**Rotary Club of Grand Rapids**

**STRIVE Program**

May 2022

**Students Taking Renewed Interest in the Value of Education (STRIVE)**is a motivational program targeted at high school junior and seniors who wish to improve their present educational status and life prospects. The program was developed on the premise that students who are academically ranked in the lower third of their class have the same natural abilities and gifts as those who are in the upper two-thirds. The difference is often motivation, attendance, work habits and self-esteem.

STRIVE addresses these factors by recognizing students who show improvement in academics, attendance, attitude and altruism. Scholars meet each week with an assigned Rotary Mentor who encourages and promotes their accomplishments in these areas. During the school year, the STRIVE scholar is measured against his or her personal improvement in the “4 A’s” – academics, attendance, attitude and altruism.

Successful STRIVE Scholars are eligible to receive:

* A STRIVE Scholarship Award
* Summer work incentive
* Recognition at the Annual Awards Dinner

Grand Rapids Rotary Club started STRIVE in 1994 at Grand Rapids Public Schools and has awarded over $300K in scholarships to students.

* The scholarship is between $500 to $1,500 based on GPA improvement.
* The summer work stipend is $1.50 for every hour worked in the summer up to $750.
* The students are required to participate in two community service projects.
* The mentors meet with the students once per week for the entire school year.

We try to attract 10 students from each school that we mentor at.  Currently we mentor at Union High School and Ottawa Hills High School in the Grand Rapids Public School District.  This past school year, we were only able to attract 6 students in a program that was shortened by the difficulties of the pandemic.

Students are selected by the high school counselors and have to apply for the program.  We try to attract juniors to mentor for two years, but many times mentor seniors for just their senior year.  The formal mentorship program ends upon graduation, but the relationship between student and mentor often continues into college, work and beyond.  Our club was honored to have a former STRIVE student speak at our STRIVE awards luncheon last week who graduated 10 years ago!

For more information, contact STRIVE Co-chairs, Paula Jastifer pjastifer@grcity.us and Mary Slafkosky mvs002@aquinas.edu.