

Report of the District Scholarship Committee
August 22, 2015
Proposed District 7780 Youth Services Scholarship Program
Policy and Procedures

Introduction

The district scholarship committee has been asked to recommend how new district scholarships might be issued with part of our DDF grant money. The membership will be considering whether to authorize a scholarship program at its September 19 district foundation seminar.

This document presents such a program; members of the committee have differing personal views on whether this may be the highest-and-best-use of such funds. To create a transparent discussion, we have added a series of pro-and-con reasons for the membership to consider when deciding whether to launch a district scholarship program.

We are not as a committee making a recommendation whether or not “to do it”: that choice belongs to the membership of the district. Individuals on our committee will speak to their own views on this question.

Background

District scholarship funds are proposed as part of the DDF allocation based upon total contributions to TRF's Annual Fund available for District Grants. The amount designated to district youth scholarships would be decided upon at the September 2015 triennial seminar convened to direct policy regarding DDF expenditures. For the upcoming three-year cycle, it is suggested that \$5,000 per year be earmarked toward the district scholarships. For reference, this would represent 11% of the overall DDF available in FY 2015-2016, close to the size of a single district grant. The Foundation Committee could modify this amount based on actual DDF available and on the program's performance. The first applications could be made on/about June 1, 2016 with payments issued before the fall 2016 semester (using 2016-2017 DDF)

Scholarship Availability

- Scholarships will be made available in \$500 increments.
- Scholarships can be awarded in \$1,000 increments.
- In order to promote as much exposure throughout the district as possible, no more than \$1,000 may be awarded to any one recipient.
- Applicant must be recommended by a club of District 7780.
- Each club will maintain its own requirements and application process. It is recommended (but not required) that the district scholarship be in addition to a local Club's scholarship grant, and designed primarily to reward demonstrated community service by the student such as, but not limited to, participation by the student in Rotary programs (Interact, Rotaract, RYLA and Youth Exchange).
- A form (similar to the RYLA form, yet to be designed) will be submitted on behalf of each applicant by the sponsoring club.

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant must be in good standing with his/her school and community.
- Applicant must be graduating (or have graduated) from secondary school in good academic standing.
- Applicant must have demonstrated a commitment to community service (as examples, active engagement in Interact, Rotaract, RYLA, or a district Youth Exchange).
- Per RI requirements, Rotarians, individuals who were Rotarians in the last 36 months, and their family members of Rotarians are ineligible.

Application Process

- Complete club application process in its entirety and attach the required supplementary materials (test scores, academic or professional recommendations, essays, etc).
- Inform your local club that you are interested in applying for a district scholarship.
- Club interviews and endorsements are required for applicants to be considered for a district scholarship. (If the scholarship program of the club does not include interviews, the district representative interview will be sufficient.)
- Submit application and supporting materials to district no later than June 1.
- Complete an interview with district representatives.
- Receive notice of selection results in June or July. If you are chosen for a scholarship, payment will be made directly to the higher institution of student matriculation.

(This is the end of the "strawman" document describing the proposed scholarship program).

Supplemental information.

The committee assembled a list of “pros and cons” it considered during discussion of this proposal; they may not be all-inclusive. We share them with the membership to help frame the discussion on September 19.

PRO

1. Encourage clubs to establish Youth programs (start an Interact or Rotaract club).
2. Can augment existing local scholarship programs. When sponsoring club grants scholarship and district augments it, amount is more meaningful than just “for books.”
3. Provide “memorable” support to student. Will remember Rotary for long time.
4. Will be a meaningful building block for future Rotary involvement.
5. District would be “leading by example” for more club Youth participation. Demonstrates to Interact, RYLA, Rotaract, Youth Exchange that we value their service and leadership.
6. Clubs do not have to issue their own scholarships, could still recommend students for district youth scholarships. Club may not have funds, or local school could already be sponsored by another club in area (e.g. Portsmouth HS).
7. This will further positive public image in local community, supporting education.
8. Benefits existing club youth programs. Positive promotion of Rotary benefits.
9. Program would cover all of District (every club is RYLA eligible and 31 of 40 clubs have Interact).
10. Direct support to education and literacy (area of Rotary focus).
11. DDF has been increasing, this is a new way to re-invest the dollars local Rotarians give to TRF and have them return to the local communities we serve. The assembly three years ago specifically asked for a recommendation in this area.

CON

1. Using DDF in this way takes funds away from individual club projects that might otherwise get DDF project funding, international exchanges, or other purposes. Is this the “highest best use” of our limited DDF money?. Are scholarships the best use of grant money on the basis of people positively affected?
2. Clubs would have to promote to student population (HS Guidance, etc.) and review applications and submit to District (more work). Clubs without scholarship programs would have to create screening process.
3. RI requires this program cannot benefit Rotarian family members. Are we excluding some of the most worthy potential recipients?
4. Is an incremental \$500 or \$1000 meaningful to the student?
5. Are we benefiting enough people? Is the impact meaningful? Direct annual benefits to 5-10 students from a universe of RYLA/Interact/Rotaract students

- (240 in a two year RYLA cycle, 37 interact clubs, 2 Rotaract clubs, youth exchange, total eligible could be almost 1,000 students in our district.
6. Will there be a true, positive impact on our youth programs?
 7. If an individual has been active in other community service programs and has demonstrated leadership in other ways, are they less worthy of consideration and benefit? (Program only supports Interact, RYLA, Rotaract, Youth Exchange)
 8. If not need-based, are contributions to the Foundation going to a limited number of individuals strictly for promotional purposes?
 9. Are scholarships targeted to Youth Services graduates basically providing a cash reward for providing service? Is the message the right one?

For reference:

The members of the district scholarship subcommittee of the Foundation Committee are Sandy Buck (Hampton), Christine Byrne (Portland Sunrise), Dave Gooch (Kittery) and Dave Underhill (Portsmouth) (chair). Foundation Chair Marty Helman, DG Sheila Rollins and DGE Marge Barker also took part in many of the discussions, along with members of our District Youth Services team.

Respectfully submitted with the concurrence of the district scholarship subcommittee,
Dave Underhill, August 22, 2015