

Dollars for Scholars Phonathon set for April 6, 7

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Seniors Chad Larrabee, Renita Wilkes, and Drake Peterson fill out the Dollars for Scholars application.

Back in 1990, a group of four had a vision to support current and future Cambridge-Isanti students. Little did Bud Parker, Robert Becklin, Harland Johnson and Dorothy Munkberg know the enormity of the impact they would have on the lives of the youth in our community.

The goal of the Cambridge-Isanti Dollars for Scholars Foundation is to provide a meaningful scholarship to each and every graduating student who requests help to further his or her education or training after high school graduation.

According to Dr. Ray Hoheisel, current Dollars for Scholars board member, the foundation's single purpose is to award graduates of Cambridge-Isanti High School, scholarships in the year they graduate.

The originating members awarded four scholarships back in 1990, totaling \$5,000. In 2008, 216 scholarships were awarded with a value of approximately \$152,000.

To date, \$1,505,600 has been awarded in scholarships since the inception of the foundation.

Starting Tuesday, March 17, the Dollars for Scholars application will be distributed to all 2009 graduating seniors. It is up to the student to turn in the completed application to the Career Center by Thursday, March 26 at 3 p.m. The applicants receive points based on GPA, class rank, activities, work experience, classes taken in high school, an essay and awards received. The student must also have an adult complete an appraisal for them.

In 2008, all but seven students who applied received at least one scholarship, and some received more than one. All seniors that plan to further their education at an accredited post-secondary institution are encouraged to apply.

"The scholarship I received almost paid for my whole second semester of school. People should take advantage of it; everyone should apply. Every little bit helps," said Brittany Ross, 2008 Dollars for Scholars recipient.

How will the state of the economy affect this year's Dollars for Scholars program?

There are 41 permanently endowed scholarships. The 2009 graduates will receive \$38,500 from those funds. Current board members are in the process of contacting annual scholarship donors and according to Hoheisel, the results have been excellent.

"Several donors said they would be unable to give a scholarship this year, but overall response has been heart warming," stated Hoheisel.

Current Dollars for Scholars board members are: Dale Anderson, Mitchell Clausen, Dan Fosse, Ray Hoheisel, Jim Lindberg, John Munkberg, Phil Nelson, Bruce Novak, Dennis Olson, John Schlagel, Jane Skogman, Brian Strike and Cindy Szafranski.

The annual Phonathon will take place April 6 and 7. Cambridge-Isanti students will call local residents asking for a monetary donation to the program. Without the support from the community, the scholarship program would not be the success that it is.

With the Dollars for Scholars fund down considerably because investment and interest earnings are down, the scholarships awarded in 2009 will be lower than 2008.

"We are hopeful that the Phonathon will again be successful, knowing full well that financial circumstances will not allow some to contribute this year," said Hoheisel. "Phonathon donors have been very generous in the past. We appreciate the generosity and want donors to know that 100 percent of the money collected from the Phonathon is given as scholarships."

Despite the uncertain economic times, Cambridge-Isanti High School seniors remain hopeful for their future.

For more information on the Dollars for Scholars program, or to donate, please contact 763-689-6025.