



Photo courtesy of Kerr Foundation

Betty Jean Kerr Foundation Scholarship winners were recently honored as they prepared to begin the 2023 Fall semester. The recipients include: Autumn Blue, Jessica Boyer, Qui’Arian Crayton, Alicia Douglas, Kellie Fields, Blair Graham, Xzariya Graham, Darnell Hill, LaTavia Jones, Xavier Perkins (accepted by Tammy Bickley), LaKisha Sabino, and Brittany Smith. Foundation board members Dawn Butler, scholarship foundation chair; Monica McClendon, Madison Fuller, Kathleen Shaw, and Jared Odum, attended the celebration.

## Betty Jean Kerr Foundation scholars honored

### St. Louis American staff

People’s Health Centers was founded as a free clinic in 1972 by community activists and medical students in a storefront at Kingsbury and Des Peres in University City.

The late Betty Jean Kerr joined them in 1975 and would become Kerr People’s Health Centers CEO and a civic stalwart in healthcare. She helped the provider grow to over 200 staffers, including doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners, and mental health counselors, at three sites.

The Betty Jean Kerr Scholarship was established in 2007 to support People’s Health Centers employees, and immediate

family members, who are pursuing degrees in health care.

Awards are made to undergraduate and graduate students in an amount of \$1,000 per academic year. Past Scholars who received funding have pursued education in nursing, pharmacy, dental, social work, and human services.

Twelve recipients for the 2023 Fall semester were honored at a recent scholarship awards ceremony. Kerr passed away in September 2020, and the collegiate financial support continues her legacy in supporting the aspirations and educational dreams of future advocates for health care equity in our underserved communities.

## We must be examples for children

By Marian Wright Edelman

When our children see the news right now, what are they thinking? We are at a moment where adults everywhere are reminded once again that we must all continue to strive to be the examples we want our children to emulate. We must teach them to value the truth and to know right from wrong. We cannot depend on anyone else.

I believe all great faiths, history, moral decency, and common sense beckon us anew to examine as individuals and as a people what we are to live by and teach our children by precept and example.

I urge adults in America of all races, faiths, and political persuasions to make a difference by teaching our children to love themselves and others as God loves us. We must teach our children at every age how we expect them to treat themselves and others respectfully and fairly and then struggle to model that behavior daily no matter what people in power,



Marian Wright Edelman

public figures, or role models are doing or how often we fail to meet our own standards, get up, and try again.

To our children, I hope they will make a difference as they grow by being courageous, aiming high, and holding on to ideals of mutual respect; by caring and serving; by being honest and telling the truth; by persevering and not giving up no matter how difficult the challenge; by being determined and resourceful; by being grateful for the gift and wonders of life; by working together with others; by being compassionate and kind; by being nonviolent and working for justice and peace in their communities, nation, and world; and by being faithful and struggling for what they believe.

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it still bends towards justice. It is so important for adults not to let ourselves off the hook or to become apathetic or cynical by telling ourselves that nothing we do can make a difference. Every day, light your small candle. It just might be the one that sparks the movement to save our children’s and our nation’s future.

Lord, You told us, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”  
The world says, “Blessed are those high on spirits.”

You said, “Blessed are those who mourn.”  
The world says, “Blessed are those who maim and torture.”

You said, “Blessed are the meek.”  
The world says, “Blessed are the arrogant and the strong.”

You said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”  
The world says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for fleeting power and fame.”

You said, “Blessed are the merciful.”  
The world says, “Blessed are the mercenary and punitive.”

You said, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”  
The world says, “Blessed are the hard of heart.”

You said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”  
The world says, “Blessed are the weapon makers.”

You said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”  
The world says, “Blessed are those who persecute for the sake of riches and race.”

You said, “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil about you falsely on my account.”  
The world says, “Blessed are you when people applaud you and praise you for your own sake.”

Help us, Lord, to find our way to You  
Marian Wright Edelman is Children’s Defense Fund founder and president emerita



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