



Harold Alfond College Challenge  
December 11, 2007  
Greg Powell Remarks

Welcome and thank you for being with us for this very special occasion. I'm Greg Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation, and I am here with members of the Foundation Board and the Alfond family to make an important announcement for the children of Maine.

Joining me from the Foundation are Trustees Ted Alfond, Bill Alfond, Peter Lunder, Bob Marden and Larry Pugh. Also joining us are Governor Baldacci, Beth Bordowitz, the acting CEO of FAME, Richard Patenaude, Chancellor of the University of Maine System and Scott Bullock, CEO of MaineGeneral Health.

Harold Alfond believed that every child in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should have aspirations and access to higher education. And he was fond of saying, "Our children are the future."

This past summer here in Maine - the last summer of his remarkable life, Harold Alfond looked out over Great Pond of the Belgrade Lakes, and asked, "What more can I do to help the children of this state?" As he pondered that question, he watched with love and pride his great grandchildren at play in the Maine summer sun, and the answer came to him.

For decades, at the birth of each child in the Alfond family, Harold Alfond would send a gift of \$500 to the parents with a simple message: “Here is a gift to start you out saving for your child’s future.”

Today, on behalf of Harold Alfond, his family and Foundation, we are pleased to announce the “Harold Alfond College Challenge” – a first in the nation initiative that, when fully operational, will provide every child born in Maine with a \$500 college savings fund at birth. With this legacy gift, Harold Alfond wanted all Maine children to have the chance to pursue further education after high school and to enjoy the benefits such education would bring to them and our state. And he wanted Maine to lead the nation in making higher education a right and responsibility of good citizenship for all.

The model for the Harold Alfond College Challenge will begin on January 1, 2008 and be offered to children born at the Waterville and Augusta hospitals of MaineGeneral Health. As the model is polished and perfected, we plan to roll out the Alfond College Challenge statewide in January of 2009.

There are three parts to this Challenge and they are as simple as their purpose is evident: First, to start saving for college at the birth of every child; Second, to encourage all parents to contribute and grow college savings as their children grow; and Third, to help

every family prepare every child for higher education by using the savings system as a tool to motivate and inform.

- Getting started with saving early is key. The Alford Challenge offers parents of every newborn a \$500 college account when they open up a 529 college savings plan before leaving the hospital. Because starting early is so important to compound earnings, this Plan calls on Maine hospitals to encourage parents to open a college saving account for their infant at birth ---a time of high hope and aspiration.
- Second, to encourage ongoing contributions to college savings, the Alford Challenge partners with FAME, our State's administrator of the NextGen College Savings Plan; once parents open a 529 account to receive the \$500 Alford scholarship, parents and employers will be able to contribute additional dollars over 18 years growing the account as their child grows. And because the child's account is a NextGen 529 account, investment earnings will be tax exempt as long as the contributions are ultimately used for education;
- Third, to motivate parents and provide them with the information they need to prepare their children for higher education, both academically and financially, the Alford Challenge calls on our State's leaders in education to guide parents and families through each child's pre-college years with

specially crafted information that will accompany quarterly 529 account statements.

So, as I say, the plan is simple and the objectives clear: start saving at the birth of each child; contribute and grow savings as each child grows; and help prepare every family and child for higher education by using the savings system as a tool to motivate and inform.

True to Harold Alfond's philosophy of giving, this initiative is a challenge and as with all Harold Alfond challenges, committed partners are as welcome as they are critical to success. In launching this initiative, the foundation challenges not only parents, but Maine businesses, and nonprofits to make higher education a reality for all Maine citizens. So far, absolutely terrific partners have stepped forward to help. Many of these partners have already contributed countless hours of time and effort to support and design this unique initiative and so the Foundation would like to thank Governor Baldacci and his office, MaineGeneral Health, the Finance Authority of Maine, Merrill Lynch, the Maine Compact for Higher Education, and the University of Maine System. We'd also like to thank the Maine Community College System, the Maine Community Foundation, the Mitchell Institute, the Maine Hospital Association and its members for their support and welcome them all to this effort.

We have invited some of our partners to say a few words about their role and commitment to this unique plan for Maine's children. And so now it is my pleasure to introduce Governor Baldacci.

(GOVERNOR BALDACCI REMARKS)

(ELIZABETH BORDOWITZ REMARKS)

(RICHARD PATTENAUE REMARKS)

(SCOTT BULLOCK REMARKS)

Thank you Scott, Rich, Beth, Governor. We will be glad to take any questions shortly, but before we do that, we have one last item to share with you.

It was Harold Alford's profound wish to be with us here to today. And if Harold Alford were here, it would now be his time to speak--the time when he would rise to his feet, blare out the challenge and urge us onward with the twinkle of purpose and affection in his eyes we have loved and have lost to time. The Challenge we announce today is the capstone of Harold Alford's lifelong commitment to the people of Maine. He knew this gift would not be for his lifetime but would benefit generations of children he would never know. But still he wanted this moment with us and without him here, this announcement seems as incomplete as it is

bittersweet. And so, as imperfect as it may be, we have a brief video of the man who made the Harold Alfond College Challenge possible.

(PLAY VIDEO)

I now invite you to ask any questions you may have about the Harold Alfond College Challenge.

(QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

(END OF PROGRAM)