

Cy-Fair Educational Foundation's Endowment Program helps to ease financial burdens of higher education

"Investing in the Future" is what the Cy-Fair Educational Foundation's Endowment Program is all about. In 2010 alone, the CFEF awarded 84 scholarships totaling \$220,000, and since this organization's formation in 1970, over \$4,000,000 has been given to more than 900 students in the Cy-Fair Independent School District.

Given the current state of the economy and the effect this has on our area's families, the generous dollars donated to the CFEF are likely more important today than ever before.

"Many families are struggling and these scholarships help to ease the burden of ever-increasing higher education costs," states CFEF Executive Director, Marie Holmes. "We are dependent upon and extremely thankful for the financial support from the community members that make it all happen."

CFEF scholarships range in denominations from \$500 up to \$20,000. Twelve of those awarded are in the amount of \$10,000 – two of which are given from funds endowed by the Cecil Hall estate which requires a student to attend Texas A&M University. The remaining ten have no specific university attendance requirements. The largest single scholarship of \$20,000 (the Eric Bassett Memorial Scholarship) is awarded to a student graduating from CyFair or CyFalls High School that will be attending Texas A&M.

The CFEF's Endowment Program, established in 2008 to encourage companies and individuals to establish endowed scholarships for students in the Cy-Fair Independent School District, offers at least five scholarships per year to each CFISD high school. All scholarships are awarded from the CFEF and from the endowed CFEF Edwin Schroeder fund.

Endowments can be established in the amounts of \$20,000, \$50,000, \$100,000 or more and can be named for private individuals, corporations and organizations, in memory of individuals and in honor of individuals. Donors have seven years to fully fund their endowment and from each, an annual scholarship will be given in perpetuity to a student who meets the requirements of that scholarship. The CFEF has set an endowment fundraising goal of \$250,000 for 2011. Due to the rapid growth of the Cy-Fair school district, students will need financial assistance more than ever to further their educational pursuits.

Students wanting to apply for scholarships can access the online application by visiting the CFEF website at www.thecfef.org, and selecting the tab for scholarships. The 2011 application deadline is February 10, 2011. To improve their selection chances, students applying should commit the time to provide a comprehensive application and essay that adequately outlines their current situation and reasons for scholarship assistance. Scholarship recipients are chosen based on an applicant scoring process based on fifty percent economic need, twenty-five percent scholastic achievement, and twenty-five percent activities and leadership qualities.

Bryan Ginsburg, Chair of CFEF's Scholarship Committee for the past five years and a Board member since 2001, is proud to be part of an organization that provides necessary funds to so many deserving students and is grateful to the donors that offer those opportunities.

“Without the scholarship dollars needed to fund our mission, many students might not otherwise be able to attend college,” says Ginsburg. “Education is key to helping our younger generation achieve their future goals, and it is through endowed scholarships, fundraisers and grant solicitation that this giving community makes it possible.”

In addition to, or in lieu of monetary donations, community members can get involved by volunteering their time and expertise to the CFEF and/or serving on event committees. Through volunteerism and increased funding sources, we can work together to provide that need. Community members interested in donating their time and/or considering the CFEF for planned giving through an endowment or scholarship can contact Marie Holmes at 281-807-3591 or marie@thecfef.org for more information.