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285 Philadelphia Schools' Students Awarded \$800,000 In Scholarships

By Patricia Hawke

The Philadelphia Education Fund has been in operation for 20 years. A nonprofit organization, the

Fund partners with school districts (including the Philadelphia schools), other nonprofit organizations, businesses and individuals to provide scholarships for students in the Philadelphia schools system. Its purpose is to initiate and implement innovative educational programs, of which they have several. They work to improve the quality of teachers in the Philadelphia schools, conduct educational research, and engage the community in school reform. The Fund is one of the largest of 86 education funds that are affiliated with the national Public Education Network.

One of the programs that are sponsored by the Fund is the Philadelphia Scholars Program that awards Last Dollar Scholarships to Philadelphia schools students. In June 2006, they awarded \$800,000 in scholarships to 285 schools students.

Over the last 16 years, the Fund has awarded more than \$5 million to students, who attend 15 high schools of the Philadelphia schools system -- many of these youth were the first in their families to attend college. Scholarships range from \$200 to \$4,000, helping to fill the gap between a student's financial aid package and actual college costs. Scholarships cover tuition, fees, books and transportation. They are renewable for a maximum of six years for students attending accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities across the nation.

Scholarship funding is from Philadelphia donors (many of which are the city's most prominent philanthropists in the financial industry), but includes hundreds of individuals, businesses, and organizations. The most active donor is John C. Bogle, chairman of the National Constitution Center and former chairman and founder of the Vanguard Group. Besides wanting to make college a reality for Philadelphia schools students, Bogle hopes that these same children will one day invest in Philadelphia's next generation.

Once such group, which raises funds for the Last Dollar Scholarship program, is the Scholars Advisory Committee. To date, they have raised \$16 million. A. Morris Williams, Jr. chairs the committee, is the president of Williams and Company, and was formerly an executive of Morgan Stanley. He and John Neff, a committee member and former managing partner of Wellington Management Company, are the

two driving forces behind the Philadelphia Scholars Program. Together, they provided the seed money for the program's launch.

Williams wants to help the Philadelphia schools students reach their goals, hoping to inspire others to support higher education in Philadelphia. Neff wants to give something back to the community that has been so good to him, and sees supporting education as a way to give students an opportunity for a better life.

Most investors in the scholarship program for Philadelphia schools students recognize the something must be done to help the city's youth succeed. Without the opportunity of a higher education for today's students, Philadelphia will be left wanting for an educated workforce in the future. The donors' generosity helps the Philadelphia schools students have a better future, as well as helping the city succeed tomorrow.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more information on Philadelphia schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Pennsylvania/philadelphia/index.html>

How To Search For A College Scholarship

By Garrick Banks

With thousands of scholarships available, the task of finding all of the scholarships that apply to you can be quite troublesome. Luckily, there are several ways you can go about efficiently finding all of the scholarships that apply to you.

In the United States athletic scholarships are largely regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, which sets minimum standards for both the individuals awarded the scholarships (in terms of GPA's and standardized test scores for recipients), and for the institutions granting them (in terms of the proportion of scholarship recipients who must ultimately earn degrees).

In 1973, the NCAA split its membership into three divisions: Division I, Division II and Division III. Under NCAA rules, Division I and Division II schools can offer scholarships to athletes for playing a sport. Division III schools may not offer any athletic scholarships. Generally, larger schools compete in Division I and smaller schools in II and III. Division I football is further divided into I–A and I–AA.

Ironically, institutions that engage in misconduct may be stripped of the ability to award a certain number of athletic scholarships. Although this damages the ability of that institution to compete in sporting events, the greater impact is on the ability of student athletes, who may lose their only avenue to higher education.

1. Financial Aid Office

The most obvious first place to start looking is the financial aid office of the school you are interested in. This office usually contains useful texts as well as consellers that can help to start you on your quest for scholarships and financial aid.

2. Internet Scholarship Search Sites

There are numerous web sites out there that will let you, for a small price, apply to all of the scholarships that you qualify for. After filling out a few forms and answering some common questions a list will appear and you can check off that ones you would like to apply to electronically.

For example, CollegeNets Mach 25 Search is a free version of the WintergreenOrchard House Scholarship Finder database. Although they don't allow you to electronically file for applications it is still a great listing of over half a million unique scholarships and over \$1 billion dollars is given to students annually.

3. Other Places You Can Try

– Bulletin board of the financial aid office – Admission office booklets and pamphlets – The athletic department and school team coaches – The library – High School Guidance Counselors

For more great scholarship related articles and resources check out

<http://123scholarships.info>



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