of the parties he threw in our backyard," David recalls with a laugh.

The Nolens consider the University of Houston an esteemed neighbor, one they spend a lot of time with. In an effort to give back to the community that so graciously

embraced their family, David and Laura became lifetime patrons.

In addition to annual gifts benefitting programs and projects of particular interest to them, the Nolens recently established the Andrew Ladis UH Tier One Scholarship Endowment, in memory of a dear friend. Ladis was an Art History professor at the University of Georgia, who shared the Nolen family's passion for higher education and the belief that a college degree plays an integral role in creating a more promising future for those eager to learn.

The Nolen's generous act seemed to grow wings when Laura's employer, Marathon Oil, agreed to match their donation. And through the remarkable generosity of an anonymous source who donated \$7 million to the University of Houston to be used specifically for Tier One Scholarship matching, the Nolen's gift was met a second time. Suddenly support for higher education became a gift that will benefit UH students in perpetuity.

"It was wonderful to see our gift grow like that. What an exciting opportunity to see first-hand how giving really does multiply," says Laura.

David and Laura Nolen are a prime example of how one act of giving can initiate a chain reaction of generosity, affording many deserving students an education through much needed funding and fulfilling many promises of a brighter future. With the support of Houston's community, like good neighbors David and Laura Nolen, the University of Houston is privileged to continue the journey toward Tier One accomplishments across the educational spectrum.

## Matching Gifts

Many companies, large and small, will match individual contributions to the University of Houston. This means that for every dollar you give to UH, your employer may give a dollar to UH. Some companies go beyond a 1-to-1 match and will give \$2 or \$3 for every dollar you give. So your gift of \$10 or \$10,000 packs 2- or 3-times the punch!

When UH alumni, parents and students take advantage of Corporate Matching Gift benefits, their willingness to go the extra mile for UH provides a significant and vital boost of support for all Coogs. Last year more than \$1.7 million was raised through matching gift programs. This summer, the ExxonMobil Foundation presented the University of Houston with a check for \$491,929 – the largest ExxonMobil match to UH ever! The ExxonMobil Educational Matching Gift benefit matches \$3 for every \$1 you give, turning \$100 into \$400 or \$5,000 into \$20,000! Some companies match gifts to UH from spouses and, like Shell and ExxonMobil, even retirees.

So bookmark the web form and tell your friends at the office. Please help us ensure that all UH families know when they have the distinct advantage of industry-leading educational matching gift benefits.

Go to [www.matchinggifts.com/uh](http://www.matchinggifts.com/uh) to see if your company or your spouse's company participates in gift matching.



David and Laura Nolen with their daughter Ruthie

# Coogs Calling Coogs

It is not often that the past, present and future meet, but when you experience Coogs Calling Coogs, that is exactly what you get. Current UH scholars work through the UH Call Center to reach out to alumni and parents across the country. Students are especially enthusiastic about developing relationships with UH alumni, talking about campus events and initiatives, and asking UH alumni and parents to make a gift in support of the UH vision for the future.



Tijuhna Green, Larry Whitfield, Mariah Berry

Here is a little of what current Coog callers Larry Whitfield (Pharmacy), Mariah Berry (Political Science) and Tijuhna Green (Philosophy & Political Science), have to say about the dynamic between them and the Coog graduates they call:

**UH: Why do you think calling our alumni is important, overall?**

**LW:** We come to work, but at the same time, we're helping out our school. So the more work we put in, the more help we are going to provide – whether it's scholarships or support for different programs throughout the college.



**TG:** I also think it's important that we're students making the calls because the alumni were students once. If they receive a call from a student, they may be a little bit more connected to what we're trying to do.

**UH: What do you find interests many of the people you call?**

**LW:** Our Tier One status. A lot of alumni like to know that we're doing well and on our way to achieving a full Tier One status. I also like to talk about football.

**TG:** Tier One, of course! I also talk a lot about construction because the campus is a lot different these days, from when many of them were students.

**UH: What's a perfect call?**

**MB:** I really like it when someone actually asks me questions, too. It just shows that they care and that they're interested.

**UH: Why is it important to give back to the university, and how do you convey that message?**

**MB:** I think it's important to let them know that giving affects them as well. They graduated from here. It's a tradition. Plus, when the university looks good, they look good.

**UH: Do students have big goals as Coogs Calling?**

**TG:** I'm actually the first student to have reached the Diamond Club, which means I have raised \$100,000 for UH. I'm close to having raised \$200,000. It's nice to know that I've done a lot for the university.

**UH: What is more important, the money you raise or the relationships you make?**

**MB, LW:** Relationships.

**TG:** We also want folks to have a good feeling when we call. I've had situations where someone did not want to give, but enjoyed talking to me so much that they gave later. You know, most of them have kids, and if they get a good impression from us, they'll want to send their kids here, too.

**UH: Were you aware of the need for private funding before you became a Coog Calling?**

**MB:** No. I just thought UH ran on tuition and state assistance.

**LW:** No. I tell people that the money we raise comes straight back to us, to support the students at UH. They know that college isn't the most financially stable time of your life, and they understand that they are supporting students through this gift. They understand where we're coming from.



President Khaor congratulates Tijuhna Green



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