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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

The difference you have made

Impact report 2024/25

Thank you for
supporting our
scholarships at
York St John

Thank you for your generous and ongoing support of scholarships at York St John University.

Your contributions play a vital role in opening doors to education for students who would otherwise face financial barriers. These scholarships help ease the burden of living costs but also empower students to fully engage with their studies, achieve their potential, and pursue their dreams.

York St John has always been defined by its strong sense of community, and I continue to be inspired by how deeply the University's ethos resonates with everyone connected to it. This deep connection is reflected in the generosity and commitment of our growing network of alumni, friends, and supporters, whose contributions help ensure that future generations can benefit from the unique and enriching experience that makes York St John so special.

Expanding access to higher education continues to be a challenge. There is no question that higher education maximises life opportunities and we believe that financial circumstances should never be a barrier to learning. Unfortunately, students who have experienced social or economic inequality still face some of the greatest challenges, despite often having the most to gain from the opportunities a university education provides. Your involvement is helping us break down those barriers and ensure that talent and potential, not circumstance, define a student's future.

We have bold ambitions for the future. Our fundraising work and your advocacy within our alumni and donor community are more important than ever. With your continued generosity, our goal is to reach a point where every eligible student who applies for a scholarship can receive one. These awards provide not only vital financial assistance but also the encouragement and confidence students need to stay on their educational journey.

This report highlights how your support is helping students from less advantaged backgrounds thrive, both academically and throughout their broader university experience. Much of this narrative is shared through the voices and experiences of the students themselves, and we are proud to be able to share with you the powerful impact of your generosity.

I believe these words from a scholarship recipient, a final year Psychology with Child Development student, perfectly capture the positive change you are creating:

"The Scholarship has been a lifeline for my university experience, and has enabled me to achieve far more than I would have expected to in its absence. My time at York St John has not only helped me develop as an academic, but as a person, and I cannot thank the donors enough."

Your support is truly transformative in the lives of our students, shaping brighter futures and fostering a more inclusive and diverse academic community. We are incredibly grateful.

Thanks to you we can do more.

Louise Gash
Fundraising and Alumni Relations Manager



Your support is transforming lives

Our scholarships

Since 2018, **168** students have received a scholarship or prize award, receiving a total of **£232,820** in support.

In 2024/25



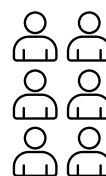
74

Students were awarded a scholarship or prize award

£54,500

Funding support awarded

We receive **6** applications for every scholarship available



138

Scholarship applications received



86%

Final year scholarship recipients achieved an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education

Our supporters

Since 2018, **369** members of our alumni community have generously supported us, including individual donors, community groups, and charitable trusts and foundations.

In 2024/25



148

Alumni and supporters made a donation

25

Age of our youngest donor

98

Age of our oldest donor

69%

Donors gave with Gift Aid, increasing the value of their donations by **25%**

“The scholarship was a lifeline for me”

Second year Psychology student and recipient of our alumni-funded scholarship from 2024 to 2026.

Why did you apply for the alumni-funded scholarship?

I applied for this scholarship during a very difficult period in my life. After becoming homeless and estranged, I found myself overwhelmed with debt and relying heavily on credit cards just to meet my basic needs. At the same time, I was juggling long work hours with my studies, and the strain began to severely affect my mental health. With no support system of my own, and having experienced physical, financial, and emotional abuse, I was struggling to stay afloat academically and personally. I applied for the scholarship with the hope that it would relieve some of the financial burden and allow me to focus on building a future through my education.

How has the scholarship supported you this year, and what has it helped you achieve?

It helped cover essential living costs such as food, accommodation, and transport, as well as study-related expenses like books and equipment. By easing this financial strain, it allowed me to reduce my work hours and dedicate more time to my studies without constantly worrying about survival. More importantly, it gave me the mental and emotional space to focus on my health and my future goals.

What would you like to say to donors who have supported your scholarship?

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the donors who made this scholarship possible.

“ At a time when I felt I had no one to turn to, your support reminded me that kindness and generosity still exist in the world. ”

This grant was more than just financial assistance - it was a message of hope and encouragement that gave me strength to carry on. I am sincerely thankful for your generosity, which has not only helped me through this year but has inspired me to continue working hard and to one day be in a position to give back to others facing hardships.

“ Thank you, wholeheartedly, for believing in me when I needed it the most. ”

What are your next steps and future plans?

Looking forward, my ambition is to continue my academic journey into postgraduate study, either pursuing a master's in mental health followed by a PhD, or undertaking Graduate Entry Medicine. I am preparing to sit my entrance exam this coming August, and I carry with me the encouragement and faith you have shown in me.



Final year Psychology with Child Development student, recipient of our Enabling Education scholarship

“ When I started the university, I had become a care leaver so navigating independence was particularly challenging. I applied for a scholarship as I found myself aging out of the additional funding my home council had provided, and given the context of the cost-of-living crisis I was struggling quite significantly.

In addition to funding my travel costs, I have been able to purchase resources to help with my learning and continuous personal development, which has enabled me to look further into the future at my career prospects.

Without the donations in support of the Scholarships, I don't think I can truthfully say that I would still be in education. I feel that I would have been in a position where I was choosing between living and studying, and no student deserves to be placed in that position.”



First year Occupational Therapy student, recipient of our alumni-funded scholarship

“ A BIG THANK YOU goes to everybody that believed in me. The financial assistance allows me to concentrate more on my studies rather than working full time, and I just wouldn't have been able to afford to continue to attend University without the scholarship I received.

I have used the majority of the monies for child care costs and I have used some funds to pay for parking nearer to university as I can't walk too far. Despite many challenges, I am still here at university and I am so motivated and committed to this course and in doing something that I have wanted to do for a long time.

Once qualified, I want to focus on specialising in supporting and caring for people living with dementia in the community, or to work in occupational therapy for servicemen and women, helping them address physical, psychological, and social challenges related to their service.

Thank you again for your generosity and support. Because of the opportunity you have provided me, I hope to one day give back and help other students achieve their goals, just as you have helped me.”



Your generous donations are opening doors for students underrepresented in higher education, empowering them to chase their dreams and realise their full potential.

This year has meant a significant drop in our family income and without this additional support I would have not been able to buy the laptop that I use to complete my work. The difference this has made to my ability to work, and my productivity, has been incredible. Thank you so much.

I have faced challenging situations every day at school, had illness in my family, broken my ankle, and a considerable amount more. However, I am proud that I stayed resilient and determined and able to move forward with my teaching dream.

Secondary PGCE student, recipient of our Alumni-funded scholarship

Thank you for supporting students who need it. The scholarship has made a lot of potential financial pressure much easier by helping me to secure somewhere to stay, and contributing towards my general finances to support me whilst studying. This has allowed me to enjoy university life knowing I have a source to rely on for any financial needs over the course of my studies. The support goes a long way towards making people's lives much easier.

Second year Film and Television Production student, recipient of our Enabling Education scholarship

The scholarship opened many doors for me. I could finally afford to commute between home and university easily, pay for lunches, and even just be able to afford getting some books or flashcards for revision. Thank you so much. I got a first on my most recent assignment, which was a massive achievement compared to my last assignment.

You are out here changing lives, not just financially but simply by giving students like me an opportunity to enhance our learning and development. I wholeheartedly appreciate people seeing my story and for providing me with more motivation to learn and inspire growth.

First year Project Management student, recipient of our Alumni-funded scholarship



Why support our students

The support we receive from our donor community is essential to the growth and long-term sustainability of our scholarship programme.

We are honoured that our donors choose to share their personal stories with us, reflecting on their connection to York St John and what inspired them to give back. These accounts reveal the diverse and often deeply personal reasons behind their support. By sharing these stories with you, we hope to show not only the lasting impact of their generosity on students, but also how giving back can be a rewarding and meaningful experience for the donors themselves.

David Metcalfe

**York St John Alum 1964-1967 and
Cordukes Circle member**

York St John has always been a wonderful place to be, and a very inspiring place, and I can see why students enjoy coming here and often don't want to leave York when they graduate. With the privilege of coming here and having the opportunity to do what I had decided I wanted to do, I've got so much to thank St John's for.

There were so many opportunities to come on to campus and be involved in activities, particularly as a headteacher bringing children from my school. We also had students in our school, and I got to know about their activities at the University. In supporting them I realised that I wanted to continue doing that, supporting as an alumni in all the ways that I could to give back.

I hope my support will help address whatever needs are there to help students at a particular moment, which no doubt varies considerably. Not only with personal support for academic work, but other work to do with accommodation, resources, and sometimes very sensitive issues. I hope it helps to carry them through whatever they are inspiring to do.



Hear more about David's experience at York St John, and how he hopes his contributions will support our students.

blog.yorks.ac.uk/alumination/2023/05/04/david-metcalfe



Professor Stuart Billingham

**Previous Head of School of Linguistics and
Social Sciences, and Cordukes Circle member**

What makes the University stand out for me? Well, perhaps above all it is the way it tries, as hard as it can, to treat students and staff as individuals. Leaving a gift in my will to encourage this approach is for me, really a "no-brainer", especially if the money will be used specifically to support students from backgrounds and contexts traditionally under-represented at university.

I have spent the whole of my professional life identifying and promoting policies and practices which will achieve this. And that is exactly how I wish the Legacy to be used. Of course, I realise that my Legacy is but "a drop in the ocean" of the funding needed to achieve ever greater equality of opportunity in access to university, success whilst there and social mobility afterwards. However, even if it makes the crucial difference for just one student, I will be content.

The support from our alumni and donor community extends beyond our scholarships and financial contributions.

Holistic support, including networking opportunities, career advice, and celebrating student achievements, plays a vital role in helping our students thrive both academically and personally. This collective generosity enriches the university experience, empowering current and future students to overcome challenges and achieve their ambitions in ways that extend well beyond scholarships alone



CRYSJ Graduation Prize

To celebrate 50 years since the foundation of the College of Ripon and York St John (CRYSJ), we raised money to support a new graduation prize. Our aim was to raise £2,500 to enable us to award £50 to 50 graduating students.

Graduation prizes are often awarded for academic achievement, but we know that life at York St John is not just about grades. We wanted to support students who fit the ethos of what CRYSJ was all about, community-driven, resilient and supportive of others during their educational journey. Our Academic Schools nominated final year students who they believe embody these values and are truly deserving of this prize.

With the generous donations from our Ripon and York St John community, we achieved the £2,500, and it was wonderful to celebrate and honour all our deserving recipients at the recent graduation ceremonies.

“ I am delighted to be receiving the CRYSJ award. As someone who returned to education with limited self-belief, this recognition means a great deal to me. It serves as a reminder that my efforts have been acknowledged and that I am capable of achieving my goals. Thank you so much!

Primary Education BA Hons student





Our Alumni community

Over the past year, members of our alumni community have supported both current and future students by sharing their University experiences and career insights through our webinar series and Aluminations snapshots.

These stories, ranging from recent graduates to those enjoying retirement, offer valuable guidance and inspiration to students navigating their academic journey and prepare for life beyond university. Often, these personal reflections provide the spark that encourages students to believe in themselves and take the next step with confidence.

If you'd like to share your career highlights, advice and memories from your student days, please complete a snapshot by scanning the QR below.



yorks.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-community/submit-a-snapshot

York 10k 2025

On Sunday 3 August, a fantastic team of staff and alumni took on the York 10K to raise money for our scholarship fund. We were incredibly proud of their dedication, battling through the rain to support our students and still managing to cross the finish line with smiles on their faces.

Over the past three years, our running teams have raised over £3,000 in support of our alumni-funded scholarships, enough to provide a full three year scholarship for one student. This achievement not only demonstrates the strength of our community spirit but also has a life-changing impact.

We look forward to 2026, when we plan to expand participation and introduce new events, further increasing opportunities for future students to access education at York St John.

With your legacy, we can do more

Since 1841, York St John University has been centred on our community approach, allowing student's, colleagues, alumni and partner organisations to come together to support education for everyone. Legacy giving provides our alumni community the opportunity to continue this legacy and become a part of our future.

We are deeply grateful to have received legacy gifts and pledges from a growing number of generous donors. Their lasting contributions enable us to expand our efforts and make an even greater difference in the lives of future generations.

Education Opportunity Award

The Education Opportunity Award was established through a generous legacy gift, left by the family of a teacher training alum from the 1950s. Their legacy supports mature students during their PGCE course. Thanks to their generosity, 22 students have benefited from enhanced support, allowing them to pursue their dream.

“ It has been a tough nine months of studying and teaching. However, I have laughed more than I cried and thoroughly enjoyed this challenge in my life. Additionally, I have shown my children what is possible and that hard work really does pay off.

All of this wouldn't have been possible though without this kind donation. It allowed me to secure appropriate care for my 10-year-old son and paid for travelling to and from placements, university and alliance days. Thank you so much for taking a chance on me and for making the past 9 months a little easier financially.

Primary PGCE graduate, recipient of our Education Opportunity Award

Having dedicated over ten years of her professional life to York St John, Professor Dianne Willcocks has also pledged to leave a gift in her will to ensure the future of our university.

“ You can make a real difference by leaving a gift to York St John University. Society will always need teachers, health and medical professionals, artists and business leaders. As an organisation that has existed and developed since 1841, York St John has the experience to use your gift wisely.

Leaving a gift in your will to York St John will help sustain the opportunities that the University provides for students from a wide range of backgrounds. Regrettably not all those who could benefit from a Higher Education can do so because of financial constraints. Your gift can help the University continue to open its doors to as many people as possible.

If you too choose to leave the University a legacy, I am sure that you will feel the same sense of satisfaction that I did from making a commitment to shape the future for the better.

Professor Dianne Willcocks CBE, York St John's first Vice Chancellor and Cordukes Circle member



You can find out more about leaving a gift in your will to York St John by visiting our website: yorks.ac.uk/support-us/legacies

Please consider contacting us at alumni@yorks.ac.uk, or call **01904 876741** for a confidential chat.

Your support is making a real difference - thank you!

We are extremely grateful to all those who have contributed to our scholarships. To all our donors, supporters and friends, thank you for your ongoing commitment and generosity.

Thanks to your continued support, we are dedicated to breaking down barriers so that every student, no matter their background or life experience, has an equal opportunity to succeed. Your generosity makes it possible for students not only to study at York St John, but also to thrive. Here, they find a community that encourages them to discover their potential, build confidence, and grow as individuals as they shape their futures beyond university.

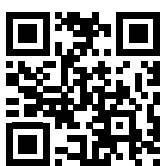
Thank you once again for standing with us and helping us achieve our goals, our success wouldn't be possible without your support.

Together, we can do more.



To learn more about our alumni-funded scholarships and about other ways to support us please visit:

yorks.ac.uk/support-us



Hear how your support is making a difference for our students

www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3DacVliBaA



Stay connected

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