FIFTY DOLLARS and the name of a distant relative she never had met were all the mother of Anna Kazimierczak ’11 had when she came to the U.S.

Maria had left her native Poland in search of better opportunities, and in America, she built a new life. She married, had two children, and settled in tight-knit Wallington, N.J., where half of the residents are of Polish descent. With its old-world delis and its red and white flags flying next to red, white, and blue ones, the small town made Maria feel a little closer to her old home far away.

Then everything changed. Her husband Bogdan, just 34 years old, passed away from lung cancer and heart disease, and she was left alone to support two children. Anna was 6 years old. Big brother Damian was 8.

At that point, Maria had a decision to make. Should she remain in America or return to her family in Poland? Thinking of her children’s future, she decided to stay. “She stayed for us to have a better education here,” Anna Kazimierczak says. “We would have the life she came here to seek.”

When Kazimierczak grew up and was ready to attend college, though, that hope of a better education needed a little help. Her dream school was Babson, but even with her mother working two jobs, as a house cleaner during the day and machine operator at night, attending the institution wasn’t financially feasible, especially with her brother already in college.

Thankfully, help came. Kazimierczak remembers receiving her financial aid package, which included an Erik Hans Isbrandtsen ’94 Memorial Scholarship. In that moment, the decision was made. She was going to Babson. “It was an amazing feeling,” she says.

Such is the impact of scholarships. Financial aid gives people access to a quality education, which can lift them above their circumstances, create opportunities where none were thought to exist, and in the case of Kazimierczak, complete a search for a better life that began with a trip across the ocean years ago. “I do believe the power of education is unmatched,” says Undergraduate Dean Dennis Hanno.

Unfortunately, providing scholarships, and thus enabling that power of education, is not inexpensive. For undergraduates in the 2008–2009 school year, Babson awarded $20.7 million in grants and scholarships. For graduate students, the total was $3.8 million. Of all this money, a whopping 85 percent came from Babson’s operating budget, which meant that financial aid funds were competing with everything that made the College run, from light to heat to salaries. “Financial aid puts a ton of pressure on the budget,” says Melissa Shaak, director of student financial services and associate dean of the Undergraduate School. “That raises the concern about whether [aid] can be sustained at the current level.”

To strengthen scholarship support, the focus for the next phase of the Babson Rising campaign is financial aid. The institution hopes to continue supporting students such as Kazimierczak, whose Babson education has led her to

by John Crawford
the cusp of a career and made her mother proud.

Her mother cried when Kazimierczak, who also received a Class of ’49 Scholarship, announced that accounting firms had offered her internships, positions that often turn into jobs after graduation. “She was so happy,” Kazimierczak says.

**Human Capital**

Babson has made a bigger investment in financial aid during the last 10 years, Shaak says, and that has translated into tangible effects. For starters, that investment helps Babson to compete for the best and brightest students, though the school still loses good applicants because of aid. Of those admitted to Babson but who went elsewhere in 2009, 56 percent said aid or cost was a significant factor in their decision. “While our financial aid is strong, it’s a very competitive marketplace,” Shaak says.

Scholarships also shape the student body by helping to attract the widest range of backgrounds and points of view to the College. Since 2005, the percentage of undergraduate women has increased from 39 to 43 percent, and the percentage of multicultural undergraduates has increased from 18 to 27 percent. “That creates a more vibrant educational environment,” Shaak says.

When considering the full impact of scholarships, though, one must look beyond statistics and focus on individual lives. To invest in financial aid is to invest in human capital. “It’s all about people,” Hanno says.

For instance, the Eleanor M. Johnson ’85 Alumni Scholarship enabled Francesca Sagripanti ’12 to attend Babson. Her family couldn’t have managed the tuition otherwise. Her brother is autistic and mentally disabled, and the state’s funding of his care, which includes a private boarding school, is not guaranteed every year. “It’s a struggle to get everything paid for,” says Sagripanti, who also received a Women’s Leadership Award.

Sagripanti is driven. She has known since the seventh grade that she wants to be a lawyer. When she’s not working in alumni relations or off-campus at the Wellesley Country Club, she’s involved with the Babson Law Society, which she helped to found.

After graduation, she’s heading right to law school. Sagripanti wants her life in order, because when she turns 30, she will take on the responsibility of becoming her brother’s legal guardian. Eventually, she also would like to work pro bono for families with children who have special needs. “It’s a duty to help people in need,” she says.

Financial aid was also critical in allowing Duylam Nguyen-Ngo ’13 to attend Babson, where he works as COO of a Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship business, tinkers with his startup idea for a new type of tea bag, and writes a blog focused on empowering first-generation college students, who can carry the weight of family expectations. “At times, it can be a burden,” says the Richmond, Va., resident.

Nguyen-Ngo knows about that burden. His mother left her native Vietnam so he could have a better education, and when he was a child, she worked two jobs, one as a janitor, the other at Arby’s. “She always told me to work hard and do what I love,” he says. “If you study and work hard, [everything] will work out better in the end.”

Nguyen-Ngo feels that coming to Babson was meant to be. In middle school, when classmates were reading comic books, he flipped through his uncle’s copies of *BusinessWeek*. “I always wanted to be a business owner,” he says. Now he spends much time at the Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship, the famous brands hanging above him as he ponders his tea business, and he remembers what his mother said when he left for Babson: Make us proud. “I hope I do,” he says.
A Ripple Effect

While financial aid transforms individual lives, its impact also creates a ripple effect. Scholarships aren’t just an investment in a person; they’re an investment in what that person might accomplish in the future, starting with his or her time on campus.

Consider the Posse program participants. Ten are chosen a year, in large part for their leadership abilities. As a result, they’re typically active inside and outside the classroom and have an influence far greater than their numbers. “[They] are such a vivid example of the impact of financial aid,” Hanno says. “If you walk around here, they are the leaders. They shape the campus.”

Or consider Daniel Brown ’09, MS ’09. He’s from quiet Chariton, Iowa. Young people usually don’t stray too far from their small town when attending college, so when Brown decided on Babson, some 1,300 miles away, that took guts. Why go so far, his family asked. “In the Midwest, the culture is to stay close to home,” Brown says.

It also took guts because Brown wasn’t sure how he would afford Babson’s tuition. Maybe I’ll land a job, he thought, or perhaps some funding will come my way. If not, his Babson career could end quickly. “My family didn’t have the means to help me,” he says. “I took a leap of faith going out there.”

That leap of faith paid off. He was awarded a Class of ’49 Scholarship and became a resident assistant, which allowed him free housing. Later he received even more support with the Michael J. Conlon ’96 Memorial Scholarship and the Ralph Z. and Charlotte R. Sorenson Merit Scholarship.

Once on campus, Brown became involved. “He was the heart and soul of the place,” Shaak says. He was a member of the Russian Club, Honors Program, and Babson Accounting Club. He traveled to Louisiana for Habitat for Humanity. He went to Ghana to teach entrepreneurship and business. “I felt like a lot was given to me,” he says. “I wanted to give back.”

He made such an impact that, when Hanno heard that Brown’s mother couldn’t afford a plane ticket to attend commencement, the dean took up a collection. Hanno knew that Brown was set to win a number of awards and felt his mother should see that. Staff agreed and happily donated. “That was the most touching memory I have at Babson,” Brown says. “That meant more to me than any award I won that day.”

Beyond Campus

The ripple effect of scholarships can go a long way. Iowa may be far from Babson, but Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, is on the other side of the globe. There, Shokhrulkh Yakubjanov ’12 thought about how he could change the world and about which college could help him to do that.

Admittedly, changing the world is an ambitious goal. Some might call it naïve, but Yakubjanov, who goes by “Shoney,” was committed to giving it a shot. He thought Babson could help him start businesses concerned with the greater good.

There was just one problem: Yakubjanov couldn’t afford the College’s tuition. But that changed one late night. He was studying at 3 a.m. when he received a call from Babson saying he was named a Weissman Scholar. He immediately woke up his parents, who then called his grandparents. “The whole family was in a huge celebration,” says Yakubjanov, who also received the Adam Collins ’94 Alumni Scholarship.

The Weissman Scholarship enabled Yakubjanov to attend Babson, and with the $5,000 in yearly seed money it provides, he already is starting a business. It’s a T-shirt company that allows customers to donate half of the sale to entrepreneurs in developing countries. He hopes it’s one of many businesses he’ll start, and one of the many ways he’ll repay the investment made in him.

That’s the power of scholarships. Recipients don’t just transform campus. They graduate and go on to transform the world. “[The Weissman Scholarship] impacts me, it impacts my family, and it impacts every person I affect in my journey of life,” Yakubjanov says. That sort of far-reaching future impact is what the College wants to continue funding.