Town of Northborough
Scholarship Advisory Committee
63 Main Street
Northborough, MA 01532

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2004 7:00 – 8:50 p.m. at Town Hall Room C
Present: Margie Hurwitz, Stacey Incorvaia, Joyce Isen, Laurie Klein, Greg Young
Absent: Bob Melican or representative

Housekeeping: Minutes of the February 4, 2004 meeting were approved.

Publicity Scrapbook: Stacey will maintain a collection of our clippings.

Special Municipal Employee Designation: The committee voted unanimously to request special municipal employee designation from the town.

Northborough Businesses: Greg distributed a list of Northborough businesses. We will all go through the list to see if we know any of the owners personally so we can make a personal appeal for contributions. This list will be the basis for our direct mail fundraising campaign.

First Fundraiser: Maria Olson, owner of Curves for Women, held a blood pressure clinic that netted $38 in donations. She also sent us a check for $100. Joyce will write a personal thank you note. Laurie will give her a window decal. Stacey will write a public thank you as a letter to the editor of local papers.

Application Review Process: Applications are available and are due back April 2. Greg will organize them, make them anonymous, copy them, and prepare the packets for the other four members who will read and evaluate them.

Next Fundraiser: We talked more about our booth at Applefest, which we plan to share with the Elderly/Disabled group. Melody Cunningham and Terry Crean have offered to make quilts for us to raffle off.

Dollars for Scholars: The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Lynne Zervas of Dollars for Scholars, the organization to which we belong and that provides our 501C-3 tax deduction status. They file form 990 on our behalf, and group us with other towns who raise less than $25,000 in a given tax year.

We are exiting the "Accumulating" phase and making our first awards this year. Lynne remarked that Publicity and Fundraising go hand in hand with multiple opportunities that are interrelated. She suggested we read the "Chapter Fundraising Manual" to find ideas that would be a good fit for us. We should look for ideas that are unique, clever, and inexpensive to run.

We should also take a look at this website: www.scholarshipamerica.org/dfs/index.php. Log in using the account name *MA0032* and the password *temple* (note that these are case sensitive). Under "Downloadable Forms," take a look at "Master Manager." The four sections under that are the four sections of the big Chapter Guidebook. Under "Printable Forms" we can find the required forms that June completed for us in the past. There are some generic student applications and financial forms that many chapters use instead of writing their own. There is also an Excel spreadsheet we might want to use for tracking income and expenses; it lines up with Chapter Financial Report Form A.

The most popular fundraising technique is the phone-a-thon run by students and held at a business center with lots of telephones. The phone-a-thon in Wakefield is very sophisticated and based on much experience. The second most popular technique is a telethon on local cable TV. We would get pledges in advance from local businesses, then have walk-on appearances by the owners on TV. This needs lots of planning. One town got a sponsor to match all pledges. The third most common technique is the direct mail campaign letter, which we are planning to do.

Lynne said we can use the DFS bulk mailing permit for our direct mail campaign but we must deliver the letters to Stoneham. We should look for a local printer to give us free or low cost printing. A good return rate on a direct mail campaign is 10%. We should be sure to thank all donors, perhaps with a window decal. We can buy decals from DFS. Another town thanks businesses by hosting a free breakfast for the owners and does not fundraise at this event.

Idea: have student recipients write a thank you note and use quotes from these in the paper. Or record awards night and use their remarks.

More ideas include: Adopt-a-Class: a business adopts a class year and follows it through to graduation. The business would match funds raised by/for this class. Harlem Wizards basketball team will organize a game on our behalf. Donations in lieu of flowers at funerals: this has been well developed in another town and has become a town tradition. Flamingos: buyers order a flock to be placed on a friend's lawn. Have high school seniors participate in the walk-a-thon in Wakefield, for community service credit. Financial Aid Seminar: we could host this and charge admission, or at least we should have a representative on the panel at Algonquin for Financial Aid Night. Local telephone directory: if someone publishes this, ask them for a phone list on CD, and award a scholarship in their name. Others: adult spelling bee or trivia contest. In all projects, try to get local businesses to donate space for events, or pay for trophies, etc.

Note: Dollars for Scholars will process credit card donations for us and deduct the bank fee.

Some towns that have done very well with fundraising put 5% into an endowment every year. Burlington, Billerica, and Arlington have done this.

Publicity Ideas: Tip of the Month: we can get these from DFS and send them to the local paper from the Northborough Scholarship Advisory Committee. Selectmen: Ask them to declare an official Scholarship Week at the meeting in May when we give out the awards. Put the Dollars for Scholars logo on our letters of congratulations. Note: May is National Scholarship Month. We can enter a drawing for $500 through DFS if we have any kind of event during May.

Lynne suggested that people in other chapters would be willing to talk with us and give advice on their projects.

More ideas: We could work with DECA students at Algonquin. We could also be a work-study opportunity for a journalism student.

More ideas from Lynne: We could be an umbrella organization for other scholarship donors in town, such as Rotary and Chamber of Commerce, and use a common application.

Collegiate Partners Program: About 500 colleges across the country promise not to reduce a student's grants because of our scholarship, and one third of the colleges will match our scholarship. Some examples of matching colleges are Assumption, Stonehill, Leslie, St. Michaels in Vermont, and Sacred Heart in Connecticut. Note: we can offer these benefits to Rotary and Chamber winners if those organizations work through us. *We should get the directory of Collegiate Partners and fill out the form for matching grants if our winners are going to these colleges..*

How to give the awards: We currently plan to make the check payable to the student but Lynne favored making it out to the college, or copayable to them both. *Students are supposed to report any private scholarships they receive and we should remind them of this.* If they don't, they might risk losing all their awards from the college. If we send the check to the college, we should instruct the college "Use this money to reduce the unmet needs or the loans for this student."

Dollars for Scholars holds workshops every year. The next one is November 6. The cost will be $35-40 per person. Lynne gave us the past year's worth of back newsletters.

Reports we send to DFS annually: 1) Chapter Activity Report, 2) Annual roster of members of the committee, 3) List of award recipients and colleges they choose, 4) Annual financial forms.

Action items: Greg will ask Bob D'Amico to get us on the Selectmen's agenda for a meeting at the end of May so we can give out the awards. He will also be in touch with Kathy Joubert about getting an Applefest booth. Brainstorming ideas: raffle two quilts, give away balloons, baskets?

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 14, at 7:00 **NOTE CHANGE OF DAY****

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Isen, Secretary

Distribution:
Scholarship Committee members (5)
Bob D'Amico, Board of Selectmen liaison
File copy for Town Clerk
June Hubbard-Ward
Bob Melican