

Stand Behind Beneficence: Creating Beneficence Family Scholars' Magazine

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

By

Liz Rieth

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Jason Powell

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

May 2019

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2021

Abstract

As long as media has been around, organizations, including nonprofits, have used media to convey their message. Magazines have been both a print and digital medium in which nonprofits advertise their impact while making a call for donations. Beneficence Family Scholars (BFS), a new nonprofit in Muncie, Indiana, needed a magazine to convey one of its first printed messages. BFS works to change the narrative of generational poverty in Muncie by providing single-parent families with education, housing, and comprehensive support. Because it has just been created, many in the community have yet to hear about BFS's mission. I created BFS's first magazine, 12 pages in length, thus effectively conveying its purpose and need for support.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Jason Powell for advising me through this project. His friendship and help with my creative thesis represent only a fraction of his impact on me thus far at college.

I would like to thank the team at Beneficence Family Scholars for letting me undertake such a task. Also, I would like to thank Bobbie, Eliza and Olivia and Liz for their aid in the final product.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for constantly encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

Process Analysis Statement

For my Honors Thesis, I had the chance to give back using my creativity. From scratch, I created a 12-page magazine for the new Muncie nonprofit, Beneficence Family Scholars (BFS). The nonprofit works to provide single-parent families in the community with holistic support through education and housing. BFS is being created by 16 Honors students in an immersive learning course through the Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. It's the first nonprofit of its kind in Indiana. Because of my involvement in this course, I have had the opportunity and the honor to create its first magazine/newsletter. A semi-annual publication, this magazine provides BFS with a way to communicate its mission in a print and online publication. Creating this magazine entailed several aspects. I had to dive into the purpose of the magazine, then design and write it.

Before I even dove into those aspects, I laid the groundwork with some brief research and careful thought. As the first nonprofit of its kind, I wanted to make this magazine the first of its kind. I wanted it to be unique and stand out – all while conveying BFS accurately and emotionally. To do this, I wanted to ensure I had the necessary background knowledge. First, my involvement in the immersive learning course served as a form of research. I was part of the behind-the-scenes of BFS, which in turn allowed me to truly understand the organization. By understanding BFS, I could then make a product to reflect it. As far as design research went, I used Pinterest for ideas and inspiration. I looked into various nonprofit marketing designs and into magazine design as a whole. Also, as a journalism major, I have taken design classes and designed print products before. So, I just had to couple my background with my Pinterest inspiration to start creating sketches of the magazine. For the writing that went into the magazine I utilized my background in journalism. I've written for a multitude of publications, teachers and

editors; each has helped me discern how to write well and for a particular audience. Additionally, I read other nonprofit websites extensively, especially the site of BFS's parent organization, Family Scholar House. These gave me examples of the language and terms other nonprofits use. Overall, my research was a combination of my prior experience and examples of writing and design. Once I was able to firmly establish this knowledge, I started to look at why I wanted to create this magazine.

More than a magazine

To understand a product's purpose, one must know who will view the product. I determined that the magazine would be distributed at BFS's launch party/fundraising event and that it would be viewable online. Because of this distribution, the magazine would then be viewed primarily by donors and secondarily by potential participants in the BFS. For the donors, the magazine would need to serve as an emotional and informative piece that stirred them to action. It would draw in donors in to stand behind the mission of BFS while simultaneously calling them to support it. As a new organization, BFS needs the support of the community — this magazine can be a tool to bring in that support. Also, the magazine had to be a piece that lifted the community up. If a potential BFS participant saw this, they would not read it and view BFS as an organization providing hand-outs, but rather hand-ups. It should draw them into BFS and encourage them to get involved. The magazine serves concurrently as a fundraising, informative, and emotional document for readers.

My creative project means more to me than just a printed publication or a fundraising tool, it is a way for me to give back to Muncie. As a Christian, I am compelled to give back using my talents. With this magazine, I am able to use talents I love — like writing and design — to create a needed publication. Because I full-heartedly stand behind this nonprofit and its mission,

I can only hope the time I spent on this project betters the community. I put a piece of my heart into it with the hope that it will then encourage donors and families to be involved in BFS, thus encouraging the growth of the organization. This project tested me and my creative abilities, but it gave me a chance to feel a part of the community.

Creating the magazine

The magazine includes several elements to achieve its purpose. I formatted it as a 12-page magazine that holds the appearance of a traditional print magazine. I created it in this format to make it both easily readable and accessible. I wanted this to be an 8.5 x 11-inch publication because this was the standard for semi-annual nonprofit publications. Also, this size is eye catching while not overly large. Magazines can be laid out on coffee tables or made into PDFs for websites. They can be picked up, flipped through, or emailed out. Magazines offer versatility in layout, content and publishing locations.

Before I go into descriptions of each of the magazine's pages, I will briefly explain the magazine's title, *Beneficence*. That word, while part of BFS's name is correspondingly part of BFS's core beliefs. Beneficence signifies a desire to act in goodwill or in a charitable manner. BFS wants to not only help its families rise out poverty but to inspire them to beneficence, to give back to their communities. Hence, I titled the magazine after this vital word. Now, to describe the specific parts of each page, I will give an overview of the layout and then explain my decision process behind it. The layout runs like this:

- Page 1, Cover Page
- Page 2, Table of Contents
- Page 3, Meet the President
- Page 4-5, Empowering Families, What is BFS

- Page 6-7, The Team Behind Beneficence
- Page 8, BFS's Vision
- Page 9, Inspiring Generations, Wilisha Scaife
- Page 10, A Call to Give
- Page 11, BFS Donors
- Page 12, Back Page

Page 1

Mary Dollison, BFS board member and co-founder of Motivate our Minds decorates the front page of the magazine. Ms. Dollison is a pillar of the Muncie community because of her involvement in the city's nonprofit sector. She's passionate about serving families here while changing the narrative of poverty. I wanted her on the cover because she personifies several aspects BFS works to embody including: the Muncie region, the intimacy of community, the importance of family and diversity.

Additionally, I will describe my reasoning behind the three fonts used in this section of the magazine. I use a cursive font for the magazine title and other titles because it combines formality and personality. It gives off a handwritten and official character. The second title font I used is a serif font, meaning it is a font style similar to Times New Roman. I use this because it aesthetically pairs with the cursive title font and it is similar to the font in our logo. For the body text, I used a sans serif, like Arial, because it is easy to read, and it is the font on our website.

Page 2

On the second page, I introduce readers to the contents of the magazine. Also, I explain who is on the cover page and put down contact information for BFS. The information is organized to be readable and concise.

Page 3

BFS's president Lydia Kotowski introduces herself on this page. The majority of nonprofit magazines let their presidents write a letter on the first page of their respective publications. I helped her craft her writing to include personal narratives and a call to action. I also include a large picture of her so that readers would feel like they know her.

Pages 4-5

This part of the magazine is designed to tell readers what BFS is. For design, the page is interactive with graphics and a variety of text boxes. I use a photo as the background to make the page visually interesting. I write about BFS in a way that correspondingly conveys what poverty is. Readers should understand the need that poverty creates so they then can understand the need for BFS.

Pages 6-7

On these pages, I dive into the *who* behind BFS, which included the students in the immersive learning course and the BFS board members. The students' story conveys the interesting aspects of the Virginia Ball Center while showing the dedication of the students. The images on this page consist of the students' pictures lining the bottom of the pages. The students stand side by side to convey togetherness and community.

Page 8

BFS has a vision of a thriving community rooted in family, education and beneficence. On this page, I explain this vision to readers and inspire them to stand behind. To do that, I not

only explain our vision, but I also explain our future and what we hope to accomplish by specific dates. Additionally, through graphics I show what our parent organization has achieved in its own organization. Family Scholar House illustrates the vision of BFS.

Page 9

Wilisha Scaife's story fills up this page. A BFS board member, she had been a single-mother who pursued higher education. Her story is compelling and fits in with BFS's mission to serve single-parents. Because of her experiences, she was driven to serve Muncie community with BFS's mission.

Page 10

The second to last page is a call for readers to support BFS. In the previous pages, they were given the necessary material about BFS, informational and emotional. This page then calls readers to action and gives them another few reasons why their support is needed. Additionally, readers learn about multiple ways to support BFS; in that way they do not feel pressured solely into financial support. I include statistics on Muncie to show readers the need for BFS.

Page 11

For the last content page, I list the donors. I want to show readers who stands behind Beneficence Family Scholars. By seeing other donors, readers can be inspired to give and have their own name on the list.

Page 12

The back-page credits those who have contributed to the magazine and it also plugs BFS's social media. I ensure that everyone who has played a large part in the magazine is recognized. Photos of the two photographers are placed on this page because they are not previously pictured in the magazine.

Finding Myself in the Magazine

Creating this magazine has been a dream come true for me. As a journalist, I love to design and write — this magazine allowed me to do both from start to finish. I loved this project so much that I worked on it every second I possibly could; I became a little obsessed with it. While this project nurtured my passion for journalism, it also enhanced and taught me many necessary skills. Before this project, I had not worked extensively with Adobe products, so the project required me to get to know the tools very well. The project challenged me to refine my writing skills. Normally, I write unbiasedly for papers. For this, I had to write very biased for BFS. It was challenging yet worthwhile to learn this style of writing.

It was no easy feat to publish a 12-page magazine on my own. I struggled to find a timely and affordable printer, to utilize Adobe well, and to manage photographers and editors efficiently. I became editor, writer, and designer all at once for this project and had to learn how to switch my roles in an instant. At the end of the day though, I have now acquired very marketable skills. The magazine combines what I have been learning as a journalist into a single, published document which I will showcase to future employers. The publication functions as a useful tool for a nonprofit and as a way for me to demonstrate my journalistic skills.

As someone who is both passionate about nonprofits and journalism, I am very excited to have accomplished this project. I know that I love writing for a nonprofit just as much as I do for

a newsroom. In both career fields, I feel I am able to give back to the community around me. Working on this for Beneficence Family Scholars has shown me how open I am to work outside of traditional journalism — I now realize that I am willing to write for any organization as long as I can believe in that particular organization and feel like my writing contributes to something greater. Ultimately, this Honors Thesis shows me how driven I am to impact the world. As for the tools journalism has taught me, they are the path I use to achieve this desire. My Honors Thesis will hopefully be one of the many times I use them in such a way.

Bibliography

Beneficence Family Scholars “Home.” *Beneficence Family Scholars*, Mar. 2019, bfscholars.org/.

Dykstra, Cathe. “The Education Issue.” *EmPower, A Family Scholar House Magazine*,
June 2018.

“Pinterest.” *Pinterest*, www.pinterest.com/.

Beneficence



A Beneficence Family Scholars Publication

Volume 1 • Issue 1 • April 2019

Our Beginning

What's Inside:

- 3 Lydia Kotowski
- 4 Empowering Families
- 6 The Team Behind
- 8 A Thriving Community
- 9 Inspiring Generations
- 10 Invest in Family
- 11 Beneficence Donors



bfscholars.org
[@bfscholars](https://www.instagram.com/bfscholars)

Beneficence Magazine

Meet

Lydia Kotowski

Chief Possibility Officer

Hello! My name is Lydia Kotowski, and I am thrilled to introduce you to Beneficence Family Scholars! Our organization is a new nonprofit in Muncie, Indiana that serves single-parent families and empowers them to overcome generational poverty through education.

Growing up, I was blessed to have parents who always supported and encouraged me to pursue education. I remember how they took the time to read to me every night when I was little. Throughout my education and my life, they showed me hard work, accountability, and commitment are the building blocks of success. I am so grateful to my parents for everything they have done for me.

However, I know many people are not as lucky when it comes to the family they are born into.

Many parents want to provide these resources to their children, but they don't have the means to do so. When faced with an impossible decision, parents must choose between the essentials or everything else – between food or books, electricity or museum visits, housing or the arts. They often don't have the time to encourage their children to pursue education.

Parents should feel confident in their ability to provide more than just the basics for their family.

I saw families taking control of their futures first-hand when I volunteered with Family Scholar House (FSH) in the summer of 2018. FSH works to end the cycle of poverty by providing families with resources ranging from education to housing. I was astounded to find an organization that supports families – both parents and children – with comprehensive support, similar to what my parents gave me. Not only was I amazed to see the organization in action, I was inspired by their results. The fact that FSH scholars complete 93% of all their college credits, and 100% of them exit to stable housing, is a testament to the success of the organization.

Since the beginning of my time as a student at Ball State University, I have been engaged in the Muncie community. When I saw the impact FSH had in Louisville, I wanted to create something that would impact Muncie the same way. Beneficence Family Scholars can and will help change the narrative of generational poverty for single-parent families.

We can all come together and empower families to achieve unimaginable success.



On the cover: Board member
Mary Dollison
Photo by Olivia Rowe



Photo by Olivia Rowe

Empowering families

Beneficence Family Scholars

Imagine growing up in a world where your only goal is survival.

Each morning, you wake up unsure if you and your family will be able to make it through the day. You hope that you will be able to secure food from the local food bank to make your children dinner. You pray that the electricity won't be turned off because you haven't been able to pay the bill.

There always seems to be bills to pay and mouths to feed. But you're a single-parent with a low-paying job. These basic necessities aren't guaranteed. Between the long hours at your job and caring for your family, you never seem to find the time to pursue the education that will help you get a better career.

The typical day of single-parents in generational poverty can look like this. Often, parents want to change their situation, but struggle to find the support and means to do so.

At Beneficence Family Scholars (BFS), **we hope to change this narrative in Muncie, Indiana.**

Beneficence Family Scholars is a

nonprofit that strives to empower single-parent families to overcome poverty through education, housing, and comprehensive support.

It's the first of its kind in Indiana.

Our scholars will work toward higher education while living in stable housing. BFS provides families with resources that encompass all of their needs, from financial to academic to career opportunities. While providing hand-ups rather than hand-outs, our programming and services emphasize accountability and community.

When families graduate from Beneficence Family Scholars, they are equipped with tools to succeed in their own lives and to give back to their community.

Our organization is an affiliate of Family Scholar House (FSH).

Family Scholar House works to overcome every aspect of generational poverty in Louisville, Kentucky. BFS's programs and structures have been modeled after Family Scholar House's award-winning program.

Our Services



Education

BFS believes in empowering families through education. Scholars must complete a four-year degree, an associate degree, certificate, or another higher education program. We provides hands-on guidance with academic advisors and programs that help scholars navigate the various costs of education.



Housing

Scholars deserve to have stable housing while they pursue education. Families enrolled in the BFS program can apply for our residential program, expected to launch in Fall 2020. In the residential program, families will have a safe place to call home while they work toward creating a better future for their family.



Child Care

We offer programs to scholars of every age at BFS. Children five and under will be enrolled in a child care facility. Children older than five have access to after-school programs BFS provides through community partners. Child care and after-school programs are provided for free or reduced prices.



Health

Families deserve to have the tools necessary for pursuing healthy lives. We offer scholars the opportunity to work on improving their own well-being through our nutrition and health programs. Additionally, BFS helps families access primary care providers and nutrition services in Muncie.



Programs

Families in Beneficence Family Scholars are able to attend our comprehensive programs that are tailored to provide support in every aspect of their lives. We host programming events to develop financial literacy, career-readiness, humanities enrichment, life-skills, healthy lifestyles, and more.

The team behind

Beneficence

Sixteen Students

Sixteen students are working to create Beneficence Family Scholars from the ground up.

Through a 15-credit hour immersive learning course at Ball State's **Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry (VBC)**, these students are focused solely on the development of BFS.

Students earn credit through this semester-long project while creating an organization that gives back to Muncie.

These students have come together from a variety of majors — business to communications to humanities — to work on this project. Each student brings a different background and set of skills to the table. They work to tackle each diverse aspect of BFS.

From fundraising to programs, these students have used their

skills to make BFS a reality. They have marketed, researched and made community partnerships as part of their course work. Because the students are able to work full-time on this project, they have established the nonprofit in a matter of months.

The idea for the class came from Lydia Kotowski, BFS President and Chief Possibility Officer. After volunteering with BFS's parent organization, **Family Scholar House**, Lydia wanted to bring a similar nonprofit to Muncie.

She reached out to Jason Powell, Vice President of Beneficence Family Scholars and professor of Honors humanities.

Jason had recently accepted a position as a VBC Fellow, a position where he could conduct a hands-on and long-term

project. After talking with Lydia, he decided to make her dream of bringing a nonprofit to Muncie the focus of his VBC course.

Early in the course, students traveled to Family Scholar House in Louisville, Kentucky to train and research for the creation of BFS. The visit gave the class inspiration for the program they wanted to create in Muncie.

Beneficence Family Scholars has a similar structure to the Louisville organization, but students added their own touch.

The course is partnered with **Ball State Honors College** — meaning BFS programming will offer courses inspired by the college's courses. These programs will focus on the humanities, with topics in literature, culture, and art.

Six Board Members

Beneficence Family Scholars currently has seven board members dedicated to making BFS a part of the community.

Lydia Kotowski, President

Lydia founded BFS after volunteering with Family Scholar House in the summer of 2018. As president, she manages the Executive Board, serves as the face of the organization, and handles legal work.

Lydia is double majoring in Political Science and Health Policy at Ball State University.

Dr. Jason Powell, Vice President

As vice president of the board, Jason leads BFS's focus on the humanities and promotes BFS to the community. He has a background as an intellectual historian and has led classes on generational poverty.

Jason is an instructor for Ball State University's Honors College.

Brandy James, Secretary

Brandy serves the board by managing grants and fundraising, as well as assisting with program development. Previously, she has trained as a Family Therapist and has worked with single-mothers at the Suzanne Gresham Center in Muncie.

Brandy is an instructor in Early Childhood, Youth, and Family Studies and a Doctoral student at Ball State University.

Wilisha Scaife

On the board, Wilisha bridges the gap between the community and schools. She is a self-proclaimed community advocate who works to help families' voices be heard.

Wilisha is a Family-Community Engagement Liaison and an instructor

in Ball State University's Early Childhood Department.

Dr. Jeongyoon Lee

Jeongyoon works to structure Beneficence Family Scholars and its management. She has worked with other nonprofits and civil society organizations and has research expertise in nonprofit organizations and voluntary sector management.

Jeongyoon is a Political Science instructor at Ball State University.

Mary Dollison

Mary wants to serve the community through BFS. On the board, she fundraises and connects our organization with the community. Mary co-founded the nonprofit Motivate our Minds and currently serves on the Whately Community Council.

Mary is a retired Muncie teacher.



a thriving community

Our vision is a thriving community rooted in **family, education, and beneficence.**

Each of these three elements, family, education, and beneficence, represent what Beneficence Family Scholars (BFS) wants for our scholars and for the community.

We want our scholars to have a foundation in family. Beneficence Family Scholars supports both single-parent families and the family that is created within the BFS community.

Next, everyone should have the opportunity to establish roots in education. Whether it is young children learning to read, or adults pursuing a college degree, education should be supported.

The last element, beneficence, represents our desire to create a culture of goodwill among our scholars. Not only does BFS want

scholars to be rooted in family and education, but we also want to inspire them to give back to their community.

BFS is working to make this vision a reality through a three-stage organizational structure.

Pre-Residential Program

Launch date: May 2019

The pre-residential program provides families with resources and programming in financial literacy, scholarships, academics, and transferable life skills. In this stage, families work toward admission to the residential program by attending BFS programming and events.

Residential Program

Launch date: August 2020

Our residential program gives families access to the same

resources and programming in the pre-residential program while also providing stable housing and child care. By Fall 2020, we will have a pilot class of scholars in the residential program.

Additionally, scholars enrolled in the residential program will be enrolled in school or an apprenticeship full-time. They will meet with an academic advisor and family advocate twice a month.

Post-Residential Program

Launch date: TBA

We will continue meaningful relationships and personal career development with our scholars after they graduate from their various programs. BFS will help scholars as they transition to a career and stable housing.

Inspiring generations

Wilisha Scaife said she had always planned to go to college, ever since she was a teenager.

In high school, adults saw her "on a path to glory," the BFS board member said. From her extracurricular involvement to her grades, people said Wilisha was going somewhere.

Her life took an unexpected turn when Wilisha had a son at age 17.

Despite Wilisha's unexpected pregnancy, she was determined to make the most of her life through a college education.

"I jumped right into college right after graduating," Wilisha said. "I was thinking I've got to stay on this trajectory to success."

However, the hardships of being a teen mom impacted Wilisha's college education for years to come.

Wilisha often stayed up until two in the morning to finish homework. She struggled to balance family, classes, and the cost of college.

"I had a newborn my first semester at Ball State."

"My grades were impacted. I was put on academic probation, trying to keep up with things and the baby," Wilisha said.

While her family encouraged her to succeed in school, Wilisha flunked out of Ball State at the end of freshman year.

She wanted a degree, but realized it would be tough to get.

Wilisha decided to take classes when she could. She was determined to take classes until she earned her degree.

While working toward her education, Wilisha got married and had another child. Her husband continually encouraged her while she chased after a degree.

Even with his support, it was tough balancing motherhood, school, and work.

"I was raising my kids while in

school, but I kept going for them," Wilisha said. "I just kept fighting for it and my kids watched me."

Finally, Wilisha earned her Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Leadership from Anderson University. When she crossed the stage to receive her diploma, she was pregnant with her third child.

It took Wilisha 12 years to get her undergraduate degree.

Ten years later, Wilisha received her Master's Degree in Executive Development for Public Service from Ball State University.

"Both of my degrees became something I needed for me. I've been working so hard," Wilisha said.

"Through all of life, all of these things, these ups and downs — it's something that is finally mine."

Because of her experiences as a teenage mom, Wilisha said she was drawn to Beneficence Family Scholars.

Her family's support helped push Wilisha to chase after her dreams for higher education for 22 years. Wilisha believes BFS can come alongside families and provide similar support.

"I just know how hard it is," Scaife said. "Even if BFS could serve just five single-parents, that would change their world."



Board member Wilisha Scaife is motivated to support single-parents as they work toward higher education.

Family Scholar House exemplifies our vision.

81%

of Family Scholar House participants exit to stable employment

445

degrees have been earned by Family Scholar House participants

585

families housed in Family Scholar House residential programs

Change the community one *family* at a time

By donating to Beneficence Family Scholars, you are investing in a **family's future**.

By supporting Beneficence Family Scholars, you help single-parent families move from instability to stability and from uncertainty to security. You will be part of changing the narrative of families in generational poverty.

Our families count on your generous donation for their housing and their educational support. When you give to BFS, you stand behind an organization that empowers families through hands-on support, education, and comprehensive resources.

You can join the Beneficence Family Scholars family by doing any or all of the following:

Donate

By giving to BFS, you directly help a family in Muncie. You can provide a family with the opportunity to attain education, housing, programming, and other resources. Through your generosity, you help our vision of a thriving community come to life.

Volunteer

Your time is valuable to BFS. The BFS family needs your

talents and skills to enrich our organization. We need volunteers to help with our programming and fundraising as we continue to develop our organization. If you are interested in volunteering, email hello@bfscholars.org.

Share

Spread the word about BFS! Tell your family, friends and anyone you know about us. Be sure to visit our website bfscholars.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram [@bfscholars](https://www.instagram.com/bfscholars).

3rd Highest

Delaware County has the **3rd highest** food insecurity rate in Indiana.

4,000
Single-parents

There are over **4,000** single-parents in Delaware County.

More than 2x

Muncie's poverty rate is **more than 2X** the national poverty rate.

They stand behind *Beneficence*

Friends of BFS



BFS Donors

Ball State University Athletics
The Caffeinery
The Candy & Treasure Chest
Crew Carwash
Fort Wayne Tin Caps
French Lick Winery
Greek's Pizzeria
HotBox Pizza
Muncie Civic Theatre
Newfields
Normandy Flower Shop
The Pickled Peddler
Sun King Brewery
Squire Boone Caverns
Three Wise Men
TIS Bookstore

Katherine Barger
Theresa Ebbert
Amy Holland
Carl Hook
Paul & Louis Johnson
Jim and Vicki Kotowski
Arlene and Dale Manwaring
Theresa Lowman
Thomas Miller
Judith Miller-Steinmetz
Beverly Richards
Judy Stallings
Barb Stoll
Sam Wiley

Invest in a family today. Donate to **BFS**.

Beneficence

Designer/Author:

Liz Rieth

Editors:

Bobbie Burton & Eliza Roark

Photographers (*below*):

Olivia Rowe & Liz Kim



bfscholars.org
@bfscholars

