

# Nonprofit Profile

## LYNNE MARTIN

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STUDENTS RISING ABOVE

#### Organization

**HQ:** San Francisco.

**Mission:** To invest in low-income, first generation college students who have demonstrated strength of character. To guide and support students to and through college graduation, and into the workforce. These students and graduates are breaking the cycle of poverty, serving their communities, and providing a new generation of employees and leaders from diverse backgrounds.

**Milestone:** We just completed our most successful year ever. We selected our largest class ever, so we now have over 160 students (from the Bay Area) attending and graduating from colleges across the country.

**Annual budget:** Almost \$2 million.

**Expense allocation:** 78 percent students and student programming, 12 percent fundraising, 10 percent general and administrative.

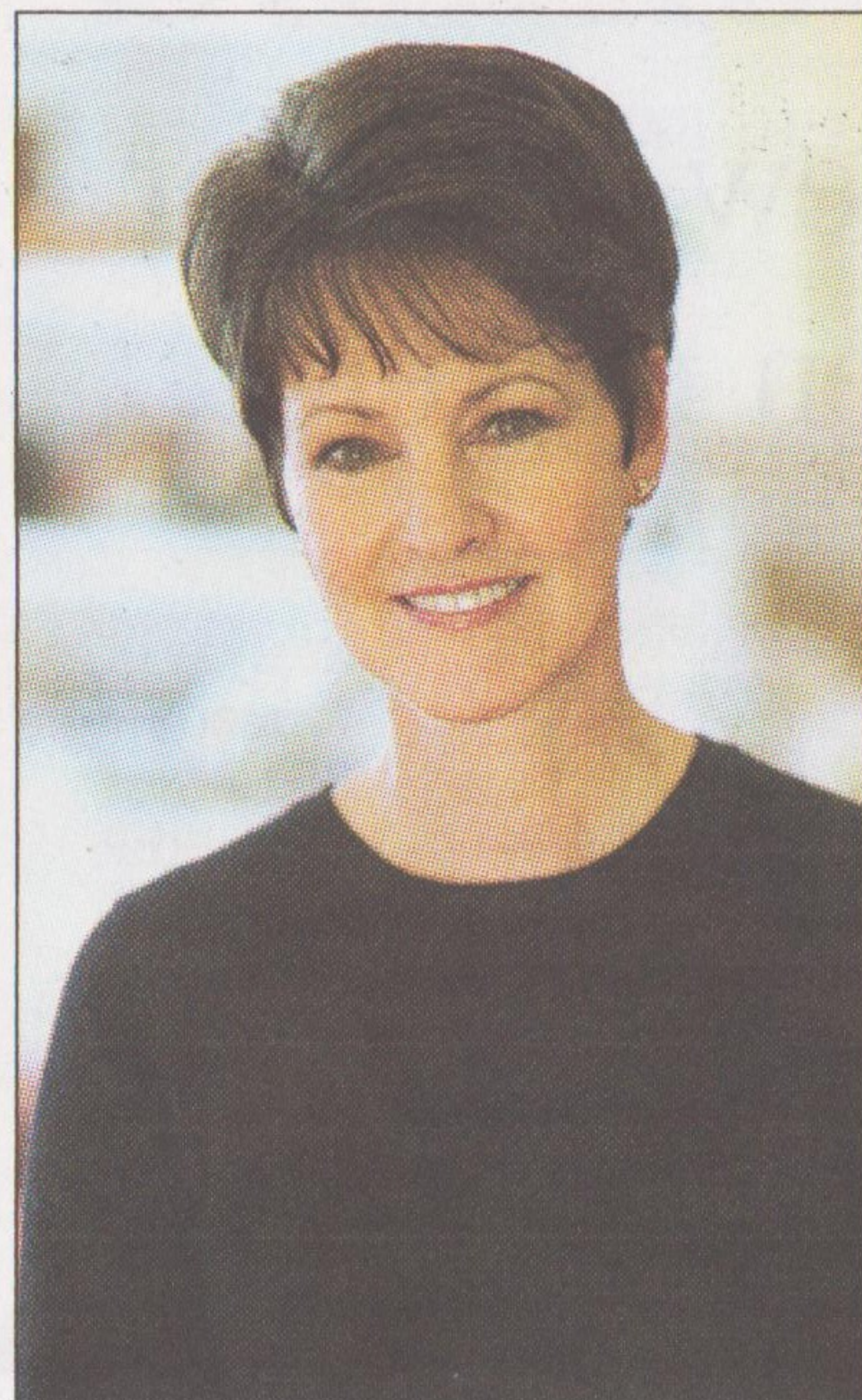
**Corporate support:** 21 percent.

**Corporate supporters:** Union Bank, Orrick Herrington, PG&E, Chevron, Cisco, Dodge & Cox, Oracle, Wells Fargo.

**Board chair:** Gail Lopes and Lois Cole.

**Board members:** 14, including John Diserens, Julius Robinson and Joe Malkin.

**Employees:** Three full time and 13 part-time.



**Volunteers:** 125.

**Telephone:** (415) 333-4222.

**Web site:** www.studentsrisingabove.org

#### Office Issues

**Recent challenge:** We're ready to embark on our biggest challenge, and that is to double in size in the next

three-to-five years.

**Measures of success:** We have a 90 percent graduation success rate, and that is two-to-three times greater than the national average for low-income, first generation college students. We also just had an independent, third-party cost benefit analysis on the program. ... For every \$1 spent on an SRA student, there is at least a \$4 fiscal benefit to state and federal governments. Our students are graduating, are able to earn greater income, hence pay greater taxes and have a much lower reliance on having to utilize welfare or government health care programs.

**Smartest move:** Teaming up with Barb Hendricks, our director of student programs. The two of us have been responsible for building SRA. The funny part is we were both freshman college roommates at Cal.

**Missed opportunity:** When we cannot select the number of students we want in a class because we don't have the funding to support them through the four-to-five years it takes them to go to college. We are not a one time payment.

**Misconception:** That access to college is enough to ensure completion. We've learned that it takes so much more than a tuition check to get our kids to and through college.

#### Professional Insights

**Personal path to nonprofit work:** Until seven years ago, I was in the for-profit world. I started by volunteering for SRA doing fundraising. The board at the time decided it wanted to formalize the program into a 501c3, so I raised my hand. I was a partner within an inter-

national executive search firm and I helped start an Internet company.

**Toughest aspect:** Juggling the sometimes conflicting demands of the various constituent groups.

**Most surprising aspect:** People work in nonprofits because they are passionate about a cause, want to make a difference, want to give of themselves to help others. So the biggest surprise is how much you receive in return.

**Biggest concern:** The declining education system in the state of California. There are so many students falling through the educational cracks and who are not prepared for college.

**Greatest pleasure:** We are helping to raise 17-22 year olds, so our greatest pleasure is watching them grow and mature into just these remarkable adults.

#### Introspections

**Best recent moment:** A note I received from a graduating senior who thanked us for opening up the world to her.

**Worst recent moment:** Learning that one of our graduates is gravely ill.

**Dream for another life:** I'd love to win an Olympic medal in women's rowing.

**Greatest inspiration:** Beside the students we work with, my husband and my own kids because they just make me laugh and truly have brought out the best in me.

**Down time:** I like to hike, I like to cook, and I'm a good napper.

**Causes:** Making college education a reality for more kids.

**Most like to meet:** I'd like to meet Mark Twain.

—Sarah Duxbury ■